



**JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION PROGRAM
FORMATIVE EVALUATION
Summary, Recommendations and Management Response**

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**Evaluation Division
Policy Integration and Coordination Section**



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SUMMARY REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In 1995, the Department of Justice (DOJ) consolidated 25 discretionary grants and contributions funds into the Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Program in an effort to streamline the management and administration of the discretionary funds and to establish a standardized process for ongoing monitoring, planning and review. In 2002, a summative evaluation of the Grants and Contributions Program identified the need to:

- identify measurable, results-based objectives for a renewed Program;
- implement a practical performance measurement strategy;
- consider the level of resources available when developing new objectives and the performance measurement strategy for the renewed Program;
- clarify the role and objectives of the Program;
- continue promoting partnership under the renewed Program; and
- promote the objectives of the renewed Program both within and outside the Department in order to increase awareness about the Program and its objectives and to optimize its use and effectiveness.

In response to the issues and recommendations raised in the evaluation, the DOJ Programs Branch developed a new vision for the Grants and Contributions Program. The new vision sought to first and foremost, clarify the role of the Program. Along with a communications

strategy, renaming the Program the “Justice Partnership and Innovation Program” was an integral component.

1.2. Program Description

The overall goal of the JPIP is to contribute to an increasingly relevant, accessible and responsive Canadian Justice System by:

- increasing the capacity of Departmental partners to develop innovative solutions to emerging justice related issues;
- developing a more informed and engaged public and legal community with regard to the law and legal system; and,
- contributing to policy development in the Department as it serves a changing society.

The JPIP is a grants and contributions fund that makes transfer payments to third parties for which no goods or direct services are received. The JPIP plays a unique role within the Department, in that it is the only general purpose fund that has the ability to respond to emerging justice-related issues in a timely manner.

The JPIP budget for 2004-2005 is approximately \$2.4 million (excluding the Family Violence Initiative). The Program utilizes four funding types or categories, as follows:

- 1) *Named grants*, which represent 21% of JPIP funding in 2004-05, are used to establish and facilitate partnerships with nine select organizations such as the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police;
- 2) *Core funding*, which represents 46% of JPIP funding in 2004-05, is provided annually to Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) organizations to support justice related programming;
- 3) *Class grants*, which represent 5% of JPIP funding in 2004-05, are provided for time-limited projects (no longer than three consecutive years) such as short-term pilot projects, consultations, conferences, research, and the development and dissemination of public legal information; and,

- 4) *Contributions*, which represent 28% of JPIP funding in 2004-05, are provided in cases where greater accountability and control is deemed necessary.

1.3. Statistical Overview

- During the first two fiscal years (2002-03 and 2003-04) of its implementation, there were 73 JPIP recipients and 113 rejected applications (often because proposals were not consistent with Departmental or Program priorities).
- The primary priorities addressed by recipients were justice system design (39%) and equality, diversity and access to justice (34%). About a quarter of recipients addressed more than one priority area.
- Conferences (27%) and PLEI (25%) accounted for the majority of activities funded under JPIP during 2002-03 and 2003-04.
- Over the life of their projects, JPIP recipients have received or will receive almost \$10 million in financial contributions, and \$1.25 million in in-kind benefits from other government departments, NGOs, the private sector, fundraising, fees etc. Provincial governments and law societies were the greatest contributors.
- Some 36% of all JPIP recipients (funded before the 2004-05 fiscal year) were funded solely by DOJ. On average, JPIP funding accounted for 59% of the funding received from all sources.
- Common outputs reported by JPIP recipients include: summary reports, annual reports, conference summaries and evaluation reports. The most common anticipated outcome reported by recipients was increased awareness and knowledge of legal issues.

1.4. Evaluation Context

Consistent with Treasury Board requirements, DOJ conducted a mid-term evaluation of the JPIP in 2004. The main objective of the evaluation was to examine issues related to the design and delivery of the JPIP in order to make improvements to the Program midway through its mandate. The scope of the evaluation was limited to the first two years of the Program's implementation, that is, fiscal years 2002-03 and 2003-04.

1.5. Methodology

Multiple lines of evidence were used to address evaluation issues, as follows:

- a review of program documentation, including administrative data;
- key informant interviews with 18 DOJ officials;
- a focus group session with Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) representatives;
- two case studies involving an in-depth interview with the project manager, interviews with other managers or advisory group members, and observations where applicable; and,
- a survey of recipients (n=44) and applicants (n=30).

2. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. Issue: Program Administration

2.1.1. Advisory Committees

At the outset of the Program's renewal, the DOJ Programs Branch had intended to create an advisory group and review committees. The advisory group was to meet at least twice a year, once to establish priorities for the upcoming fiscal year, and once to review the year's results and to consider the dissemination of those results. Review committees were to review proposals, determine their merits and recommend those proposals most relevant to the policy development process.

The first year (2002-03) was used to establish the new Program. As such, the advisory group had only met once, that is, to establish priorities for the Program's second fiscal year (2003-04). Most advisory group members held that clear priorities were identified for the 2003-04 fiscal year, although some added that they were never really implemented due to uncertainties related to the government-wide reallocation exercise.

Due to logistical difficulties in bringing people together for meetings to discuss proposals that the Program receives continuously throughout the year, review committees were never established with the exception of a review/selection committee that meets once a year to select students for the Legal Studies for Aboriginal Peoples Program (LSAP). One of the main ideas behind review committees was to help ensure that JPIP projects remained relevant to the policy

needs of the Department. Interviewees from the program commented that even without formal review committees in place, the relevance of JPIP projects is ensured through an informal process whereby each proposal is sent to the applicable policy area for review.

Recommendation

In order to ensure that linkages are made within the Department, the Program should reconsider reviewing proposals in the context of a review committee.

Management Response

In addition to the Selection Committee for LSAP, the Innovations, Analysis and Integration Directorate lead and chair two working groups, one dedicated to Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) and the other to Northern programs. These committees, with membership from various areas within the Department sharing an interest in each of the substantive areas also serve to make linkages within the Department, as well as outside the Department, for the Northern programs. Unfortunately, formal review committees are not the most effective or efficient mechanism for reviewing and selecting proposals under JPIP. As is stated in the Evaluation Report, "...even without formal review committees in place, the relevance of JPIP projects is ensured through the informal process whereby each proposal is sent to the applicable policy area for review". Further, this process ensures a written response from each policy area that is then placed on file. Final project reports are also shared with the applicable policy area to ensure that the results of the project contribute to policy and program development.

2.2. Issue: Communications

The summative evaluation of the Grants and Contributions Program clearly identified the need to inform stakeholders about the Program and disseminate information acquired from projects and other activities supported by the Program.

2.2.1. Informing Internal and External Stakeholders

Given that there are limited funds available to support communications activities, the promotion of JPIP is limited primarily to existing communications mediums (i.e., the Programs Branch website, DOJ publications, presentations, participation and presentations made at meetings with community groups and various conferences etc.) targeted to the Department and accessible to external stakeholders and the general public.

Communication activities targeted to external stakeholders (eg. NGOs, academic institutions, professional organizations, associations, regional/municipal governments, provinces/territories and the public), have centred on simplifying the application process (eg. by redesigning the application form) and posting the application kit on the Internet. Further efforts in terms of external outreach have been limited due to the already high demand for JPIP funding.

Communication activities targeted to internal audiences (ie., employees of DOJ) have included presentations, brown bag lunch sessions, articles in various internal newsletters such as InfoSector, Profile, and Justinfo, as well as communication through the Excellence in Programs Committee, a Departmental body that promotes consistency between programs.

2.2.2. Dissemination of project results

At the time of this evaluation, very little dissemination of project results had occurred within DOJ. A document summarizing each project's results had been drafted, but it had yet to be released. While project reports were circulated to those who commented on the proposal, this did not occur in every instance.

Recommendation

Implement a mechanism by which project results and reports are systematically shared within the Department.

Management Response

We agree with this recommendation. While project results are shared with the applicable policy area, we will explore additional mechanisms, perhaps within the context of the Program's RMAF, in order to ensure that project results and reports are more broadly shared within the Department.

2.3. Issue: Preliminary Program Impacts

While a future summative evaluation will determine more definitively the extent to which the JPIP has met its objectives, DOJ interviewees and survey respondents felt that the JPIP is progressing well towards its objectives midway through its mandate.

In relation to progress towards the Program's outcomes, areas in which PLEI is active (ie. increasing access to information; increasing public awareness, and contributing to an increasingly relevant, accessible and responsive justice system) received the highest ratings. Although still generally rated above average, progress towards the outcomes related to innovation in the delivery of justice services; leveraging investments by partners; and contributing to policy development, received lower ratings. The lack of discretionary funds available was cited as a primary hindrance to achieving the innovation and leveraging outcomes. The case studies demonstrated the JPIP's great potential to influence policy development, but project reports and their dissemination need to be a priority. As mentioned previously, very little dissemination of project results had occurred within DOJ, and in some cases, results reporting by recipients was inadequate.

Recommendation: Same as previous

Management Response

We will explore possible mechanisms, perhaps within the context of the Program's RMAF, in order to ensure that project results and reports are shared within the Department. In addition, we will endeavour to continue to work collaboratively with our partners to improve their capacity to adequately report on results of their projects.

Recommendation

Ensure that recipients are made aware of the performance information they need to collect and that there is a mechanism in place for systematic reporting on results.

Management Response

We will endeavour to continue to work collaboratively with our partners to improve their knowledge of performance measurement and their capacity to adequately report on results of their projects. Future project funding agreements will detail the performance information to be provided in the final project report. While project results are shared with the applicable policy area, we will explore additional mechanisms, perhaps within the context of the Program's RMAF, in order to ensure that project results and reports are shared more broadly within the Department.

2.4. Issue: Satisfaction with Program

The efforts taken by management to simplify and clarify the application, funding and reporting processes is one of the key differences between JPIP and the previous Grants and Contributions Program. With an average rating of 5.4 out of 7 (1 = poor and 7 = excellent), most recipients were satisfied with the overall administration of the Program. The Program received a lower average rating of 3.8 from applicants (who were only asked to rate the application process), although they remained positive overall, with 71% of applicants providing an average or high rating.

Overall, the various elements of the Program's administrative processes received high ratings from recipients. For instance, the comprehensiveness of the funding guide, the amount of work required to complete the application, the clarity of application requirements for funding, the clarity of requirements once funding has been awarded, the monitoring and follow-up on projects once implemented, and the feedback provided on project reports/products, all received scores of at least 5 out of 7 (1 = poor and 7 = excellent). The timeliness of the response to the recipient's application received the lowest average rating of 4.64 out of 7 (1 = poor and 7 = excellent).

During the PLEI focus group session, the majority of PLEI representatives indicated that the JPIP application form is difficult to complete in the case of core funding. For instance, the form assumes that the organization is applying for funding for a project with a definite start and end date. Many focus group participants expressed great frustration over being forced to craft "artificial responses" to inapplicable questions. However, when asked to compare the JPIP application process to that of the previous Grants and Contributions Program, the majority of PLEI organization managers surveyed indicated that they considered the overall application process for JPIP an improvement over the previous regime.

Recommendation

Consider revising the JPIP application form so that PLEI organizations are only required to complete sections that are relevant to them.

Management Response

We agree with this recommendation. We have already revised the JPIP application form in order to tailor it to the specific requirements of the PLEI organizations applying to JPIP for on-going funding. The revised form is currently being piloted in the 2005-06 application process and we have received a positive response from the organizations.

2.5. Issue: Performance Measurement

2.5.1. Suitability of Performance Indicators

JPIP was one of the first programs in DOJ to be designed in the context of an RMAF. Inexperience with such a tool caused some missteps such as identifying far more performance indicators than any program, particularly a small one like the JPIP, could manage. As such, the original RMAF for the JPIP was revised.

The suitability of performance indicators in the revised RMAF was addressed via interviews with DOJ personnel (either working with or knowledgeable about the JPIP) and an assessment by the evaluators. DOJ personnel generally felt that the performance indicators were appropriate and indicated that the revised indicators were an improvement over those in the original RMAF (eg. less duplication and fewer indicators).

While DOJ personnel interviewed had a favourable impression of the current set of performance indicators, a less positive impression emerged from the assessment undertaken by the evaluators. This assessment concluded that: there continues to be too many indicators; some are too difficult to collect; many lack clarity; and some do not reflect the results that JPIP is trying to achieve.

2.5.2. Collection and Reporting of Performance Information

While management was found to be results oriented, it had some difficulty in pulling together information across sources to report on its performance measures. This is in large part due to a new electronic performance monitoring system (GCIMS) that lacked reporting capability at the time of the evaluation (although the reporting function is in development); and a vacancy in a position responsible for performance measurement which is currently being staffed. The number of performance measures is also too onerous for a program of this size. Although JPIP managers and analysts indicated that a project summary report had been devised to assist recipient organizations with reporting, little in the way of performance information was being collected from grant and contribution recipients. Consequently, decisions are not being influenced by performance information, at least in terms of a formal set of performance measures.

Recommendation

Revisit the RMAF and consider reducing the number of performance measures. Ensure that recipients are made aware of the performance information they need to collect and that there is a mechanism in place for systematic reporting on results, both internally and externally.

Management Response

We agree with this recommendation. In fact, prior to the mid-term evaluation, we had already reviewed the RMAF and had made minor changes to the Logic Model and had greatly reduced the number of indicators associated with the Performance Measurement Strategy. In preparation for the renewal of the terms and conditions of the JPIP due prior to the 2007-08 fiscal year, we will be undertaking a fulsome review of the program's RMAF. We will endeavour to continue to work collaboratively with our partners to improve their knowledge of performance measurement and their capacity to adequately report on results of their projects. While project results are shared with the applicable policy area, we will explore additional mechanisms, perhaps within the context of the Program's RMAF, in order to ensure that project results and reports are shared more broadly within the Department.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The main question in a process evaluation is, "Does the program as it operates faithfully, reflect its design?" In the case of JPIP, the answer is yes in most respects. Administrative processes and communication activities seem to be working as planned: both key informants and survey respondents felt the Program was doing well in these regards. The main departures from the Program's design concern the absence of formal review committees and the manner in which the advisory group has been implemented.

The limited amount of financial resources allocated to the Program affects the magnitude of the projects that can be funded. This is likely to have an impact on the time it will take for the Program to reach its long-term objectives. It also affects results reporting and the Program's performance measurement strategy since such a small proportion of funds are contributions, which have mandatory reporting requirements.

The case studies demonstrated that JPIP has great potential to contribute to innovative solutions and policy development related to emerging justice issues. JPIP is the Department's only multi-purpose fund, created to respond to new issues and engage in partnerships. It should be funding

cutting edge projects to maximize its utility, but the amount of discretionary funding that is allocated to the Program limits the impact it can have on policy and innovation.