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EVALUATION DOCUMENT

MID-TERM EVALUATION NATIONAL STRATEGY ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION PHASE II

**Summary,
Recommendations and Management Response**

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**Evaluation Division
Policy Integration and Coordination Section**

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1. Introduction

The National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Phase II is a federal interdepartmental initiative launched on June 2, 1998 and led by the Department of Justice and the Department of the Solicitor General. The fundamental premise of the National Strategy is that to be effective, solutions to crime and victimization must be community-based and involve broad partnerships. Both federal partners recognize that there are limits to the ability of the criminal justice system to prevent crime; that the enforcement, courts and corrections approach should be balanced by the crime prevention through social development approach that attempts to deal with the root causes of crime and victimization.

In order to fulfil a central agency requirement to report on the progress of the National Strategy by March 31, 2001, a midterm evaluation was conducted. The focus of the evaluation was on design and implementation issues to ensure that the organizational structure that is in place will facilitate the attainment of the Strategy's overall goal and objectives. This report summarizes the findings from the evaluation, the recommendations and the management response prepared by the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC).

1.1 Overview of the National Strategy

The overall goal of the National Strategy is to create safer communities by equipping Canadians with the knowledge, skills and resources they need to introduce crime prevention initiatives in their particular communities. The objectives of the National Strategy are:

- to promote integrated action of key governmental and non-governmental partners to reduce crime and victimization;
- to assist communities in developing and implementing community-based solutions to crime and victimization, particularly as they affect children, youth, women and Aboriginal persons; and
- to increase public awareness of and support for effective approaches to crime prevention.

The Strategy has three components. The first is the *NCPC*, which is housed within the Policy Sector of the Department of Justice and is responsible for the overall management of the National Strategy and serves as the federal government's crime prevention policy centre.

The second component of the National Strategy is the *Safer Communities Initiative*, which is comprised of four funding programs. The first, the *Community Mobilization Program (CMP)* supports community-based efforts to foster community partnerships to deal with crime and victimization, to increase public awareness and support for crime prevention, to increase the capacity of communities to deal with crime and victimization, and to do so using a problem-solving, multi-sectoral approach with a strong community focus. The overall objective of the second program, the *Crime Prevention Investment Fund (CPIF)*, is to identify, implement and evaluate new social development, community-based approaches to crime prevention by identifying crime risk factors. The focus of this program is on high-need, low-resource communities and addressing major gaps in crime prevention knowledge. The third is the *Crime Prevention Partnership Program (CPPP)*, which is designed to encourage non-governmental organizations to develop information, tools and resources that facilitate community involvement in all phases of crime prevention. Lastly, the *Business Action Program on Crime Prevention (BAPCP)* encourages the private sector to get involved, or to continue involvement in crime prevention in their communities by expanding upon existing corporate efforts to prevent crime and reach out to new partners in crime prevention.

The third component of the National Strategy is the *Promotion and Public Education Program*. The objective of this program is to increase knowledge about crime and victimization and the responses to them. The program also sponsors activities encouraging Canadians to be active in creating a safer environment. As the National Strategy matures, this program will also support the dissemination of lessons learned in the various communities.

2. Evaluation Objectives and Issues

The purpose of the midterm evaluation was to provide feedback and analysis of the overall structure and functioning of the National Strategy Phase II. The objectives of the mid-term evaluation are:

- to determine the appropriateness of the program design to support the achievement of the objectives of the National Strategy;
- to assess the effectiveness of the structure and management process and determine whether or not there are sufficient resources to support the work of the NCPC in key activity areas

such as community outreach, crime prevention policy development, development of tools and resources, research and evaluation, and promotion and public education;

- to look at the coordination and integration mechanisms that have been put in place to create linkages among federal departments, provincial/territorial governments, non-profit and private sectors to promote, develop, implement, evaluate and disseminate the results from projects funded under the four funding programs; and
- to examine the capacity of the performance measurement strategy and data collection practices to support the ongoing monitoring and management of the National Strategy.

A total of 26 issues were addressed by the midterm evaluation. These were grouped into four main categories of issues: program design, clarity and appropriateness of roles and organizational partnerships, performance measurement, and sufficiency of resources. This evaluation did not look at outcomes, as it is still too early to assess the impacts and effects of the National Strategy.

2.1 Methodology

The methodology for the midterm evaluation of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention Phase II consisted of a review of documentation, literature and performance measurement data and 88 key informant interviews.

3. Evaluation Findings

The principal findings from the mid-term evaluation are summarized below:

3.1 Key Successes

- There is widespread support among key stakeholders and the Canadian public for the crime prevention through social development approach advocated in the National Strategy. Fostering and supporting the development of local, provincial and national level partnerships is seen as integral to ensuring the sharing of information and experiences.

- The flexibility in the programming component and the regional and community-based operations of the Centre contribute significantly to its capacity to identify and respond to the needs of individual communities. Moreover, the quality of the staff is seen as essential to being able to meet the short-term and longer-term goal and objectives of the Strategy.
- Through grants and contributions, the federal government is able to demonstrate its commitment to crime prevention and to recognize the significant role that communities play in identifying and responding to their unique needs and interests. Grants and contributions are seen as effective mechanisms to support mobilization efforts and to encourage communities to think more strategically about addressing the root causes of crime and victimization in partnership with others.
- Improved public awareness and education, the flexibility in the funding programs and the role of the Joint Management Committees (JMCs)¹ are all believed to have contributed to the appropriate targeting of funded projects to the four priority groups and to the risk factors associated with participation in crime. This has resulted in an overall improvement in the quality of proposals since the launch of the National Strategy.
- The NCPC has involved a variety of stakeholders in almost all aspects of the National Strategy ranging from providing policy advice to the two federal Ministers to reviewing and recommending project proposals for funding. Those interviewed during this evaluation, were positive about the Centre's involvement of stakeholders in the National Strategy and believed that this was likely to facilitate the achievement of the objectives of the National Strategy.
- A great deal has been accomplished in the two and half years since the Strategy's inception. The development, negotiation and approval of the provincial/territorial protocols, development and implementation of four funding programs, the establishment of coordinated partnerships at the federal and provincial/territorial level, as well as the development of some key operational policies and systems reflect some of good work that the Centre has completed to date.
- In spite of all that has been accomplished, more needs to be done. The NCPC appears to have developed a process, largely through the coordination function of the Planning, Information, Coordination, Research and Evaluation Directorate (PICRE), that identifies where problems or concerns are emerging, where more work is required, and how these issues should be addressed. While the information provided below highlights areas where

¹ JMCs have been established each of the 13 provincial/territorial jurisdictions with members drawn from provincial/territorial governments and communities. JMCs work with their Regional Liaison Consultant to co-manage the CMP in their jurisdiction. In addition, JMCs identify local crime prevention needs and gaps, review and recommend CMP funding applications and play a role in monitoring the progress of the funded projects.

improvements are needed, it is important to note that many of these issues have already been identified by the Centre and have been integrated into future plans and activities.

3.2 Lessons Learned

The key lessons learned are listed below.

- The National Strategy appears to be performing well. However, it is difficult for the Centre to speak about its successes and areas where improvements are needed in the National Strategy, without the existence of comprehensive performance measurement and project evaluation systems in all funding programs.
- The evaluation found that there is a need to improve the information management system. The Project Control System (PCS) is a file tracking software, and as such, is an inappropriate information management tool to support performance measurement.
- When Phase II was conceived, it was believed that communities were ready to mobilize and what they needed most was the financial wherewithal to get started. Over the past two years, the NCPC has become increasingly aware that there are many communities across Canada that are in need of significant investments of time and resources (both human and financial) before they can begin the process of mobilization or even apply for funding. Such communities typically are located in rural or remote areas that do not have the basic infrastructure in place required to address the problems associated with crime and victimization. Moreover, there is the added challenge of finding ways to work with these communities and to provide support and information to them in languages other than English and French.
- The evaluation noted that grants and contributions are seen as appropriate mechanisms to provide funding directly to communities, particularly those that have the basic building blocks needed to support community mobilization already in place. On the other hand, the evaluation also found that there are communities that are in great need and for which time-limited, project-based funding will not support the longer-term crime prevention through social development goal of the National Strategy. For these communities in particular, grants and contributions in their present form do not seem to be as appropriate and there is need to consider ways of developing more long term, sustainable funding in these communities.

- The evaluation highlighted the need to improve communications and coordination within the NCPC and between NCPC headquarters and the regions. Another key area where enhanced coordination and communication is desirable is between the NCPC and related Department of Justice initiatives. There is a need not only to prevent potential overlaps in project funding but more importantly to capitalize on opportunities for collaborative policy work between initiatives. The lines separating Crime Prevention projects/issues from those of Family Violence, Victims, Aboriginal Justice and Youth Justice Renewal are not always crystal clear and for this reason, it is essential to foster effective ongoing communication. The same observation can also be made in reference to federal interdepartmental initiatives.
- To date, there has been limited concerted investment in the area of communications, promotion and public education. As the National Strategy matures, there is a growing need to focus on the successes and lessons learned stemming from the funded projects. More resources will be required in order to ensure that the information gathered for dissemination is accurate and is provided in a variety of effective formats targeting a number of key groups, particularly the media and Canadian communities.

4. Recommendations and Management Response

The National Strategy has accomplished a great deal to date. The focus of its efforts during the remainder of its five-year agenda will be to improve on its current operations, to enhance the supports necessary to ensure the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of its work, to tailor its activities to targeted groups and communities, and to capitalize better on what it has learned to ensure its ongoing development.

4.1 Organizational Review

The evaluation highlighted a lack of coordination and communication within headquarters, among the four funding programs and between NCPC headquarters and the regions. There is a need to ensure the consistent transfer of knowledge, information and experiences between programs in a timely manner. One factor possibly contributing to the lack of coordination and integration of the four funding programs is the organizational bifurcation of the funding program management and delivery structures. Another possible complicating factor is that the largest funding program, the CMP, is managed regionally whereas the remaining programs are managed nationally. And finally, there are differences in the individual mandates of the funding programs and the client groups served by them. Beyond the programs, there is also the need to ensure that NCPC staff and key stakeholders are aware and can contribute to the ongoing policy, research

and evaluation work of PICRE and to integrate this information into their own work as it becomes available.

It is recommended that:

The NCPC immediately undertake an internal organizational review with priority placed on improving the coordination and communication within headquarters, among the four funding programs and between NCPC headquarters and regions.

Management Response:

The NCPC is currently undergoing an independent organizational review and analysis to provide options for the organization. The issues raised in the Mid-term Evaluation regarding this matter are a key component of the overall process. It is anticipated that implementation activities related to the recommended option will commence in June 2001.

4.2 Performance Measurement

According to the Treasury Board Secretariat, “the foundation of results-based management is accurate and timely performance information.”² Being able to speak conclusively about the relative success of the National Strategy depends, to a large extent, on the effectiveness of the measures and systems in place to capture and report on progress. The results of the midterm show that the National Strategy and the NCPC are progressing well to date. Unfortunately the capacity to demonstrate the progress is diminished by the lack of a formal and strategic performance measurement system. While the NCPC has made considerable strides in this area this year (development of the common project evaluation tool for CMP, improvements to the PCS, involvement of the CPIF in comprehensive planning projects), more work needs to be done.

It is recommended that:

The NCPC place high priority on fully implementing a performance measurement system that will provide the comprehensive information needed to manage the National Strategy effectively and to report on results achieved.

² Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Results for Canadians: A Management Framework for the Government of Canada, Ottawa: 2000, p. 11

Management Response:

The NCPC is committed to demonstrate the progress and success to date of the National Strategy. Therefore, it will fully develop its performance measurement system and strengthen its capacity to communicate and share the successes and challenges associated with the development of safer communities.

4.3 Information Management

In order to implement a comprehensive performance measurement system, there is a need to improve the information management system. Data captured on the PCS provides basic descriptive data about: the applicants, their partners and the projects for which funding is being requested; the priority group(s) and the crime and victimization risk factors that are being targeted by the proposed intervention. This data system was adapted from one developed earlier for the Department of Justice Programs Branch. It allows the NCPC to keep track of all projects submitted and to develop quarterly trends analysis reports based largely on program demand. It requires special training to understand the software and data retrieval and manipulation have proven challenging to all but highly trained staff. This software has limited capacity to monitor program performance. There is a heightened need, as the Department of Justice assumes the role of a programming department, to have information management software capable of making the linkages and sharing information among the various Department of Justice funding programs.

It is recommended that:

The NCPC continue to work with representatives from the other Department of Justice funding initiatives to develop information management systems that will improve access to data and that will support the performance measurement system.

Management Response:

The NCPC is prepared to continue working closely with the Department of Justice's funding initiatives to implement an effective and efficient Departmental Transfer Payment (Grants and Contributions) Project Control System. The new system, which will be implemented during 2001-02, will offer an improved automated tracking system for projects and funding recipients as well as improved and integrated reporting on results.

4.4 Organizational Partnerships

Another of the key areas for improved communication and coordination is the clarification of the respective roles and responsibilities of the range of individuals and groups involved in the National Strategy and more strategic use of existing and developing organizational partnerships. Recent improvements made to both the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group and the Sub-Group of the Interdepartmental Working Group are examples of the kind of improved strategic integration of federal and provincial government partners that may help the Strategy attain its goals. An example where enhanced coordination and communication is still needed, however, is in the area of intradepartmental efforts. More formal and strategic mechanisms are needed to ensure the two-way sharing of information between NCPC and related Department of Justice initiatives in order to avoid duplication and capitalize on opportunities for collaborative policy work. The same observation may be made in reference to federal interdepartmental initiatives.

It is recommended that:

The NCPC continue to strengthen working relationships between the Centre and related Department of Justice initiatives and other federal departments.

Management Response:

The NCPC is committed to strengthening its capacity for linkages and partnerships within Justice and with other federal departments. Through a series of measures, including the organizational review and the development of a regional policy presence, the NCPC will consider and adopt improvements that favor coherence with regards to policy, research and programs.

4.5 Promotion and Public Education

The Promotion and Public Education Program of the National Strategy also plays an integral role in ensuring the progress and overall success of the Strategy's goal and objectives. Its primary role is to provide Canadians with the knowledge, skills and resources they need to promote and implement effective crime prevention in their communities. The results of the midterm evaluation indicate that the Program relies extensively on the information, resources and lessons learned provided by other components within the National Crime Prevention Centre in order to disseminate useful information and to educate the Canadian public. To date, limited financial and human resources have been available to this area. As more and more information becomes available from the other programs within the Strategy, greater investment is going to be needed to ensure that the appropriate support systems are in place to access, assess and disseminate the information needed to create and sustain increased public awareness of the Strategy and the nature and impact of its various activities. Where possible, the NCPC should also take the opportunity to learn from crime prevention work that is being supported outside of the National Strategy.

It is recommended that:

The NCPC place increased emphasis over the balance of this initiative, on sharing knowledge and information with Canadians about crime prevention, effective interventions and the lessons learned.

Management Response:

The NCPC recognizes the importance of communicating the experiences and knowledge gained to date to better equip communities in addressing their crime prevention needs. The NCPC has taken steps towards these goals; most recently, for example, by initiating a process to integrate information officers in its regional offices. More broadly, the NCPC will maximize existing resources to enhance its current communications and public education activities, and will seek additional resources to fully and effectively develop its capacity to produce, package and disseminate information on crime prevention, intervention and lessons learned.

4.6 Project Sustainability

Grants and contributions represent a significant component of the Safer Communities Initiative. The evaluation concluded that grants and contributions are appropriate for generating interest and investment in crime prevention through social development activities. However, they were not seen to be as appropriate in their present form for generating a longer-term impact on the

nature of crime in Canadian communities. The need to explore further and address issues pertaining to project sustainability was constantly raised during the course of the evaluation. As a first step, the NCPC plans to undertake a project sustainability literature review and discussion paper this year.

It is recommended that:

The NCPC research and develop strategies to foster sustainable approaches to crime prevention through social development.

Management Response:

From the outset of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, the issue of sustainable approaches to crime prevention has been identified as a key challenge by the NCPC and its partners. NCPC is committed to work towards addressing the long-term and ongoing success of crime prevention through social development (CPSD). Various initiatives, like a sustainability study, will help NCPC to more appropriately assist communities and to go beyond in its development of future actions.

4.7 Community Outreach

Many communities are in need of significant investments of time and resources (both financial and human) as they begin the long process towards addressing the root causes of crime and victimization. Such communities typically do not have the basic infrastructure in place that is required to develop, implement and manage crime prevention projects effectively. The evaluation identified the challenges associated with strengthening local capacity and developing and disseminating information and crime prevention tools in high need communities³, where the first language is neither English nor French using formats that do not rely heavily on the written word. Strengthening of community capacity and the development of tools represent early, critical steps to begin the community mobilization process and ideally, would be complemented by training.

³ For the purposes of this evaluation, the term ‘high needs communities’ is used to refer to communities at risk that possess limited resources and capacity for change and that are isolated or marginalized from the mainstream society due to geography (rural/remote locations) and/or due to a combination of socio-economic and cultural factors.

It is recommended that:

The NCPC place priority on providing developmental support, information and tools to assist high needs communities to plan and implement effective responses to crime and victimization.

Management Response:

Delivering the Strategy's programs in a way that ensures equity of access and outcome to high needs communities, has been a key concern and challenge of NCPC. Initially NCPC responded by building a capacity in each province and territory to assist in project development work with communities.

NCPC has recently taken steps to strengthen this capacity and improve its program information (for example, CMP Access Guide) and developmental support for these communities. Various activities are also under way to assess a variety of community development and mobilization tools/models and practices in high-needs, remote and hard to reach communities.