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Making A Difference? Measuring the Effectiveness of Provincial Rural Policies

2017-2019

Lead

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Proposal Submitted to

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

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How effective are provincial rural development policy and program interventions? How do we know if an intervention was a 'good' or an 'effective' investment of public funds? Governments across Canada are challenged to develop and implement robust, flexible, and effective rural policies and programs to meet the ever-changing contexts of rural communities. This research initiative will examine how other provinces in Canada have defined rural development policies/programs, designed new initiatives, and evaluated their success. The mandate of this initiative is to provide Ontario evidence-based recommendations for designing, implementing, and evaluating successful rural development policies and programs.

This initiative will use a mix of three methods, both quantitative and qualitative. The key methods will include content analysis of an inventory of

provincial rural development policies and programs, key informant interviews with provincial policy analysts and managers, and focus groups with provincial policy representatives. At the conclusion of this research initiative, benefits will be generated in three key areas: improved public policy, enhanced rural development programming, and enhanced curriculum and teaching. This research initiative directly addresses priorities identified in the 2016-2017 OMAFRA Research Themes and Priorities, particularly under the theme of Economic Sustainability of Rural Communities.

Dr. Ryan Gibson is a principal investigator on this research proposal. A decision on funding is anticipated in Spring 2017.