



GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FUND
Summative Evaluation
Technical Report

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Evaluation Division
Policy Integration and Coordination Section



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1995, the Department of Justice restructured its program of discretionary grants and contributions in response to growing fiscal pressures and calls for improved linkages between the funded projects and departmental priorities. The following changes were made: 25 different funds were consolidated into the single Grants and Contributions Fund; one set of terms and conditions was developed and operationalized for all transfer payments issued under the Fund; six broad objectives were developed to guide the allocation of funds; four funding categories were created; and a framework for identifying priorities and designating resources within the Fund was implemented.

In order to fulfill a central agency requirement to report on the results of these changes, a summative evaluation of the Grants and Contributions Fund was conducted. The purpose of this evaluation was also to provide feedback and analysis on the continued relevance, success and cost-effectiveness of the Grants and Contributions Fund in the Department of Justice. This evaluation covers the period from 1996 to 2001. The key findings are summarized below.

Relevance

- In general, there continued to be widespread support for the role of grants and contributions in support of the development and implementation of Department of Justice policy and programs. In particular, the respondents viewed discretionary funding to be an economical and powerful alternative to more traditional policy tools. Identified strengths of grants and contributions were that they provided: a testing ground for government policies; an alternative to changes in legislation; a means to facilitate citizen engagement; more flexibility, speed and relative ease of use; an economical way of developing partnerships; and a broader approach to policy thereby allowing for a broader range of responses.

Program Design

- The consolidation of the 25 funds into the Grants and Contributions Fund and the subsequent creation of the four funding types contributed to the flexibility of the Fund and its overall efficiency of administration. This same process also created a number of challenges for the Fund. Most notable among these was the very broad set of funding objectives that lacked clarity both in terms of establishing future priorities and in terms of explaining the results being sought through the Fund.
- Shortly after the Fund was created, the context within which it was operating changed significantly. Starting with the Child Support Initiative in 1996, the Department launched a number of special initiatives that involved grants and contributions funding. As these initiatives assumed responsibility for issues that had previously been funded through the Grants and Contributions Fund, Programs Branch was able to reduce the scope of the Fund. However, these larger initiatives were more targeted than the Fund and were broadly promoted both inside and outside the Department. An unintended impact of the creation of these new initiatives was that the visibility and role of the more modest Grants and Contributions Fund (both within the Department and beyond) diminished. The evaluation concluded that beyond Programs Branch, few respondents knew very much about the Fund, its objectives, or the types of projects it had funded.
- The level of funding available for the Fund remained relatively stable over the five-year study period until the 2000-01 fiscal year when it dropped by 12 percent. In contrast, the number of applications to the Fund dropped by 45 percent over the five years. Across the four funding types, the proportion of funding allocated to each remained relatively constant with the highest proportion (approximately 55 percent) dedicated to project contributions. The project-funding rate¹ remained steady at between 50 to 56 percent over the study period.
- The Fund has supported certain organizations and groups of organizations that might not otherwise have received funding due to their lack of specialization. The Fund provided these organizations with the opportunity to develop and test some innovative ideas and programs.
- Among some of the overall strengths of the application and review process were: the speed and punctuality of the funding; the accessibility, cooperative nature and professionalism of

¹ Number of projects funded divided by the total number of applications for funding.

Fund staff; and the overall simplicity of the application itself. The respondents also cited the Fund's unique focus, openness to innovation and its capacity to support smaller projects as strengths.

- Applicants to the Fund reported that one of the barriers to accessing funds was the lack of clarity in the application materials regarding the funding requirements. Another barrier was the broad nature of the Fund's objectives and funding priorities, which made it challenging for them to assess the extent to which the objectives of their projects "fit" with those of the Fund.
- Another weakness of the application and review process was that it was conducted on a project-by-project basis as the projects were submitted. This process favoured the timeliest rather than necessarily the best proposal. When project funding is limited to the extent evidenced in this Fund, it is incumbent upon the Department to ensure that the projects that will provide the most value and that will further the overall objectives of the Fund, receive first consideration for funding.
- To ascertain the extent to which the projects relied on the Fund, applicants were asked the degree to which their failing to receive funding had negatively affected their project. 90 percent responded that not being able to secure support from the Fund had affected their projects to a "moderate" or "large extent" and in turn, had either ceased or delayed their projects. Receiving an endorsement for their project from the Department of Justice was also deemed to be very important.
- The Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework was not believed to be flexible enough to respond to emerging issues in the Department of Justice. Developed primarily for the purposes of guiding the proposal review and selection process, Fund management and staff used this framework to ensure that the projects selected for funding fit with and contributed to departmental policies and priorities. The Framework identified the funding priorities and strategic plans for funding operations for three years (1998-2001)² and allowed for these priorities to be reviewed annually.

Objectives Achievement

- Partners reported that their involvement with the Grants and Contributions Fund had strengthened existing partnerships/networks, increased the visibility of their organization and

² Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework, Grants and Contributions Fund, Programs Branch, Policy Sector, Department of Justice Canada, 1998.

their work, and assisted them in establishing new partnerships/networks. These positive findings suggest that partners would be likely to maintain or further enhance their relationship with the Fund and/or the project sponsor. In addition to the benefits cited above, partners also reported playing a significant role in the projects in which they were involved.

- The case studies highlighted some significant positive findings with respect to the policy implications of the projects reviewed. The first case study was an annual grant project that resulted in a recommendation to amend the Criminal Code. The second case study was an annual contribution project that improved access to information regarding justice-related policies. The third project was a project contribution whose performance to date had been promising but it was still too early to measure results. The fourth case study, a project contribution, tested the viability of developing and perhaps instituting, an alternative to the criminal justice system responses to cases involving serious crimes. Initial evaluation results provided by the project partner noted that the pilot project demonstrated some encouraging results and offered some support for the project's potential to contribute to further justice-related programming in the area of sentencing reforms.
- The capacity of the Fund to achieve its overall objectives was constrained by: the overly broad objectives that were unlikely to have an impact in policy development or making the justice system more efficient; the lack of concise and measurable indicators of success; the lack of clear direction from departmental policy areas to ensure that funded projects were directly relevant to existing and emerging policy needs; and the limited awareness of the Fund within the Department which impeded its being used to best strategic advantage.

Cost-effectiveness

- In terms of leveraging funds, the Grants and Contributions Fund may be considered to be cost-effective. For projects involving partners, the partners have contributed a significant proportion of the total project value (ranging from 49 to 96 percent) over the study period. Even though the number of partnerships dropped significantly over the same time, most notably for annual grants and annual contributions, partners continued³ to provide significant levels of support. The reasons behind the drop in partnerships warrant further study. While a broader discussion of cost-effectiveness of the Fund is premature given the lack of information regarding the extent to which its objectives have been achieved, the Fund has encouraged substantial investment into justice-related issues.

³ These data were provided at the time of application and do not necessarily represent an accurate account of the actual support provided by partners at the end of the project. These data are not collected in the PCS.

- Overall, the evaluation concluded that the level of financial resources currently allocated to the Grants and Contributions Fund was insufficient to meet all of the funding priorities identified, support the ongoing collection, analysis and reporting of results-based information and to provide for projects for which funds have not yet been committed. This evaluation has confirmed the findings of a number of previous studies that have consistently identified many of these issues.

Performance Measurement

- Although performance measures had been developed by Programs Branch, the information was not collected in a consistent, systematic manner and consequently, there was extremely limited information available on the results of the projects funded. Typical of older programs such as this one, the final project reports tended to focus on the activities that were undertaken over the course of the project rather than on the results achieved. In a review of a sample of 47 randomly selected project files, the evaluation concluded that the project files did not contain the information necessary for tracking and evaluation purposes. Consequently, it was not possible to assess the extent to which the Fund as a whole, had contributed to the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs. In contrast, the case studies that were conducted as part of this evaluation did demonstrate that with a concerted investment in measuring performance, results attributable to the Fund could be measured and reported.
- Consistent with the findings in other recent evaluations conducted by the Department, the existing file tracking system or Project Control System (PCS), currently functions as a project management, rather than as an evaluation or performance measurement tool.⁴ The data available through the PCS provided limited, if any, information on project results or lessons learned. The system also did not allow for integration and sharing of funding information across funding programs within the Department.

Perceived Duplication between the Fund and other Department of Justice Initiatives

- While a number of respondents perceived that there was duplication and overlap between the projects funded under the Grants and Contributions Fund and other Department of Justice special initiatives, this evaluation did not find any evidence of this. Similarly, the recent audit of grants and contributions programs within the Department also did not find

⁴ Evaluation Division, Mid-term Evaluation of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Department of Justice, January 2001.

any evidence to support this perception.⁵ Funding applicants⁶ and funding recipients were asked whether or not they had requested funding from sources other than the Fund. Fifty seven percent of the funding applicants and 65 percent of the funding recipients reported that they had asked and received funding from at least one other source. When asked to identify the other sources of funding, none of the funding applicants and only seven percent of the funding recipients identified other Department of Justice initiatives. Both groups reported that they were most likely to have received additional funds from provincial/territorial governments and other federal departments. This finding does not support the notion that there is duplication between the Fund and the special initiatives in the Department of Justice.

⁵ Internal Audit Division (2001) *Grant and Contribution Programs*, Department of Justice.

⁶ Funding applicants are defined as those who have applied but who have never received funding from the Grants and Contributions Fund. Funding recipients have received funding on at least one occasion over the study period.

1. INTRODUCTION

Discretionary grants and contributions operate within the federal government as transfer payments to third parties for which no goods or services are received. Within the Department of Justice, these funds are used for the express purpose of assisting in the development and implementation of policy and program initiatives. In 1995, the Department of Justice altered its program of discretionary grants and contributions in response to ongoing and growing pressures related to fiscal restraint and calls for enhanced linkages between grants and contributions and departmental priorities and emerging issues. Among the changes witnessed during this critical period were: the consolidation of 25 different funds into the Grants and Contributions Fund; the development and operational implementation of one set of terms and conditions for all transfer payments issued under the Fund; the creation of six broad objectives to guide the allocation of grants and contributions; the creation of four funding categories; and the implementation of a framework for identifying priorities and designating resources.

In order to fulfill a central agency requirement to report on the results of these changes, a summative evaluation of the Grants and Contributions Fund was conducted. The evaluation covers the period from 1996 to 2001.

1.1 Evaluation Objectives and Issues

The purpose of this evaluation was to provide feedback and analysis on these changes and on the continued relevance, success and cost-effectiveness of the Grants and Contributions Fund. A total of 23 issues were addressed in this evaluation. Four of the issues addressed the Fund's continued *relevance*. Here, the evaluation focused on determining whether or not there continued to be a need for the Fund, particularly in terms of the contribution that the Fund was designed to have in relation to supporting departmental program and policy development. Other relevance issues included whether or not there were alternatives and gaps in programming within the Fund and whether or not there were overlaps between the Fund and other grants and contributions programs.

In determining the Fund's overall *success*, the evaluation focused on the extent to which the Fund was able to meet its objectives. In particular, whether the Fund, with all its changes, was able to:

- support policy development and implementation;
- support the development of justice programs;
- serve as a lever for change in the justice system;
- promote access to justice, equality and human rights;
- stimulate innovation in the justice system;
- stimulate investment in the justice system;
- enhance partnerships with individuals and organizations; and
- promote consultation and information exchange amongst various justice stakeholders.

The evaluation also assessed the effectiveness of the Project Control System (PCS) and other information systems used in support of the measurement of project performance and success. In addition, the evaluation examined the existence and use of performance targets, the extent to which project results were analyzed, and the degree to which changes to the Fund were implemented as a result of the monitoring information gathered.

Under the assessment of the Fund's success, the impact of the 1995 changes to the Fund was of particular interest. For example, to what extent has the ability to shift monies between funds, now permitted by the consolidation, enhanced the Department's capacity to meet its policy and program goals? Another issue focused on the emergence of the special initiatives in the Department and their impact on the Fund.

The final evaluation issue was *cost-effectiveness*. Here the concern was to determine whether or not the Grants and Contributions Fund was the most cost-effective means of attaining its objective and whether there were other less costly alternatives. Within this group of issues, there were six evaluation questions. Specifically, the evaluation set out to determine whether or not there were less costly ways of supporting policy and program development and implementation and of stimulating investment in the justice system to make it more cost-efficient. Issues pertaining to the relative cost-effectiveness of the different types of transfer payments (annual and project contributions; annual and class grants) and the relative cost-effectiveness of different approaches to delivering grants and contributions were also addressed. Finally, the evaluation sought to determine whether the level of funding was sufficient to enable the Fund to attain its objectives.

1.2 Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation of the Grants and Contributions Fund consisted of a review of documentation and performance measurement data, a review of 47 funded project files/reports, 75 key informant interviews, 166 telephone surveys, and four case studies. Each methodological component is described briefly below.

1.2.1 Documentation and Performance Measurement Review

The purpose of this component of the evaluation was to review existing sources of evidence to provide a context within which to assess the various aspects of the Fund, to provide insights into its operational and strategic management, and to supply information concerning the nature and results, where possible, of funded projects.

Documentation reviewed as part of this component of the evaluation included: Grants and Contributions Fund files, interim and special study and working group reports, applications materials for funding proposals, project files and reports/products, minutes of planning and decision-making meetings such as that of Policy Committee, strategic plans, and the Terms and Conditions of the Fund. Key sources of information reviewed are identified in Appendix B. Performance measurement data collection and data management systems, such as the PCS, were also reviewed.

1.2.2 Funded Project File/Report Review

An additional and unique component of the documentation review process involved an exploration of the content of a representative sample of 47 randomly selected project files and reports. A breakdown of the project files reviewed is as follows: 4 (9 per cent) Annual Grant project files; 17 (36 per cent) Class Grant project files; 8 (17 per cent) Annual Contribution project files; and 17 (36 per cent) Project Contribution files. The purpose of this review was primarily to address issues pertaining to performance measures and tracking of results. However, additional and comparative information was also gathered on the extent to which funded projects reflect the policy and program priorities of the Department.

1.2.3 Key Informant Interviews

A total of 80 individuals, representing key stakeholder groups within and associated with the Grants and Contributions Fund, were identified by members of the Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG)⁷ as possible key informants for the evaluation. Each of these individuals was sent a cover letter and a copy of the interview guide by fax or email. The cover letter identified the overall purpose of the evaluation, the reason why the informant was being approached for their participation, and the specific nature of their participation required. The key informants were asked to participate in a telephone interview regarding their experiences to date with the Grants and Contributions Fund.

A total of 73 key informants agreed to participate in the interview process. The breakdown of the number of participating informants per stakeholder group are as follows:

- Programs Branch staff and management (20);
- Policy and Program Officials (14);
- Senior Policy Sector Managers (3);
- Representatives of Intergovernmental and External Relations Division (2);
- Representatives of Communications and Executive Services, Judicial Affairs Unit, the Human Rights Law Section, the Diversity and Gender Equality Office, Access to Justice Section, the Strategic Planning Division, and the Priorities and Planning Division (6);
- Department of Justice staff involved in complementary special initiatives (8);
- Representatives of non-governmental organizations (10); and
- Representatives from other federal government departments; (10);

The length of time required to conduct the interviews varied extensively from 15 minutes to two hours depending upon the respondent's familiarity with the Fund and its overall goals and objectives. The information gathered through the interviews was noted, transcribed, analysed, and integrated into the findings of this report.

⁷ The EAG is comprised of members from Programs Branch and the Evaluation Division who are responsible for advising the Project Manager on all aspects of this evaluation.

1.2.4 Telephone Surveys

A total of 166 telephone interviews were conducted with funding recipients (111), funding applicants who had never received funding (33), and funded project partners (22). The purpose of conducting the telephone survey was to gather information pertaining to issues of relevance, program design, success, cost-effectiveness and alternatives from a larger number of stakeholders, who have had some connection with the Fund. Each of the individual surveys was designed to capture tailored information from each of the respective respondent groups to be used in the final integration and analysis of all the information stemming from individual lines of evidence. The overall number of funding recipients and funding applicants who participated in the survey was fairly high; 89 per cent and 132 per cent⁸ of the targeted number of respondents respectively. The response rates for project partners was lower than anticipated (29 per cent of targeted number) largely because a pre-existing database of project partners did not exist and had to be created along the way. There was a much lower response rate found among Annual Grant recipients (40 per cent) than among the recipients of the other three funding categories. Response rates for these groups ranged from 90 per cent to 100 per cent of the targeted response rates.

1.2.5 Case Studies

The final component of the methodological approach was the conduct of four case studies. The purpose of these case studies was to gather more detailed information pertaining to a number of key evaluation issues including: the relationship between focus/priorities of the Fund and identified site-specific needs and priorities; identification of the unique nature and contribution made by the Fund to funded projects; the perceived potential to implement projects without the Fund; project satisfaction with delivery and implementation of the Fund; identification and assessment of project impact and contribution of project to departmental priorities; and opportunity to offer recommendations pertaining to enhanced implementation and effectiveness of the Fund. The selection of the case studies was done in concert with the EAG. The following criteria were used in the selection process: three of the four funding types (exception of Class Grants which were given greater emphasis in the project file review process) were represented in the selected cases; priority areas addressed by the project; and status of project (at the developmental stage *versus* fully operational for a number of years). While a number of initial challenges were encountered in setting up appropriate dates for site visits, all four of the case studies conducted consisted of at least two key informant interviews (senior level and staff) and a documentation review process.

⁸ The reason that this group was over sampled (surveyed a higher number of respondents than initially proposed) was to enhance the stratification of the respondents.

1.3 Organization of the Report

The remainder of this report presents findings from multiple lines of evidence. In an effort to present a succinct document, only the key findings highlighted by all lines of evidence are discussed. Chapter Two describes the Grants and Contributions Fund. Chapter Three analyzes findings related to program design and delivery. Chapter Four examines program relevance. Program success is examined in Chapter Five and cost-effectiveness and alternatives are discussed in Chapter Six. Conclusions are presented in Chapter Seven.

2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

2.1 Overview of the Grants and Contributions Fund

Within the federal Department of Justice, discretionary grants and contributions are only one of a number of policy tools used to facilitate the Department's efforts to meet its mandate. Among the variety of tools utilized by the Department are legislation, programming, research and cost-sharing agreements. The specific role played by the Department's discretionary grants and contributions is to serve, in a number of ways, as a lever to enhance or contribute to policy development, policy implementation, and program development and implementation.

Traditionally, *grants* have been used to support smaller, more short-term activities that are designed, for the most part, to strengthen or contribute to an organization's or community's capacity to better understand and participate in the process of policy development and implementation. This form of funding arrangement has seldom been used for the purposes of program development and implementation and has had limited, if any, use in directly assisting in the development and implementation of justice-related policies. *Contributions*, however, have not only been used to assist more directly in the development and implementation of policies, but also have provided the Department with the means to test and more fully explore innovative ideas and programs that may, ultimately, influence policy direction. From consultations and conferences to support for the development and implementation of service delivery models, the Department has used contribution funding to facilitate policy development (i.e., law reform), policy implementation (i.e., training for representatives of the legal system about changes to the law), and program development and implementation (i.e., support for implementation of legislative changes within the provinces and territories).

In 1995, the Department of Justice altered its program of discretionary grants and contributions in response to ongoing and growing fiscal pressures and calls for enhanced linkages between grants and contributions and departmental priorities and emerging issues. Among the changes witnessed during this critical period were: the consolidation of 25 different funds into one funding pool; the development and operational implementation of one set of terms and

conditions for all transfer payments issued under the Grants and Contributions Fund; the creation of four funding categories; the creation of six broad objectives to guide the allocation of grants and contributions; and the implementation of a framework for identifying priorities and designating resources. The specific nature and anticipated impact of each of these significant changes is discussed in turn below.

2.1.1 Consolidation of 25 Separate Funds into One Funding Pool

The creation of the Fund reflected the consolidation of 25 previously existing distinct discretionary grants and contributions funds. To a large extent, this consolidation represented the Department's efforts to streamline the management and administration of the discretionary funds and to establish a standardized process for ongoing monitoring, planning and review. While the consolidation reflected a significant reduction in the number of distinct funds available within the Department of Justice, it in no way includes all of the Department's funding efforts. A number of larger, special initiatives were created principally within the Policy Sector (the exception is Aboriginal Justice) and currently operate as independent endeavours. They include: Aboriginal Justice, Victims of Crime, Child Support, Firearms, Family Violence, Nunavut, and the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention.

2.1.2 Establishment of a Single Set of Terms and Conditions

The consolidation of the 25 separate funds into the Fund allowed the Programs Branch to develop a single set of Terms and Conditions.⁹ These Terms and Conditions clearly laid out the overall purpose and objectives of the new Fund, the nature and range of funding types available and for whom, and the requisites for funding proposals and for those applying and receiving funds.

2.1.3 Creation of Four Funding Categories

To assist in guiding the implementation of the new Fund, four funding types or categories were established to further identify the nature and range of the funding support available through the

⁹ Terms and Conditions for the Department of Justice Canada, Grants and Contributions Fund, Programs Branch, Policy Sector, Department of Justice Canada.

Grants and Contributions Fund. Provided below is a brief description of the four funding types, namely class grants, annual grants, annual contributions, and contributions.

2.1.3.1 Class Grants

A total of up to \$300,000 per year is made available within the Fund for the purposes of supporting smaller, time-limited projects. These monies are designed to provide up to a maximum of \$10,000 to support individual endeavours that are relatively small in nature and are shorter (usually one-year) in duration. Class grants are typically provided to organizations and individuals who have a proven track record and where concern for accountability and control can be readily addressed prior to allocation of the funds. Class grants most often account for the smallest amount of expenditures within the Fund each year.

2.1.3.2 Annual Grants

Annual Grants function, in part, as core funding for organizations whose goals and objectives are closely linked to the mandate and priorities of the Department. A limited number of organizations are given annual grants in an effort to establish and facilitate a working rapport or partnership between the Department and the organizations around issues of mutual interest. Not unlike Class Grants, Annual Grants reflect a smaller proportion of the funds distributed each year by the Grants and Contributions Fund.

2.1.3.3 Annual Contributions

Annual Contributions are also intended to support and facilitate partnerships between the Department and organizations that have a significant interest and stake in the justice system. Like Annual Grants, Annual Contributions function in many ways as core funding or sustaining monies. Unlike Annual Grants, however, Annual Contributions are restricted to public legal education and information organizations (PLEI) that support justice-related programming in the provinces and territories. The administration of Annual Contributions requires more accountability than grants. While the number of Annual Contributions each year has been limited to one designated organization per province/territory, the total amount allocated is approximately triple that allocated to Annual Grants and Class Grants.

2.1.3.4 Contributions

To date, most of the funds distributed under the Grants and Contributions Fund have been used to support individual projects. Contributions, rather than Class Grants, are utilized where more accountability and control is deemed necessary. The nature of the accountability and control sought under Contributions may include an evaluation component, particularly where the funds are being used to test or pilot an innovative project. The specific number and value of Contributions awarded varies by year and are based, in part, upon the amount of funding available.

2.1.4 Fund Objectives

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges experienced as a result of the transition from a host of discretionary grants and contributions funds to the development of one Fund was the integration of approximately 130 fund objectives to a more manageable set of six. The focus of the integration process was to ensure that the stated objectives were an adequate reflection of the Department's mandate and range of priorities. The objectives were broadly defined so as to allow for sufficient flexibility to address departmental priorities and are as follows:

- To enhance knowledge of and promote development, and inform Canadians and the legal community about public law areas within the federal jurisdiction such as constitutional law, private and public international law, administrative and Crown law, Native law and human rights law.
- To promote access to justice, equality and human rights in Canada by supporting consultations, research, partnerships and the development and dissemination of information as well as the development, testing and implementation of new cost-effective, multi-disciplinary approaches, models and pilot projects regarding the delivery and administration of legal aid services.
- To promote the development and implementation of legislative and socio-legal reforms, and to support the development, testing and implementation of innovative program options, new and multi-disciplinary approaches and models in regard to and initiatives relating to criminal law and the youth justice system, crime prevention through social development and community involvement, and protection of society from violence encompassing such aspects as violence against women and family violence.
- To support judicial education efforts, to promote experimental, innovative and research work in the Canadian justice system, the development, testing and implementation of

innovative ideas, approaches and models in providing services, in order to achieve greater efficiencies, effectiveness and cost reductions in the delivery of services and programs related to the justice system such as court reform and family support enforcement, etc.

- To foster the improved responsiveness, fairness, inclusiveness and effectiveness of the justice system with respect to justice and its administration to meet the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people in the areas of appropriate models for policing, diversion, development of pre-sentencing options, sentencing alternatives (circles), alternatives to incarceration, etc.

Operational Objective

- Funding priorities and activities will support the development and implementation of innovative approaches to governmental/Departmental legal and socio-legal priority substantive areas, considered an investment on the part of the Department, and will support innovation and partnerships. Funding priorities and activities will be identified through the development of a three-year priority and strategic planning framework that will be approved by the Departmental executive committee. The priority and strategic planning framework will be revised on an annual basis and will become an integral part of the terms and conditions of the Departmental Grants and Contributions Fund. The framework will be provided to Treasury Board at the beginning of each fiscal year.

The evaluation framework noted that these objectives were not very clear. Therefore, for the purpose of evaluation, the six objectives have been condensed into three broadly defined objectives:

- To serve as a strategic lever for achieving departmental objectives by: 1) enhancing partnerships with professional organizations and individuals whose support is important to the attainment of departmental objectives; and 2) funding projects which support the implementation of departmental policies;
- To stimulate innovation, investment and improvement in the justice system; and
- To support policy and program development by providing new information in accordance with departmental needs.

2.1.5 Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework

With the creation of the Grants and Contributions Fund, the Department established a “Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework”¹⁰ to help guide the ongoing administration and monitoring of the new Fund. The Framework was designed to facilitate effective implementation and management of the Fund by setting out a standardized review process to ensure that funding activities are targeted and strategic in nature. The Framework also facilitated administration of the Fund by further highlighting the types of activities that could be supported under each of the four newly created funding categories. The individual funding categories were further categorized under a total of 16 priority areas. As stipulated above, the Framework was established as a three-year plan that was to be reviewed annually.

2.2 Application Process

Programs Branch manages the Grants and Contributions Fund, which has an annual allocation of 3.5 million dollars.¹¹ The Terms and Conditions of the Grants and Contributions Fund¹² identify the objectives and funding criteria for each of the four funding types. Included among the stipulated criteria for each of the funding types are: the nature of the funding available (i.e., time-limited *versus* annual or core); the amount of funding available (only Class Grants have a ceiling on the amount available within the Fund and per project); the nature of the activity to be funded; and the range of individuals and organizations eligible for funding.

The application process is similar for each of the four funding types and submissions for funding must include the following:

- contact/mailing information;
- background and mandate of the organization including sources of revenue;
- annual strategic plans, business and proposed activities for current fiscal year;
- identification of the needs or problems to be addressed through the project and anticipated impacts;
- identification of any previous financial support received from the Department;

¹⁰ Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework, Grants and Contributions Fund, Programs Branch, Policy Sector, Department of Justice Canada.

¹¹ Of the 3.5 million dollars, approximately \$600,000 is dedicated to Family Violence and \$113,000 to Nunavut.

¹² Terms and Conditions for the Department of Justice Canada, Grants and Contributions Fund, Programs Branch, Policy Sector, Department of Justice Canada.

- detailed funding proposal including project budget;
- proposed timeframe and work plan;
- indication of the level of support for the project within the community;
- potential for project sustainability after funding period ends;
- project evaluation plan;
- nature of the deliverables and any dissemination plan;
- identification of follow-up activities;
- declaration of any foreseeable conflict of interest; and,
- indication of how the recipient will acknowledge the Department's funding support.

Given the amount and often more long-term nature of the funding provided to applicants selected for Annual Grants, Annual Contributions and Project Contributions, there are a number of additional requirements. In particular, those selected for annual funding, either annual grants or contributions, are asked to provide much more comprehensive information to demonstrate enhanced accountability. For example, applicants selected for *Annual Grants* must also provide audit reports for the organization's previous year of operation, provide sufficient evidence of their capacity to meet the Fund's objectives and financial reporting requirements, and more clearly indicate their capacity and willingness to consult with the Department on "issues of mutual interest." Similarly, PLEI organizations receiving Annual Contributions must also provide evidence of "financial accountability" rather than an audit report. Beyond the basic application requirements, applicants for Project Contributions must also demonstrate their capacity to meet the objectives of their project and the financial requirements of the funding.

Unlike some federal funding programs, the Grants and Contributions Fund does not operate on a call-for-proposals basis. Instead, the review and selection process is guided by the Fund's three-year Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework¹³ and relies, in part, upon the submissions provided by interested individuals and organizations. The Fund's application review and selection process is also guided by consultations held with relevant sectors within the Department and, where necessary, with other federal or provincial/territorial government departments or other public or private organizations to further identify needs and priorities that may be addressed by submitted project proposals. The Department, however, takes a number of issues into consideration when reviewing applications including:

- the extent to which the proposed project is in keeping with and is likely to support and advance current governmental and departmental priorities;

¹³ Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework, Grants and Contributions Fund, Programs Branch, Policy Sector, Department of Justice Canada.

- the level of funding requested;
- the perceived potential of the budget to be in a deficit or surplus position on completion of the project;
- the nature and level of support and involvement of the applicant, local organizations/partners, and provincial/territorial and national governments;
- the innovative nature of the project as well as its perceived cost-effectiveness and applicability to other jurisdictions;
- the ability of the applicant to carry out the activities within the projected time frame and budget;
- nature and extent of previous funding provided by the Department and the extent to which the organization was previously able to successfully deliver on its funding commitments;
- that the Department limits the number of concurrent project that will be funded to two;
- the manner in which the project will be developed, implemented and monitored and the accessibility of the project and organization to be document and/or evaluated;
- nature of public recognition by the recipients of the Department's contribution;
- demonstrated potential to advance the government's and Department's existing knowledge base, legislative and policy and program development agendum;
- are considered within the constitutional framework;
- nature and extent of report on activity;
- perceived project viability and impact on the justice system and Canadians; and,
- the nature of the project's evaluation component.

With the exception of Annual Grants and a maximum of \$10,000 allocated to recipients of Class Grants, no maximum amount is set or applied against a contribution to any applicant. While few restrictions are placed upon the amount of funding provided for under the Department's Grants and Contributions Fund, there are clear guidelines pertaining to the maximum period of funding provided for under the Fund's Terms and Conditions. With the exception of selected Annual Grants and Annual Contributions, applications for funding are restricted to a maximum number of successive years that a grant or contribution can be made to the same organization for a similar project. For example, grants or contributions for provincial/territorial governments can be provided for up to five years. For Class Grants and all other contributions, the maximum period of funding is set at three years.

2.2.1 Number of Fund Applicants and Recipients by Year

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the project applications received and funded by the Grants and Contributions Fund between the fiscal years of 1996/97 and 2000/01. Looking at the data across fiscal years:

- the total number of applications varied from year to year with a high of 285 in 1996/97 to a low of 156 in the most recent fiscal period;
- the total number of approvals for funding similarly ranged from a high of 150 in 1996/97 to a low of 88 in the most recent fiscal period;
- with the exception of fiscal years 1996/97 to 1997/98, both the number of applicants and number of funding recipients declined with each fiscal year; and,
- the percentage of applicants who were actually funded remained relatively stable year to year, hovering between 50 per cent to 56 per cent, with the exception of 1999/00 which resulted in nearly three-quarters of the applicants being funded. This higher level of funding reflects a significant drop in the number of applicants and a less significant reduction in the number of recipients, rather than a significant shift in policy or in levels of resources.

TABLE 2.1
Grants and Contributions Fund Applicants and Recipients by Year^{14 15}
(1996/7 to 2000/01¹⁶)

Year	Total # of Applicants	Total # of Recipients ¹⁷	% Funded
1996/7	285	150	53%
1997/8	287	142	50%
1998/9	231	126	55%
1999/00	160	115	72%
2000/01	156	88	56%

2.2.2 Number of Fund Applicants and Recipients by Funding Type and Year

Table 2.2 provides a further breakdown of the number of applicants and funding recipients by funding type and year. Looking at the data across fiscal years:

¹⁴ Project Control System Data Report – *List of Number of Proposals Received Between April 1, 1996 and January 22, 2001*, Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund, I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch.

¹⁵ Project Control System Data Report – *List of Number of Funded Projects Between 1996-97 and 2000-2001, as of January 22, 2001*, Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund, I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch.

¹⁶ 2000/01 fiscal year data in all tables represents proposals received and funded up until January 22, 2001.

¹⁷ Funded project figures in all tables include proposals received from previous years and funded multi-year projects.

- the majority of applicants and recipients were linked to Project Contributions followed by Class Grants. The number of Class Grants awarded may be related to the maximum amount allowed (\$300,000 total cap) under this funding type;
- while the total number of applicants and funding recipients varied across fiscal years (i.e., Class Grants) or remained relatively consistent (i.e., Annual Grants and Annual Contributions), the number of applicants and funding recipients clearly declined with each year for Project Contributions; and,
- the total number of Annual Grants was consistent across all fiscal years with ten selected applicants receiving ongoing funding.

TABLE 2.2
Grants and Contributions Fund Applicants and Recipients^{18 19}
by Funding Type and Year
(1996/7 to 2000/01)

	Class Grants		Annual Grants		Annual Contributions (PLEI)		Contributions (Project)	
	Applied	Funded	Applied	Funded	Applied	Funded	Applied	Funded
1996/7	33	29	10	10	12	12	230	99
1997/8	44	44	10	10	12	12	223	76
1998/9	65	40	10	10	12	12	114	64
1999/00	33	26	10	10	12	12	104	67
2000/01	43	28	10	10	12	10*	91	40
Total	216	167	10	10	12	12 (10)	762	346

*The reason that there was a reduction in the number of PLEI projects funded in 2000/01 is because PLEI is now being funded as part of the Access to Justice Agreements in the Territories.

The distribution of funded projects across funding types is, in some ways, a reflection of the amount of monies allocated per year per category. Presented below in Table 2.3 is an overview of the designation of funds across the four funding types and each of the five years explored in this evaluation. Looking at the data across fiscal years and funding types:

- overall funding available within the Fund remained relatively constant until the most recent fiscal year (2000/01) where the total funding available declined by approximately \$500,000 or 12 per cent; and
- allocation of funds across the four funding types also remained relatively consistent with the highest percentage (approximately 55 per cent) allocated to Contributions, approximately

¹⁸ Project Control System Data Report – *List of Number of Proposals Received Between April 1, 1996 and January 22, 2001*, Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund, I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch.

¹⁹ Project Control System Data Report – *List of Number of Funded Projects Between 1996-97 and 2000-2001, as of January 22, 2001*, Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund, I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch.

26 per cent to Annual Contributions, 14 per cent to Annual Grants, and the smallest percentage (approximately 5 per cent) to Class Grants.

TABLE 2.3
Allocation of Grants and Contributions Funds ²⁰
by Funding Type and Year
(1996/7 to 2000/01)

Year	Annual Grants (%*)	Class Grants	Annual Contributions	Contributions (Project)	TOTAL
1996/7	\$608,746 (14%)	\$164,435 (4%)	\$1,166,327 (26%)	\$2,571,378 (57%)	\$4,510,886
1997/8	\$648,084 (15%)	\$300,000 (7%)	\$1,157,943 (26%)	\$2,331,258 (53%)	\$4,437,285
1998/9	\$640,371 (14%)	\$300,000 (7%)	\$1,160,884 (26%)	\$2,360,738 (53%)	\$4,461,993
1999/00	\$640,371 (14%)	\$159,942 (4%)	\$1,170,715 (26%)	\$2,479,342 (56%)	\$4,450,370
2000/01	\$640,358 (16%)	\$196,485 (5%)	\$715,000 (18%)	\$2,528,226 (62%)	\$4,080,069

*Percentage of the total available funding in the Fund by year.

2.2.3 Number of Funded Projects By Priority and Year

One of the key reasons for creating the Fund was to establish closer links with the existing and emerging policies and priorities of the Department of Justice. Table 2.4 shows the number of projects funded by priority and year and indicates a number of findings:

- the number and range of priority areas used by the Fund to select and categorize funded projects drastically declined in the 1998/99 fiscal year. Key funding priority areas in the last three years of the Fund included: Equality, Diversity and Access to Justice; Justice System Design; and Sentencing and Correctional Reform;
- priority areas that have consistently (across all five years) been used to guide the funding selection and categorization process included: Family Violence, Victims of Crime and Young Offenders/Youth Justice. The latter two initiatives grew from the Grants and Contributions Fund; and
- regardless of the number and range of priority areas utilized in the funding selection process, the category of “others” was used in each year with the exception of the most recent 2000/01 fiscal year. A higher number of funded projects (15 out of 142) were categorized as “others” during the 1997/98 funding period.

²⁰ Project Control System Data Report – *List of Funded Projects By Fiscal Years – Between 1996-97 and 2000 – 01 as of January 22, 2001*, Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund, I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch.

TABLE 2.4
Number of Projects Funded by Priority and Year²¹
(1996/7 to 2000/01)

Priority	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Aboriginal Justice	3 (2%)	4 (3%)	-	-	-
Access to Justice	13 (9%)	14 (10%)	-	-	1 (1%)
Alternative Dispute Resolution	1 (<1%)	5 (4%)	-	-	-
Child Support Guidelines	17 (11%)	-	-	-	-
Crime Prevention	30 (20%)	26 (18%)	-	-	-
Criminal Law Reform	8 (5%)	8 (6%)	-	-	-
Equality, Diversity & Access to Justice	-	-	30 (24%)	29 (25%)	20 (23%)
Family Law	12 (8%)	-	-	-	-
Family Violence	12 (8%)	12 (8%)	8 (6%)	9 (8%)	6 (7%)
Gender Equality	-	1 (<1%)	-	-	-
Human Rights	3 (2%)	4 (3%)	-	-	-
Impaired Driving	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	-	-	-
Judicial Education	5 (3%)	6 (4%)	-	1 (<1%)	-
Justice System Design	-	-	40 (32%)	38 (33%)	27 (31%)
Legal Aid	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)
Legal Studies for Aboriginal People	1 (<1%)	2 (1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (<1%)	1 (1%)
Native Court Worker Project	6 (4%)	-	-	-	-
Others	3 (2%)	15 (11%)	1 (<1%)	2 (2%)	-
Partnerships	5 (3%)	3 (2%)	-	-	-
Partnerships - International	5 (5%)	5 (4%)	-	-	-
Public Law	8 (5%)	8 (6%)	-	-	-
PLEI	12 (8%)	12 (8%)	13 (10%)	14 (12%)	18 (20%)
PLEI – Family Violence	-	-	6 (5%)	15 (13%)	2 (2%)
Sentencing & Correctional Reform	1 (<1%)	3 (2%)	7 (6%)	4 (4%)	-
Victims	1 (<1%)	2 (1%)	3 (2%)	2 (2%)*	12 (14%)*
Youth Justice/Young Offenders	2 (1%)	9 (6%)	18 (14%)	1 (<1%)	1 (1%)
TOTAL	150 (100%)	142 (100%)	126 (100%)	115 (100%)	88 (100%)

* This includes projects that were carried over from previous years and prior to the launch of the Victims of Crime Initiative.

It is important to note that the reduction in the number of priority areas supported by the Fund does not necessarily imply that projects previously funded under the broader range of priority areas are no longer being funded. Some of these projects may have been collapsed under the remaining funding priority areas. For example, the project previously funded under the priority of “Impaired Driving” continues to be funded, but under the priority of “Justice System Design”.

²¹ Project Control System Data Report – *List of Number of Funded Projects By Fiscal Year and Priorities - Between 1996-97 and 2000-2001, as of January 22, 2001*, Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund, I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch.

2.3 Previous Evaluations, Reviews and Consultations

This evaluation effort represents one of a number of review processes that the Grants and Contributions Fund has undergone both prior to its establishment and following it to ensure its ongoing development and success. Several key reports stemming from these review processes and consultations were analyzed for the purposes of this evaluation.²²

These reports reflected both internal departmental efforts and external assessments provided by third parties regarding the Department's grants and contributions programs in general and the Grants and Contributions Fund more specifically. Those concentrating on the Fund focused on priorities, program improvement, the funding process, and selected annual grants. The remaining reports addressed departmental discretionary funding efforts in general and included internal audit and risk management assessments, an evaluation of selected funds, and a review of the coordination activities. These reports provided important information pertaining to the context in which the Fund was developed and has since been maintained and offered critical insight into the factors that were likely to have contributed to its current relevance and success.

A number of additional and equally important evaluations and reviews were conducted following the creation of the Grants and Contributions Fund. Once again the focus of these assessments (both internal and external) was primarily to highlight areas for ongoing enhancements to the Fund. A number of consistently identified issues of concern emerged from these reviews including: the ineffective communication within and outside of the Department with respect to funding activities and results; the problematic application and review processes which create a number of problems for the Fund managers both with respect to their ability to effectively manage the Fund and to ensure and enhance its impact; and the lack of results-based information available to assist in subsequent funding decisions and priority-setting. Recommendations stemming from these reports often included: the narrowing of Fund priorities and objectives to enhance strategic funding decision-making and to improve project outcomes; the creation of a more proactive and strategic application process linked to a particular set of priorities and emerging policy issues; and the establishment of more formal mechanisms for identifying and communicating funding priorities and results within the Department, particularly between policy and programs.

²² A detailed summary of the findings of these studies is presented in Appendix C.

2.4 Summary

The Fund currently has an annual budget of approximately 3.5 million dollars. Funding support provided by the Fund is distributed across the four funding categories with over one-half of the total amount being allocated to project contributions. A set amount of funding is allocated each year to annualized projects (annual grants and annual contributions) with a much smaller portion being distributed for class grants. This latter funding category is the only funding type that specifies a maximum total level of funding and level of funding per project per year. For the most part, the Fund has provided funding support to just over one-half of those who applied for funding each year and across funding priority areas. While the Fund's budget was widely spread across 25 funding priorities in 1996/97, the same budget was most recently used to support projects in six primary priority areas. It is interesting to note that the initial investment strategy supported by the Fund appears to be integrally linked to priority areas, which subsequently became "special initiatives."

Prior to the formation of the Fund, three key studies were carried out whose purpose was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program and to offer recommendations for improvements where needed. Among the key findings were the need: to identify a Department-wide process for identifying funding priorities that could then be used to reduce the number of funds and fund priorities; to streamline the management and administration of discretionary funds; to further support and enhance internal coordination between Departmental discretionary funding programs; and to establish and maintain tools and processes for the production and effective dissemination of results-based information.

3. PROGRAM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Fully understanding the Fund's "success" requires a more detailed assessment of the context within which the Fund operates, namely: the creation of other departmental funding initiatives; the impact of the separation of the Fund into four funding mechanisms; the Fund's application and review process; and the nature and range of assistance provided by the Fund. Provided below is a summary analysis of each of these respective program design and delivery issues.

3.1 Decentralization of Grants & Contributions Funding within the Department

Prior to 1995, the Programs Branch managed the transfer payment programs for the Department of Justice. About the same time as the consolidation of the Fund, a new pattern started to emerge. Starting with the Child Support Initiative, a number of special initiatives were created largely within the Policy Sector of the Department of Justice. These groups were developed on the "team model" and managed their own transfer payments in support of their respective programs and policies. The extent to which these changes have had a measurable impact on the overall "success" of the Grants and Contributions Fund was assessed in this evaluation. In addition to some of the benefits experienced by the Fund as a result of the creation of the special initiatives, the findings also point to numerous challenges faced by the Fund.

One of the key reasons behind the decision to create the Fund, was to increase flexibility, particularly with respect to what gets funded and when. Another reason was to reduce overhead costs and processes by streamlining the management and administration of Departmental grants and contributions, while also seeking to balance competing funding demands within the Department. A review of documentation and key informant interviews indicated that enhanced flexibility in administrative processes and funding opportunities were, in fact, benefits experienced as a result of the consolidation.

According to departmental respondents, a fundamental challenge was the Fund's very broad set of priorities. The perceived lack of focus or "specialization" of the Fund may have contributed to

a growing perception that the Fund was a place to go to for funding for projects that did not readily fit within the funding parameters of the Department's other special initiatives. In turn, this also may have contributed to the Fund's vulnerability to pressures to support ill-fitting and often high cost projects, which in turn, could undermine the effective management and administration of the Fund.

While the consolidation of the Department's G&C Fund appears to have had both positive and negative implications for the overall success of the Fund, the creation of special initiatives was also identified as a "double-edged" sword. One of the more commonly cited impacts linked to decentralization was the belief that the removal of priority areas covered by the special initiatives, would clarify the focus and priorities of the Fund. Other positive impacts identified and associated with decentralization included the potential of the Fund to capitalize on the built-in requirement to partner and work with special initiatives to coordinate activities and, given the reduced demands on funding, to use the limited resources more effectively.

Unfortunately, the positive impacts of decentralization were outweighed by some of its drawbacks. For example, some of the respondents were concerned that decentralization had resulted in or was likely to result in some confusion among non-governmental organizations and other funding applicants about which funding program to approach to support their projects. Moreover, a number of key informants indicated that the decentralization reduced the visibility of the Fund by drawing greater attention to specific priority areas supported under the special initiatives, thereby contributing to a diminished role for the Fund within the Department of Justice. This finding is further supported by responses provided by surveyed funding recipients who reported that they just "happened" upon the Fund and had been relatively unaware of its existence.

Overall, while creation of the Fund appears to have contributed to a more flexible and streamlined administration of these funds, the same process has created a number of emerging challenges. Most notably, this includes a very broad set of funding priorities and increased vulnerability to funding pressures. Similarly, while decentralization could have contributed to a number of positive impacts on the success of the Fund, the process may have served to bolster the visibility and hence potential success of the special initiatives while reducing the role and overall visibility of the Fund within the Department.

3.2 The Four Funding Mechanisms

When the Fund was established, four unique funding types were identified largely for the purposes of enhancing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the funding process. The overall advantages associated with the four funding types were linked to the administration of resources. For example, with portions of the Fund allocated to annual grants and annual contributions, management and staff would know what would be spent each year. Similarly, the streamlined function allowed management to move resources from one funding type to another and to designate signing authority to individuals within the Department other than the Minister. In addition, the creation of these funding categories broadened the spectrum of what could be funded and how. For example, class grants allowed for the distribution of limited funds with limited accountability, while annual grants and contributions required more stringent administrative and accountability practices from recipients who requested core and/or high amounts of funding.

A number of disadvantages were identified in the evaluation regarding the creation of these categories. Of particular concern was the perception of an “unfair” implementation of the various funding types and the negative impact that one funding type could have on the successful implementation and potential impact of another. Annual grants in particular were viewed as having a more negative impact on the remaining funding types, and class grants in particular. While respondents noted that annual grants and contributions allowed Fund management and staff to better anticipate what funding would be available at the beginning of each fiscal year, these same funding types were believed to restrict the capacity of the Fund to respond to emerging Departmental policies or priorities. Similarly, while there was clearly more administrative flexibility within the Fund since its consolidation, it was equally disconcerting that, over time, standardized Terms and Conditions for varying funding types could result in less flexibility.

The findings reflect the mixed reactions to this issue. Most of those interviewed were able to readily identify both the advantages and disadvantages associated with the creation of four distinct funding types. Each of the funding categories was viewed as having some drawbacks. For example, the \$10,000 cap on class grants was regarded as too low to support projects that could make a difference. Annual contributions were seen as too complicated in terms of accountability and the amount of reporting and paperwork required to fulfill the requirements of the Terms and Conditions for funding. Both of these issues have been identified in previous

reviews and evaluations of the Fund.²³ Finally, although established as a separate funding type with dedicated funding, the perception persists that the annual grants are taking up too much of the funds available within an already limited funding program.

A number of suggestions were offered on how to improve or address some of the disadvantages identified. One of the suggestions was to more clearly identify the kinds of projects that would be most likely to produce the most successful results under each funding type. Unfortunately, this evaluation was not able to identify which funding or activity types were likely to result in the most successful outcomes. Similarly, while the greatest concern was voiced in response to annual grants, some suggestions were made regarding expanding this funding type to include PLEI. Finally, respondents recommended establishing an annual review process for core funded projects (annual grants and contributions). Once again, these issues have been identified in previous reviews and evaluation efforts.^{24 25}

3.3 Assessment of Funding Types

In addition to assessing the perceived impact of having created four distinct funding types, each of the individual funding categories was independently explored to further assess the unique contribution of the funding types to the overall “success” of the Fund. While the surveys of funding recipients were unable to provide much feedback in terms of the variations between funding types due to the small and varying numbers of respondents per funding category, a number of higher level issues were addressed through the key informant interviews with Fund management and staff. Table 3.1 summarizes the evaluation of the four funding categories according to a number of considerations including: contribution to the overall Fund goals and objectives; satisfaction with funding levels; quality of the deliverables; ease of administration; and satisfaction with level of accountability. The respondents were asked to rate the four funding mechanisms on each of the evaluation criteria on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = “Poor”, 4 = “Good”, and 7 = “Excellent.”

²³ Haug & Associates Management Consultants (1998). *Study of the Funding Process: Grants and Contributions Fund*, Department of Justice Canada.

²⁴ The Flett Consulting Group Inc. (2000). Report on a Review of Selected Annual Grants in Justice Canada’s Grants and Contributions Fund. Prepared for I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch, Department of Justice Canada.

²⁵ *Evaluation of Selected Discretionary Grants and Contributions Funds*. Programme Evaluation Division, Department of Justice Canada, 1994.

Table 3.1 indicates that:

- overall, contributions appear to provide the most favourable outcomes for the Fund, rating the highest of four of the five evaluation factors;
- the high ratings provided in response to contributions, and to a certain extent annual contributions, appear to be interrelated. In particular, factors such as level of accountability and quality of deliverables appear to be positively correlated with higher overall ratings on contribution to Fund goals and objectives;
- the level of accountability and quality of deliverables, however, appear to be negatively correlated with “ease of administration”; and,
- while class and annual grants had high reported ratings for ease of administration, the same two funding types ranked much lower on all other evaluation factors.

TABLE 3.1
Assessment of the Four Funding Categories

Evaluation Criteria	Class Grants	Annual Grants	Annual Contributions	Contributions
Contribution to Fund Goals and Objectives	4.5*	4.8	5.9	5.4
Funding Levels	3.3	4.0	3.4	4.5
Quality of Deliverables	4.1	3.1	5.4	5.0
Ease of Administration	6.2	6.6	3.6	3.7
Level of Accountability	3.7	3.4	4.8	5.9

*Average reported rating across all respondent groups

3.4 The Application and Funding Process

Another segment of the evaluation of the design and delivery component of the Fund focused on the extent to which those associated with the Fund (including funding applicants, recipients, funding partners, and Fund management and staff) were satisfied with the application and funding process. Presented below in Table 3.2 is the average rating provided by the various respondent groups in their assessment of both the overall and individual components of the application and funding process for the Grants and Contributions Fund. The respondents were asked to provide a rating on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = “Poor”, 4 = “Average”, and 7 = “Excellent.”

The results presented in Table 3.2 indicate that funding applicants were most likely to provide the lowest rating on each of the evaluation components and funding recipients the highest rating. Other additional observations include:

- markedly lower ratings, provided by management and staff in particular but corroborated by at least one other respondent group, on the nature and level of monitoring and follow-up on projects once implemented and the feedback on projects reports and/or products; and
- with the exception of the higher rating provided by the funding applicants, consistently lower ratings were found in response to an assessment of “the amount of work required to complete the application” across the three remaining respondent groups.

TABLE 3.2
Assessment of the Application and Funding Process

Evaluation Criteria	Funding Applicants	Funding Recipients	Funding Partners	Management & Staff
Overall Assessment	3.8	5.1	5.5	4.4
Comprehensiveness of the Application Guide	4.5	5.5	4.7	4.6
Amount of Work Required to Complete the Application	4.5	4.8	4.2	4.0
Clarity of Requirements for Application for Funding	4.0	5.2	5.2	4.7
Clarity of Requirements Once Funding Has Been Awarded	-	5.5	5.4	4.8
Timeliness of the Response to the Application	4.0	5.4	4.5	4.7
Monitoring and Follow-Up on Project Once Implemented	-	5.2	4.7	3.9
Feedback on Project Reports/Products Provided	-	4.7	5.6	2.3

In addition to providing assessments of the overall application and review process, funding applicants were also asked to offer some feedback on the extent to which these processes were *clear*. The purpose of engaging the applicants in this assessment was to further determine whether any aspect of these processes may have contributed to their inability to secure funding and/or could be enhanced to increase the applicant’s success in getting funding in future applications for support. It is important to note here that only applicants for non-annualized funds (i.e., class grants and project contributions) were represented in this sample. The funding applicants were asked to rate the extent to which they believed aspects of the funding application, review and approval processes were clear on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = “Not At All”, 4 = “Somewhat”, and 7 = To a Great Extent.” The overall average response and average response by respondent group are provided in Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.3
Clarity of Funding Application, Review and Approval Processes

Application, Review and Approval Processes	Overall	Applicants for Class Grants	Applicants for Project Contributions
Nature of the Projects Eligible for Funding	4.2	5.3	4.0
Amount of Funding That Can Be Requested	4.0	3.0	4.1
Nature of Funding (i.e., not core) that can be Requested	4.0	5.3	3.8
Range of Funding Types Available	3.8	3.8	3.8
Requirement for Partners	3.5	3.0	3.5
Decisions Regarding Application for Funding	3.5	5.8	3.2

The results indicate that there was some discrepancy in the clarity of the Fund’s application, review and approval process based upon the nature of the application for funding. It appears, for example, that applicants for class grants were clearer about the nature of the projects eligible for funding, the nature of the funding (type, not amount) that can be requested, and decisions regarding their application for funding. While these findings are not altogether surprising, it is interesting to note that the class grant applicants were less clear about the amount of funding that could be requested even though class grants are the only funding type with a ceiling on the amount of funding that can be allocated per project. Not surprisingly, applicants for project contributions were more aware of the requirement for partners than class grant applicants (contribution projects are more likely to require partners in terms of the activities to be undertaken).

The respondents were asked to provide suggestions on ways in which the application and approval processes could be made clearer. The majority of applicants identified clearer presentation of funding requirements in funding application materials as the issue requiring the most attention: “The terminology needs to be more clear...”, “[It] could be on-line...a lot of details...makes the information available.” The second most common issue applicants identified was the need for clearer or more comprehensive responses to enquiries made to the Fund and its personnel while completing the application: “The consultant did not know the details of how the process was...to be done”, “[there were] differences in ideas about what could be funded...by different people at the Grants and Contributions Fund.” A number of additional comments provided by the applicants reflected a recommendation to enable applicants to be given subsequent opportunity to fine-tune or revamp their application prior to being formally declined for funding. Some respondents also requested the development of a web site with application models. When asked to provide more general comments about the “barriers” they experienced in their efforts to access funding from the Grants and Contributions Fund, the respondents indicated that other than application and approval issues already identified, the only other perceived “barrier” to their ability to access funds was the broad nature or scope of the funding priorities

associated with the Fund that made it difficult to discern the extent to which their project proposals “fit” well with the objectives of the Fund.

The overall strengths and weaknesses of the application and funding process were explored with funding applicants and recipients in an effort to identify some of the key factors that were likely to contribute to a “positive” *versus* “negative” experience as a result of undergoing this process. Among the key strengths of the Fund’s application and review process were: the speed and punctuality of the funding; the accessibility, cooperative nature and professionalism of Fund staff; and the overall simplicity of the application. The respondents also cited the Fund’s unique focus, openness to innovation, and its willingness to give equal benefits (in terms of the nature and amount of funding) to smaller projects as strengths. As one recipient stated, “The timeliness was good. [We] were able to go from concept to project very quickly...allowed us to do something very innovative...couldn’t get the funding...anywhere else...”

In contrast, areas for further improvement identified by the respondents included: the confusion associated with the implementation of the four funding types (particularly as it pertained to uninformed or insufficient staff); the perceived “tedious” application, payment and reporting processes; and, the Fund’s lack of sustainability. In this respect, one recipient argued, “[It’s] hard to predict [the] timelines and delivery dates” and a second recipient stated, “The amount of time, energy and effort demanded in getting the funds do not match the funds received. There should be more long-term support available...” Other areas identified as in need for improvement were: the inability to provide funding from the outset of a project²⁶; the amount of funding received; and timelines in which recipients have to spend the money. One contribution recipient stated, “...you have to spend the money before you get the money...should be able to advance the funds. ...Unify or standardize the grants application and distribution process.” The participants also reported the Fund’s lack of follow-up and lack of promotion as key areas for further investment and development.

²⁶ Contribution payments are made after the project expenditures have been made.

3.5 The Nature and Range of Assistance Provided by the Fund

Beyond the standard application and review process, the Fund often provided additional or alternative forms of assistance to funding recipients. One component of the evaluation process assessed the extent to which additional or alternative assistance was provided. Funding recipients were asked to rate the degree to which they received assistance, other than funding assistance, from personnel of the Grants and Contributions Fund on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = “Not At All”, 4 = “Somewhat”, and 7 = To A Great Extent.” The results are provided below in Table 3.4.

Overall, the funding recipients indicated that they were less than “somewhat” likely to have been provided with additional or alternative assistance from personnel of the Grants and Contributions Fund. While the recipients indicated they were most likely to have received some assistance in the area of proposal and project development, they were less likely to have been assisted by Fund personnel in their efforts to identify and obtain other funding sources at the time of their funding request or upon termination of funding support.

TABLE 3.4
Nature and Range of Assistance Provided to Funding Recipients

Nature of Assistance	Average Response
Proposal Development	4.0
Project Development	3.6
Access to Resource Materials	3.2
Project Evaluation	3.0
Identification Of Other Project Partners/Networks	2.8
Identification of Other Funding Sources at Time of Funding Request	2.5
Help to Secure Other Funding Sources at Time of Funding Request	2.2
Identification of Other Funding Sources upon Termination of Funding Support	1.8
Help to Secure Other Funding Sources upon Termination of Funding Support	1.8

The ability of funding applicants and recipients to identify and obtain funding from other alternative or additional sources is important for a number of reasons. One is that the limited amount of funding available within the Fund dictates that additional sources of financial support are often going to be required to support the full development and implementation of a project. Secondly, a key component of the Fund is to facilitate the establishment of partnerships, some of which are funding partnerships. In this way, the development of partnerships becomes a measure of success for the Fund. Issues pertaining to the sufficiency or adequacy of allocated resources for funded projects and access to other sources of project funding are discussed below.

3.6 Sufficiency of Funding Support

Funding recipients were asked to identify the extent to which the level of funding they received for their project from the Grants and Contributions Fund was sufficient to support their efforts. The respondents were asked to rate the “sufficiency” of funding support received on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = “Not At All”, 4 = “Somewhat”, and 7 = “To A Great Extent.” The average overall response was fairly high at 5.4. Additional analyses were conducted on the perceived adequacy of the funding based upon funding type, organizational type and year of funding. The average responses by organizational type and year of funding were remarkably similar. While there were no significant differences identified by funding type, this is likely the result of the size of the sample in each respondent group for the average responses varied somewhat by funding category. Class grant (5.5) and project contribution (5.6) recipients were more likely to indicate that the funds they received were “sufficient” to support their efforts than were recipients of annual grants (4.3) or annual contribution (4.0).

Subsequent analysis of the responses provided by project case studies in response to this question indicated that while most project sponsors felt that the funding received from the Fund was adequate to support their efforts, they were quick to add that they would have been unlikely to be able continue to operate without it – “we would probably cease to exist without it.” The case studies helped to highlight that one of the reasons why the level of funding received was considered to be adequate by many of the project sponsors, was that the Fund represented only one of a number of funding partners involved in supporting their work. Having multiple funding partners helped to ensure that the project sponsors did not rely exclusively on one organization or government department for support. While this finding may seem to contradict statements made by the case study respondents about the pivotal nature of the support from the Fund, further exploration indicated that they did not necessarily rely exclusively on the financial support provided by the Fund. They also relied on the resources and personnel of the Fund to assist them in leveraging the additional funding required for their project.

The issue of “reliance” of organizations on the funding support available through the Grants and Contributions Fund was further explored with funding applicants. Applicants were asked to indicate the extent to which the fact that they did not receive funds from the Grants and Contributions Fund had negatively affected their project. The majority (90 per cent) of the respondents indicated that their not having received funding had negatively affected their projects from a “moderate” to “large” extent. A significant proportion of applicants identified financial concerns (e.g., deficits, stress) and indicated that a lack of funding from the Department had either ceased or delayed their project. Other applicants reported that additional time was

spent searching for other sources of funding. One applicant also stated that a lack of financial support from the government “sends negative messages.”

The perceived reliance of organizations on the funding support available through the Grants and Contributions Fund was also explored by identifying the extent to which funding applicants and recipients had sought and/or secured funding from other sources for their project. Table 3.5 shows the breakdown of responses by funding applicants and recipients.

TABLE 3.5
Requested and/or Received Funding from Other Source

Requested and/or Received	Funding Applicants	Funding Recipients
Requested and Received	57%	65%
Requested, but Never Received	3%	2%
Never Requested	45%	30%

Table 3.5 indicates that those who pursued additional or alternative funding were very successful in their efforts with only 3 per cent and 2 per cent of the applicants and recipients respectively having requested and failing to secure additional funds. The respondents were subsequently asked to identify their sources of additional or alternative funding. The results to this question are provided in Table 3.6.

It appears that both funding applicants and recipients were most likely to secure funding support from the provincial/territorial government and other federal government departments for their proposed projects. It is also interesting to note, however, that both respondent groups were least likely to report receiving funds from other Department of Justice initiatives. This is a particularly important finding with respect to the “perceived” overlap in funding between the Grants and Contributions Fund and other Department of Justice funding programs. Only 7 per cent of the funding recipients who responded to this question indicated that they had also received funds from another Department of Justice Initiative. These findings support the notion that there is little if any, overlap between funds. The appearance of overlap may in fact reflect partnership.

TABLE 3.6
Requested and/or Received Funding from Other Sources*

Funding Source	Funding Applicants (n=17)	Funding Recipients (n=72)
Provincial/Territorial Government	29%	56%
Other Federal Government Department	29%	39%
Funding Foundation	24%	28%
Private Sector	18%	19%
Non-Profit Partner (i.e., the United Way)	6%	28%
Own Fund Raising Efforts	6%	22%
Municipal Government	6%	13%
Other Department of Justice Funding Initiative	0	7%

*Percentages do not add up to 100% given that many of the respondents were likely to report securing funding support from a number of different sources.

3.7 Summary

This section of the evaluation report focused on the apparent strengths and weaknesses of the Fund’s current program design and delivery. Among some of the key issues were the extent to which the consolidation of the Fund, decentralization of other grants and contributions initiatives within the Department of Justice, and the creation of four funding types contributed to or impeded the Fund’s success. Findings indicated that the Fund has experienced both some advantages and disadvantages as a result of these factors. For example, consolidation contributed to enhanced flexibility in the administration of the Fund, but resulted in creating a whole new challenge related to functioning effectively with a very broad set of objectives and priorities. Similarly, while the creation of the special initiatives helped to further delimit the Fund’s objectives and priorities, it simultaneously reduced the profile and overall role of the Fund within and outside the Department of Justice.

The creation of four distinct funding types also enhanced the flexibility and overall efficiency of the funding process. A more detailed analysis of the various funding types was conducted and the results indicated that project contributions had the highest overall rating on a number of key issues including contribution to Fund goals and objectives, funding levels, quality of deliverables, and level of accountability. Annual contributions were also rated highly on contribution to Fund goals and objectives and quality of deliverables, whereas annual and class grants were most likely to be rated highly for ease of administration. However, a number of the respondents perceived the existence of annualized funds as consistently taking funds away from the other two funding types.

The overall application and funding process was explored in detail for the purposes of this evaluation. The findings indicated that, for the most part, the process was viewed positively. Components of the process that were consistently rated most favourably were the comprehensiveness of the application guide and the clarity of the requirements both for application for funding and once funding has been awarded. Rated least favourably were monitoring and follow-up on projects once implemented and feedback on project reports/products provided. Not surprisingly, funding recipients were likely to provide the highest ratings and funding applicants, the lowest. Given the favourable rating found in relation to the “clarity” of the application and review process, further analysis was conducted to highlight areas where additional clarity may be required. The findings of this component of the evaluation indicated that the elements of the application, review and approval process that were, overall, most clear were the project eligibility criteria and the funding that can be requested. Rated as least clear were the requirements for partners and decisions regarding application for funding.

Among some of the key overall strengths of the application and review process identified were: the speed and punctuality of the funding; the accessibility, cooperative nature and professionalism of Fund staff; and the overall simplicity of the application itself. Areas identified for further improvements included the complexities and confusion associated with the implementation of the new funding system, and the perceived tedious application, payment and reporting processes. A number of suggestions were made on how to improve the application and review process: providing clearer presentation of funding requirements in funding application materials; providing clearer and more comprehensive responses to enquiries made to the Fund and its personnel in completing the application; and providing of the opportunity for applicants to fine tune or revamp their application prior to forming a final funding decision.

Additional analysis was conducted on the extent to which the funding support available through the Fund was perceived to be “sufficient.” Overall, the respondents rated the sufficiency of funding highly. Sufficiency of funding was further explored through an assessment of the extent to which funding recipients and applicants relied exclusively on the Grants and Contributions Fund for financial support. While the majority of the funding applicants indicated that not having received funding had negatively affected their projects resulting in delays or actual cancellation of the project, almost all of the funding applicants and recipients who indicated that they had requested funding from additional or alternative sources had received it. In exploring the funding sources, it was interesting to note that both funding applicants and recipients were most likely to have received funds from the provincial/territorial government, followed closely by other federal government departments. Both respondent groups were least likely to receive funding from other Department of Justice funding initiatives. This latter finding is important in light of earlier

discussions concerning the “perception” of funding overlaps. There appears to have been very little, if any, overlap in respect to the funded projects involved in this evaluation.

4. PROGRAM RELEVANCE

A key component of the overall evaluation of the Grants and Contributions Fund was to assess the relevance of the Fund largely in terms of its ability to support the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs and, in particular, to function as a policy tool for the Department. In addition, the relevance of the Fund was explored in relation to the nature and extent to which it served or could serve a unique function as a funding program both within the Department of Justice and within other federal departments.

4.1 Supporting the Development and Implementation of Departmental Policies and Programs

One of the key objectives behind the restructuring of Department of Justice discretionary grants and contributions was to help the Department to create and sustain closer linkages between the Department's discretionary funding activities and existing and emerging departmental priorities for policy and programming. Prior to the creation of the Fund, an Interim Grants and Contributions Report²⁷ was submitted to the Department's Law and Policy Committee by a Working Group that was established to review and comment on the Department's discretionary grants and contributions. The Working Group's report indicated that, at the time, all grants and contributions appeared to be directly supportive of departmental objectives and priorities. The Working Group, however, was less clear as to whether the nature and level of funding was suitable to fully achieve this objective and whether contributions, in particular, were an effective mechanism to help accomplish this end. It was, in part, for this reason that the Working Group recommended that the purpose and objectives of each of the funding programs be reviewed.

The most recent internal audit also verified that the Fund's objectives matched departmental objectives²⁸. Other reviews, however, identified a number of factors that are believed to have

²⁷ Himelfarb, A. (1994). *Grants and Contributions: Interim Report to the Law and Policy Committee*. Law and Policy Committee, Department of Justice.

²⁸ Internal Audit Division (2001). *Grant and Contribution Programs*. Department of Justice Canada

contributed to an inability to confidently speak to the ongoing relevance of the Fund in terms of its direct support in the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs.^{29 30 31} The range of factors identified were:

- the reactive application and funding process did not directly call for or select projects that were most likely to contribute to or address departmental policies and priorities;
- the lack of effective communication and information-sharing mechanisms to highlight and address emerging departmental policies and priorities both within and outside of the Department; and,
- insufficient information on project results linking their impact to the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs.

In the current evaluation, the nature and extent to which grants and contributions in general, but the Grants and Contributions Fund in particular, supported or could support the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs was explored using a number of lines of evidence including: key informant interviews; surveys of funding applicants and recipients; case studies; and a review of funded project files and reports. At a more general level, much of the evidence gathered during the evaluation process pointed once again, to tremendous support for the belief that grants and contributions could be and, in some circumstances, have been used to support the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs. The following component of the report first explores the potential strengths and weakness of discretionary grants and contributions as a policy tool and then provides more detailed assessment of the role of grants and contributions, and the Fund in particular, in supporting the development and implementation of Department of Justice policies and programs.

²⁹ *Suggestion for Improvements: Grants and Contributions Fund*. Evaluation Division, Department of Justice Canada, October 1997.

³⁰ The Flett Consulting Group Inc. (2000). *Report on a Review of Selected Annual Grants in Justice Canada's Grants & Contributions Fund*. Department of Justice Canada.

³¹ *Discretionary Funding Programs: Coordination within the Department of Justice*. Prepared by the Departmental Working Group on Program Coordination and Information Sharing for the Department of Justice Canada, 2000.

4.1.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Grants and Contributions as a Policy Tool

The overall strengths and weaknesses of grants and contributions as a tool to support policy development and implementation were addressed in the evaluation process through key informant interviews with a range of stakeholder groups. The purpose of exploring this issue was to further define the advantages and the circumstances or conditions under which stakeholders believed that discretionary funds could be effectively used as a policy tool. The respondents were able to readily identify how and under what circumstances discretionary funding was likely to be effectively used as a policy tool and when and under what conditions this is less likely to be the case.

The purported *strengths* or benefits of grants and contributions as a policy tool are that:

- they provide a valid and viable testing ground to ensure that government policies are, in fact, a reflection of the people for whom they are designed;
- they serve as a much needed and powerful alternative policy tool to that more readily utilized by the Department of Justice, namely legislation;
- they facilitate citizen engagement which in turn establishes early buy-in and provides the opportunity to tap into a number of critical perspectives necessary to better anticipate public reaction to proposed policies;
- they are a more attractive policy tool given their flexibility, speed and relative ease of use;
- they are a more economical way of developing partnerships that are often required to enhance and facilitate policy development and implementation; and,
- they provide for a broader approach to policy development and implementation by allowing for exploration of a diverse number of policy issues simultaneously through a variety of approaches.

While many of the respondents recognized the potential value and benefits of grants and contributions as a policy tool, they were also able to identify the conditions under which such mechanisms were less able to effectively contribute to policy development and implementation. Among the conditions or circumstances identified that could hinder or reduce the effectiveness of grants and contributions as policy tools that are of relevance to the ongoing development of the Fund included:

- ***An inability to quickly adjust and respond to emerging policy issues and concerns.*** For example, the Fund established its guiding priorities for a three-year funding period and

during that time, policy issues emerged and changed and the Fund was not always able to respond or adjust to these changes as needed.

- ***Too broad and not sufficiently focused objectives to be used as effective policy tool.*** The still broad nature of the priorities and objectives of the Fund contributed to a lack of concerted effort being directed at a specific policy issue. This was particularly important given the limited nature of the funds available.
- ***A lack of effective coordination between policy and programs.*** The relatively informal or *ad hoc* nature of the coordination activities between policy and programs within the Department of Justice and the sharing of largely front-end, rather than results-based information between the two entities contributed to ineffective coordination.
- ***A number of management and administration factors interfering reducing the effectiveness of the Fund as a policy tool.*** A number of Fund management and administration issues were raised as impediments including: high staff and management turnover; insufficient emphasis on results; drain on fund to support high-cost projects; limited funds that were administered on a “first-come, first-served” basis; insufficient investment in innovative endeavours that could provide the lead in policy development; and lack of internal knowledge around how the Fund could best be used to support policy development and implementation.
- ***A lack of sustainability and follow-up.*** While it was recognized that grants and contributions in general were neither designed nor intended to provide ongoing support for funded projects, the lack of ongoing or follow-up funds proved to be a challenge. There were no resources to ensure that the results of projects that tested innovative approaches or models were shared in an appropriate and timely manner with other program and policy centres in the Department.

It appears that while grants and contributions were seen as valuable mechanisms for policy development and implementation, there are a number of conditions or circumstances that can hinder or interfere with the ability to fully appreciate how discretionary funds can be effectively utilized to enhance departmental policies. The extent to which the Fund was able to capitalize on the strengths of discretionary funds as a policy tool, while addressing or avoiding the circumstances that can hinder their effectiveness is addressed in the next section.

4.1.2 Support for the Development & Implementation of Departmental Policies and Programs

Additional feedback was gathered about the nature and extent to which the Grants and Contributions Fund, in particular, supported the development and implementation of Department of Justice policies and programs. The results indicated that there were a number of key ways in which the Fund supported or could conceivably support the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs including:

- facilitating and enhancing access to justice through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge;
- facilitating policy development through consultations which provide citizens with an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and establishing buy-in early in the process;
- supporting innovative projects that provide the opportunity to test program models and study the impact of new policy and legislation;
- working with NGOs to facilitate departmental efforts to engage citizens in identifying and responding to their individual justice-related policy and program needs;
- providing the opportunity for the Department to partner with other federal departments in areas of shared concerns;
- creating opportunities to gather information on emerging issues and new ways of doing justice-related programming in an effort to contribute, at the front end, towards the thinking around policy and program development in the Department; and,
- testing potential solutions to justice process problems that could lead to improvements to existing policies and programs or result in the creation of new policies, legislation or programs.

There was little question, based upon a range of evidence gathered during the evaluation process, that such relevant activities were being undertaken and supported by the Fund. For example, a review of funded project files and an assessment of data stemming from the PCS indicated that most, if not all, of the funded projects incorporated at least one of the factors identified above. What was less clear from these lines of evidence was the extent to which these funding activities were, in reality, resulting in the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs.

A more detailed review of four funded projects was carried out through case studies, in part, to further assess the overall relevance of the Fund by exploring the extent to which funded projects

actually had or were deemed likely to support the development and implementation of departmental policies. Three of the four case studies highlighted the actual and potential role of annual grants, annual contributions and project contributions in supporting the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs. For example, while a number of previous reviews of departmental discretionary grants and contributions concluded that such mechanisms were unlikely to support the *development of policy*^{32 33}, one of the case studies (an annual grant) clearly has had an impact on policy development. This particular project has resulted in a recommendation to amend a component of the *Criminal Code* and is clearly utilized by the Department of Justice in enhancing existing and emerging justice-related policies.

A second case study (an annual contribution) was similarly clearly linked to the *implementation of departmental policies*. This particular funded project facilitated the implementation of Department of Justice policies by improving access to information pertaining to existing and emerging justice-related policies. The extent to which the project supported the implementation of justice-related policy was based upon a review of the processes used to distribute policy information to the general public, an assessment of the nature of the policy information provided, and an assessment of project “users”. A third case study (a project contribution) had a similar mandate to acquire and distribute justice-related policy information. While the objectives, activities and overall mandate of the project are likely in time, to support the development and implementation of departmental policies, results-based information was unavailable for this report given the relative newness of the project.

Finally, exploration of the objectives, functioning, and interim impacts of a fourth case study (also a project contribution) indicated that it too, was likely to support the *development and implementation of departmental programs* objective following its pilot period. The purpose of the project was to test the viability of developing and perhaps instituting, an alternative to criminal justice system responses to cases involving serious crimes. Initial evaluation results provided by a project funding partner indicated that the pilot was demonstrating some promising results and offered some support for the project’s ability to eventually contribute to further justice-related programming in the area of sentencing reforms.

Detailed reviews of selected funded projects allowed for some assessment of the extent to which the Fund supports departmental policies and programs. However, the ability to speak more

³² Himelfarb, Alex (1994). *Grants and Contributions: Interim Report to the Law and Policy Committee (Draft 4)*. Department of Justice Canada.

³³ *Evaluation of Selected Discretionary Grants and Contributions Funds*. Programme Evaluation Division, Department of Justice Canada, 1994.

formally to the Fund's continued relevance in support of the Department's policies and programs was hindered by a number of factors including:

- ***Lack of comprehensive tracking and evaluation data.*** The evaluation process indicated that there was insufficient tracking and evaluation data available to indicate a causal relationship between funding activities and developing or altering departmental policies and programs. For example, in a review of randomly selected funded projects, a limited number of the files contained interim or final reports and of those available, a much smaller number included references to reported "outcomes." Among the reports that did make reference to outcomes, very little, if any reference, was made to outcomes in relation to departmental or Fund objectives.
- ***Linkages between policy and programs within the Department viewed as too informal.*** A number of the key informants highlighted the somewhat informal nature of the relationship between policy and programs within the Department of Justice. It was suggested that more formal mechanisms were needed to enhance the Department's ability to ensure that there was ongoing sharing of information between policy and programs.
- ***Insufficient feedback loop between funded projects and the Programs Branch.*** Funding recipients perceived the Fund to be relevant. Most, if not all, of those surveyed clearly believed that their project could, and may even already have contributed, to the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs. Their ability to fully comment on the relevance of their work and the work of the Grants and Contributions Fund was hindered by the lack of feedback that had been received to date around how the results of their project had or could be used to enhance policies and programs within the Department of Justice.
- ***Concern that large, multi-year projects not always conducive to ability to contribute to and respond to emerging policy issues.*** For some, the relevance of the Fund was placed into question by their perceptions of how the Fund was being used. For example, funding large-scale, multi-year projects that were believed to comprise a significant proportion of the Fund may have precluded the opportunity to fund smaller projects that could explore and quickly test some of the implications of what was being discussed at the policy level.

Most of these issues have been identified previously in former evaluations and reviews, not only in relation to the Fund, but also with respect to other departmental discretionary funding programs in general. A review of monitoring tools and procedures provided in the next section indicates that a number of these factors are likely to be addressed in the near future with the introduction of new project monitoring tools, the proposed replacement of the PCS, and the establishment of the Excellence in Programs Working Group (EiP).

4.2 “Perceived” Overlaps in Funding and Focus

The final *relevance* issue was the extent to which overlaps existed between the Fund and other grants and contributions programs, either within the Department or within other federal departments. Due to the limited nature of the funding available through the Fund, a number of processes and guidelines have been implemented in order to avoid overlaps or “duplication” with other funding programs both within and outside of the Department. For example, the Fund’s Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework³⁴ was designed for the explicit purpose of promoting and supporting departmental priorities and areas of interest that are not already covered by other funding programs.³⁵ Similarly, the Department’s PCS tracks who is funding what internally. This system is referred to on an ongoing basis by Fund staff when a funding application is reviewed to ensure that the same project is not being funded by elsewhere within the Department. Additional efforts are also made by staff to consult (by telephone or in-person) with other funding programs both within and outside of the Department to identify whether there is a risk of duplication in funding or conversely, whether an opportunity exists to partner together in supporting a project of mutual interest.

The Internal Audit Division conducted a review of the Department’s grants and contributions in the summer and fall of 2000. The results of this review confirmed that there was no real overlap or duplication in funding efforts across the Department’s discretionary funding programs³⁶. The extent to which overlaps existed was also addressed through key informant interviews with a range of stakeholder groups. Despite the processes that have been implemented by Fund staff to avoid duplicate funding and the results of the Internal Audit Division report, there appears to be a *perception* among a number of those interviewed, that overlaps do occur between the Fund and other funding programs both within and outside of the Department of Justice. An exploration of these perceptions is necessary given the potential implications of such perceptions.

Results of the key informant interviews indicated that respondents were most likely to cite overlaps between the Fund and a number of the Department of Justice special initiatives. Noted most often were perceived overlaps with the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, Youth Justice, the Victims of Crime Initiative, the Family Violence Initiative, and

³⁴ *Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework*, Grants and Contributions Fund, Programs Branch, Policy Sector, Department of Justice Canada, 1998.

³⁵ *Minutes of Policy Committee meeting*, June 23, 1999. Department of Justice Canada.

³⁶ Internal Audit Division (2001). *Grant and Contribution Programs*. Department of Justice Canada.

Aboriginal Justice. Perceived overlaps between the Fund and these special initiatives may be the result of the fact that a number of projects that were previously funded by the Fund prior to the creation of the initiatives, such as the Victims of Crime Initiative and the Youth Justice Initiative, are ongoing in nature and have been carried-over by the Fund for a couple of years. Similarly, while the Family Violence Initiative operates as a separate initiative with its own source of funding, funded projects are managed by the Programs Branch staff, which also administers the Grants and Contributions Fund.

Some of the respondents also noted that other, less obvious or frequent overlaps may also exist between the Fund and other federal departments with similar goals and objectives such as the Portfolio of the Solicitor General Canada, Correctional Services Canada, Status of Women, and Canadian Heritage; the latter two primarily around issues of access to justice and equality and diversity.

The discrepancy identified in relation to whether overlaps existed between the Fund and other funding programs may be attributed to a number of issues including: the need for a more effective inter- and intra-departmental project tracking mechanism; improved communication and sharing of information between funding programs on an ongoing basis; further delineation or narrowing of Fund objectives; and the development of a better appreciation for the role of the Grants and Contributions Fund in fostering and supporting funding partnerships. Each of these issues is discussed briefly below.

- ***A more effective inter- and intra-departmental project tracking mechanism.*** The current perception of overlaps between the Fund and other funding programs could, in part, be attributed to the lack of an effective project tracking mechanism. A need was identified by several key informants and through previous reviews of the PCS, to enhance the current project monitoring system to allow for use across funding programs within and outside of the Department. This enhancement would enable, and hopefully encourage, the various funding programs to conduct a search to assess whether or not a project was already being funded by another funding program. This enhanced system could also be used by the various funding programs to better coordinate funding activities and even allow them to search for potential funding partners around issues where a mutual interest exists.
- ***Improved communication and sharing of information between funding programs.*** Clearer and more formal linkages, particularly between funding programs within the Department, are needed to facilitate ongoing sharing of information. The “Excellence in Programs” Working Group was identified as one potential vehicle for more formal and improved coordination activities within the Department. This Working Group could be utilized to ensure that everyone is aware of what is being funded by each respective funding program,

but also to address misperceptions, where they exist, about the extent to which there are overlaps or duplications in funding efforts.

- ***Further delineation or narrowing of Fund objectives.*** The consolidation process resulted in the creation of a Fund with a range of funding objectives or priorities. Early efforts were made to narrow down the number of objectives and subsequent decentralization of a number of key priorities into special initiatives within the Department further delimited the number and range of Fund objectives. Despite the ongoing delineation of a narrower set of priorities, the broader range of objectives that continued to reflect the Fund were believed, by some, to contribute to the ongoing perception of the Fund as overlapping or duplicating the efforts of other funding programs.
- ***Generate improved awareness of and appreciation for the role that the Fund plays in fostering and supporting funding partnerships.*** The perception of overlaps may have stemmed in part, from the lack of recognition that the Fund partners with other departments and other initiatives within the Department to support projects of mutual interest. These partnerships, which may have appeared to some respondents to be a duplication of efforts, were often designed to support combined or complementary action to address complex issues and to leverage additional funds.

The suggestions highlighted above are important to consider given the “potential” implications that actual and perceived overlaps in funding efforts may have for the Grants and Contributions Fund. Key informants and survey respondents were asked to highlight what they considered to be some of the most important implications of funding overlaps, when and if they did exist. It is important to note that the following implications were identified by most respondents as “potential” risks of funding overlaps rather than actual references to real outcomes witnessed or experienced to date with the Fund. Among the possible implications of overlaps identified by the respondents were the ineffective use of already limited funds, risk of developing a poor image outside of the Department about the extent to which the funding programs work together, and the potential for confusion within the community about who to go to for funding support when attempting to address specific project objectives and priority issues.

4.3 Summary

Evaluation of the Fund's continued relevance to the policies and priorities of the Department of Justice was a key component of the overall evaluation process. The relevance of the Fund was specifically assessed in terms of the extent to which it supported the development and implementation of departmental policies and programs. The findings of this study indicated there continues to be widespread support for the role of grants and contributions in support of the development and implementation of Department of Justice policies and programs. In particular, the enhanced utilization of discretionary funding within the Department as an economical and powerful alternative policy tool was noted.

Detailed case studies of selected funded projects clearly identified the contribution that three of the four projects had made to the development and/or implementation of Department of Justice policies and/or programs (the fourth project was relatively new and hence was not in a position to demonstrate, as this stage, such outcomes). Before these very detailed assessments of the funded projects were undertaken, these findings were unknown. Therefore, questions pertaining to the continued relevance of the Fund in terms of its contribution to departmental policies and programs appears to be integrally tied to a number of key factors including: the lack of comprehensive tracking or evaluation data that would enable the Fund to speak more formally on an ongoing basis to its relevance; and the limited or poor coordination between policy and programs within the Department and between the Fund and funded projects that could be used to facilitate and enhance ongoing sharing of information.

The overall relevance of the Fund was also assessed in terms of its unique contribution to the policies and priorities of the Department of Justice. In an effort to assess the Fund's uniqueness, the extent to which the goals, objectives and operations of the Fund overlap with other funding programs, both within and outside of the Department, was explored. While the Fund established a number of operational and planning processes for the explicit purpose of ensuring that there was no overlap in their funding activities, the "perception" of overlaps nonetheless exists. In particular, perceived overlaps between the Fund and the Department's special initiatives were commonly cited. These perceptions were contrary to the results of the most recent internal audit that indicated that there were no real overlaps in funding among the Department's discretionary funding programs.

The perception of overlaps may be the result of a number of structural and operational issues including: the need for a more effective inter- and intra-departmental mechanism(s) that more clearly identifies for all involved who is actually funding what; improved communication and sharing of information between departmental funding programs; further delineation of the Fund's

priorities and objectives to further reduce the risk of duplication, while enhancing the unique nature of the Fund; and improved awareness of and appreciation for the role the Fund plays in fostering and supporting funding partnerships. It is important to note that currently efforts are being made to address the first two issues through the EiP and renewal/replacement of the PCS.

5. PROGRAM SUCCESS

The overall success of the Grants and Contributions Fund was measured using a variety of indicators. Among those addressed in this chapter are the effectiveness of the mechanisms in place to measure success and the extent to which the Fund achieved its objectives. Program Design factors influencing the success of the Fund were discussed earlier in Chapter 3.

5.1 Mechanisms to Monitor Success

The existing monitoring mechanisms were identified and examined as part of the evaluation. These mechanism varied somewhat in terms of purpose and intended audience. Among the tools and resources designed for Fund management and staff were:

- ***Priority Setting and Strategic Management Framework*** – Developed primarily for the purposes of guiding the proposal review and selection process. Fund management and staff used this framework to ensure that the projects selected for funding fit with and contributed to departmental policies and priorities. The framework identified the funding priorities and strategic plans for funding operations for three years (1998-2001)³⁷ and allowed for these priorities to be reviewed annually.
- ***Application Review and Selection Process*** – The Fund’s Terms and Conditions outlined the standard process for reviewing and selecting submitted proposals for funding.³⁸ Applications were initially reviewed to ensure the project met funding criteria and were tied into the three-year funding priorities established in the Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework. Once applications passed this initial review, they were circulated to relevant officials within the Department for review and comments. Comments provided by the reviewers were included in the final review process and if no critical issues emerged

³⁷ *Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework*, Grants and Contributions Fund, Programs Branch, Policy Sector, Department of Justice Canada, 1998.

³⁸ Terms and Conditions for the Department of Justice Canada, Grants and Contributions Fund, Programs Branch, Policy Sector, Department of Justice Canada.

pertaining to the proposal, the Fund budget was verified to ensure that sufficient funds were available.

- ***Project Control System (PCS)*** – The PCS is an Access-based database application that was developed in 1993/94 without the involvement of the Department’s Information Management/Information Technology Branch.³⁹ While quite limited in its capacity to track and report on huge volumes of project information, as of 1997/98, the PCS could produce face sheets that provided the reader with an “at a glance” summary of the funded project. These face sheets proved to be useful in reviewing project files/reports for the purposes of this evaluation, and have been improved over time.
- ***Integrated Financial and Material System (IFMS)*** – This system was designed to facilitate departmental access to financial information.
- ***Performance Indicator Chart*** – The Grants and Contributions Fund developed a “performance indicator chart” which was attached to the back of a submitted proposal to help guide the proposal review process conducted by the Policy Sector.
- ***Information Sharing Working Group/Excellence in Programs Working Group*** – In the 1998/99 fiscal year, the Information Sharing Working Group was created with the intention of promoting greater awareness and enhancing linkages across departmental funding programs. This Working Group has since evolved into the EiP, which was formed in response to the aforementioned internal audit of grants and contributions programs as well as a number of recent program evaluations that highlighted the need to strengthen linkages between departmental programs. The EiP has been in operation since the fall of 2000 and is comprised of representatives from each of the grants and contributions funding initiatives in the Department as well as representatives from the Electronic Communications Division, the Intergovernmental and External Relations Division and the Evaluation Division. Over the next few months, the EiP has placed priority on: replacing the individualized Project Control Systems with an integrated system that has the capacity to monitor performance in grants and contributions department-wide; developing department-wide standards for managing grants and contributions programs; and developing the program community by providing training, opportunities to network and by developing ongoing linkages.
- ***Consultation Process*** – The consultation process that had been established from the outset of the Fund, was designed to assist in the annual review of the three-year Fund priorities.

Among the tools and resources designed specifically for funding applicants and recipients are:

³⁹ The Flett Consulting Group Inc. (2000). Report on a Review of Selected Annual Grants in Justice Canada’s Grants and Contributions Fund. Prepared for I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch, Department of Justice Canada.

- **Funding Application** – A standard funding application with application guidelines (as set out in the Terms and Conditions for the Grants and Contributions Fund) is made available to interested applicants upon request.
- **Project Data Collection Questionnaire** – Recently, Programs Branch introduced a questionnaire that was distributed to funding recipients at the project development stage. This form outlined the information that needs to be collected and reported on at the conclusion of a project. The completed questionnaire will to be returned to Programs Branch at the conclusion of a project.

In the previous reviews of the Fund and departmental discretionary funding programs in general, the limitations of the PCS^{40 41 42 43} were commonly noted. The system functions primarily as a project management, rather than an evaluation or performance measurement tool which means that it provides partial, if any, information on project outcomes or lessons learned. While the PCS has undergone a number of enhancements over the last several years including the development of project face sheets, it does not allow for the ready integration and sharing of funding information across funding programs within the Department (which is thought necessary to reduce the potential for funding duplication and to enhance opportunities to establish funding partnerships). The EiP is currently addressing this issue.

Beyond the improvements being considered for the IFMS and the replacement of the PCS, progress has been made, and continues to be made, in the development of more effective performance measurement and ongoing monitoring mechanisms within the Grants and Contributions Fund. For example, the recent introduction of a Project Data Collection Questionnaire should help to address some of the variation in project reporting practices observed in the project file review. Similarly, the introduction of a PCS project face sheet on the inside cover of project files will greatly enhance the ability of Fund management and staff to monitor and quickly report on individual project progress and success on an ongoing basis. These face sheets have already proved useful for assessing project files during the file review process of this evaluation. Finally, the EiP initiative provides the opportunity to enhance the coordination of policy and programs within the Department to ensure that the priorities of the

⁴⁰ *Evaluation of Selected Discretionary Grants and Contributions Funds*. Programme Evaluation Division, Department of Justice Canada, 1994.

⁴¹ *Suggestion for Improvements: Grants and Contributions Fund*. Evaluation Division, Department of Justice Canada, October 1997.

⁴² *Discretionary Funding Programs: Coordination within the Department of Justice*. Prepared by the Departmental Working Group on Program Coordination and Information Sharing for the Department of Justice Canada, 2000.

⁴³ Internal Audit Division (2001), *Grant and Contribution Programs*. Department of Justice Canada.

Fund continue to reflect and to contribute to policy development and implementation within the Department of Justice.

Areas identified for improvement with respect to current monitoring tools and practices were not directed so much at the tools themselves, but rather at the enhanced *utilization and implementation* of these tools. Issues such as staff turnover and the lack of formal mechanisms to facilitate the sharing of information (such as lessons learned) between policy and programs within the Department, partially explain the ineffective or inconsistent use of these mechanisms. Evidence of such inconsistent and ineffective use of monitoring tools was noted during the review of randomly selected project files. The review revealed that the content and format of the files varied extensively from project to project; a finding that has also been reported in a number of previous reviews, including the most recent internal audit.⁴⁴ For example, approximately 38 per cent of the project files reviewed did not have a PCS face sheet⁴⁵. Among the project files that did have an attached face sheet, much of the standard tombstone data, such as priority and objectives of the project, were missing. In addition, while the PCS does not currently allow for much in the way of gathering and reporting on project results, there is a space provided on the face sheet for the project manager to comment on the “perceived” extent to which the project achieved its objectives. This space was rarely completed and where completed, it was difficult to understand upon what information the project manager’s judgement was based, given the limited nature of the information available in the file. Essentially, there was no way to corroborate the assessment provided. This latter issue was also recently raised in a review of annual grants conducted in 2000.⁴⁶

The extent to which additional or alternative monitoring mechanisms could enhance the success of the Fund, was explored largely through key informant interviews. A number of suggestions were offered in response to this question including:

- ***Formalizing and Streamlining Application, Review and Selection Process*** – Previous program reviews and consultations⁴⁷ concluded that projects may be more effectively and consistently linked to departmental priorities if they are selected through a more formal application process. Among the range of formal measures recommended were: proposal review committees made up of representatives of both the Programs Branch and the Policy

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ The PCS face sheet was introduced in the 1997-98 fiscal year.

⁴⁶ The Flett Consulting Group Inc. (2000). Report on a Review of Selected Annual Grants in Justice Canada’s Grants and Contributions Fund. Prepared for I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch, Department of Justice Canada.

⁴⁷ *Suggestion for Improvements: Grants and Contributions Fund*. Evaluation Division, Department of Justice Canada, October 1997

Sector; expert consultations where committee members lack the substantive subject area expertise; and formal calls-for-proposals with submission deadlines to ensure that projects are funded on the basis of policy relevance rather than on the basis of their timeliness.

- ***Establishing Requirements for More Frequent Reporting*** – Suggestions were provided for establishing a more regular and formalized process for reporting on progress. They included: analyzing monthly statistics on the projects funded and determining areas where greater support is needed; preparing quarterly “roll-up” reports that provide Fund management and staff and the Policy Sector with a more comprehensive review of the funding trends and results; and preparing yearly reports that can be used to facilitate the annual review process of the Fund’s Priority Setting and Strategic Framework.
- ***Establishing More Accountable, Results-Based Measures and Processes for Certain Funded Projects*** – This particular suggestion was directed at projects receiving annual funding (both grants and contributions) and those provided substantial amounts of funding. For annually funded organizations and projects, suggestions focused on regular reviews and evaluations to ensure that the funded organizations continue to meet the needs and priorities of the Fund as well as address departmental policies and priorities. This recommendation was also raised in a recent review of annual grants.⁴⁸ Moreover, field audits were highlighted as a more comprehensive way of monitoring large-scale projects involving large sums of money.
- ***Establishing More Formal Performance Measurement Tools and Resources*** – Built-in tools and resources such as a performance measurement strategy, evaluation framework and employing a full-time performance measurement resource person were offered as feasible ways to ensure that performance monitoring becomes a standard process in the day-to-day management and administration of the Fund. As mentioned earlier, while a number of these performance measurement and monitoring tools already exist, it is the consistent and comprehensive implementation and utilization of these tools that remains the issue.
- ***Building Strong Leadership*** – Among the difficulties experienced to date within the Grants and Contributions Fund has been the lack of consistent leadership to help define and refine the management, administration and monitoring of the Fund’s performance. Frequent turnover in staff and management, particularly in the early years of the study period, contributed to an increased need to ensure consistency in the implementation and ongoing development of the Fund, regardless of staff turnover. Leadership is also needed to address external pressures affecting the Fund and to strongly position the Fund within the larger context of the Department’s overall funding programs.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

5.2 Objectives Achievement

Objectives achievement was assessed in a number of ways. The first involved a question posed to each of the key informants on the nature and extent to which the Fund has been able, to date, to achieve its objectives. Validation of the apparent linkages between funded projects and Fund objectives was sought by posing questions to funding recipients and participants involved in the case studies. They were asked about the extent to which funded projects have contributed or were likely to contribute to the overall Fund objectives. The results from each line of evidence are presented below.

5.2.1. Extent to Which the Fund Achieved its Objectives

In the key informant interviews, each of the respondents was asked to rate the extent to which they believed the Fund had achieved its individual objectives on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = “Not At All”, 4 = “Somewhat”, and 7 = “To A Great Extent.” The averaged responses given by the survey participants are provided in Table 5.1.

The respondents indicated that the Fund was most likely to enhance partnerships and facilitate and promote consultations and information amongst other levels of government and various justice organizations. The key informants reported that the Fund was least likely to contribute to making the justice system more efficient and less costly, support policy development, or to serve as a lever for change in justice policy and programs. The respondents were quick to add that the objectives rated as most likely to have been achieved were those that were among the easiest to readily identify and measure. Conversely, the objectives rated as least likely to have been achieved by the Fund were those that were amongst the most difficult to measure. These comments appear to be supported by the percentage of “don’t know” responses reported in Table 5.1. The highest percentage of “don’t know” responses matched those objectives identified by other respondents as the least likely to have been achieved. Many of the overall “don’t know” responses reflected the respondents’ lack of knowledge about the connection between the Fund and its impacts. Fund management and staff also indicated that it was difficult, even for them, to comment on the extent to which the Fund had achieved its objectives or been “successful” given the lack of synthesis and dissemination of results.

TABLE 5.1
Extent to Which the Fund Achieved its Objectives
(Key Informants)

Objectives	Average Response	% of Don't Know Responses*
Enhanced Partnerships with Individuals and Organizations	5.7	15%
Promoted Consultation and Information Exchange Amongst <i>Various Justice Organizations</i>	5.4	20%
Promoted Consultation and Information Exchange Amongst <i>Other Levels of Government</i>	5.1	30%
Stimulated Innovation	4.7	30%
Promoted Consultation and Information Exchange Amongst <i>the General Public</i>	4.6	30%
Supported the Development of Policy	4.5	25%
Served as a Lever for Change in Justice Policy & Programs	4.5	35%
Stimulated Investment in the Justice System	4.4	35%
Contributed to Making the Justice System and Justice More Efficient and Less Costly	4.1	45%

*The percentage of "don't know" responses may have had an impact on the average response and, therefore, some caution must be exercised in interpreting the results

A similar exercise was carried-out with a representative sample of funding recipients who were also asked to rate the extent to which their project had contributed to the goals and objectives of the Fund. Once again, each of the respondents was asked to rate their responses on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = "Not At All", 4 = "Somewhat", and 7 = "To A Great Extent." The detailed results of this enquiry are provided below in Table 5.2. Overall, the funded recipients reported that a majority of the projects had had at least a moderate impact on furthering the Fund's objectives. They were most likely to identify enhanced partnerships as a key area of achievement, followed closely by stimulating innovation.

TABLE 5.2
Extent to Which Funded Projects Contributed to Achievement of Fund Objectives
(Funding Recipients)

Objectives	Average Response*	% of Don't Know Responses*
Enhanced Partnerships with Individuals and Organizations	6.0	9%
Stimulated Innovation	5.9	5%
Promoted access to justice, equality and human rights	5.6	5%
Promoted Consultation and Information Exchange Amongst <i>Various Justice Organizations</i>	5.5	11%
Supported the Development and Implementation of Justice Programs	5.4	11%
Promoted Consultation and Information Exchange Amongst <i>Other Levels of Government</i>	5.0	12%
Stimulated Investment in the Justice System	4.9	16%
Promoted Consultation and Information Exchange Amongst <i>the General Public</i>	4.8	9%

*It is important to note that there were no significant differences witnessed in the nature of the responses by funding type, organizational type, or year of funding. The lack of significant differences may be attributed to the small number of respondents in each group.

The results presented in tables 5.1 and 5.2 indicate a number of important issues including:

- ***The integral role of the Grants and Contributions Fund in the enhancement of partnerships.*** This finding is key to the success of the Grants and Contributions Fund given its role of fostering partnership in the development and implementation of justice policy and program-related projects. A more detailed review of the role and impact of partnerships as a component of the Fund's success are provided in the following section.
- ***The higher overall rating of objectives achievement provided by project sponsors.*** While these results may, in part, be attributed to some potential biases on the part of the project sponsors, their responses may also be an indication of this group's ability to see the linkages between their projects and the objectives of the Fund. This finding is supported by the lower percentages of "don't know" responses provided by project sponsors in comparison to key informants.

The higher overall ratings provided by project sponsors reflected, their ability to identify, albeit often anecdotally, the impacts and effectiveness of their projects given their familiarity with and understanding of what their projects were intended to accomplish. For example, in terms of more specific impacts or changes that their project brought about in their respective areas, the funding recipients were most likely to cite increases in understanding and cooperation among

decision/policy-makers, the general public and/or other key players at the municipal, federal/provincial/territorial and/or international levels. As one recipient stated, “[It] produced [an] understanding of Aboriginal law issues amongst the three provinces...and two territories. We generated some real connections between federally appointed judges in the jurisdictions...” Recipients were also more apt to cite the implementation/use of their initiative/project, as well as increases in media attention, funding and credibility as specific impacts or changes. In this regard, one recipient recalled that “Two provinces have built similar regional initiatives and two other provinces are about to do the same. Sub-sectors...have implemented far reaching screening policies...”

The case study component of this evaluation process further highlighted the ability of funding recipients to readily identify the extent to which their projects have contributed to the Fund’s objectives. For example, three of the four project sponsors involved in case studies indicated that their projects had served as a “lever for change.” Moreover, each was able to provide specific examples about how their efforts had resulted in changes in justice-related fields and organizations. For instance, one project sponsor indicated that their project’s dissemination of justice-related information had resulted in “other provinces now seeking [our] expertise to adopt a similar approach for dissemination of justice-related information in their own provinces.” Equally, each of the four project sponsors were able to provide examples of the ways in which their endeavours had resulted in: promoting access to justice, equality and human rights; stimulating innovation; enhancing partnerships; and promoting consultations. However, each of these project sponsors was less able to identify readily how their efforts had “stimulated investment in the justice system”.

The key informants, who tended to be more removed from the day-to-day management of the projects than the project sponsors, were unable to ascertain the extent to which the Fund’s objectives had been achieved. In part, this could be attributed to the lack of results-based information available to the Fund management and staff and to the Department as a whole. There were also a number of program design, management and administration issues that the respondents believed influenced the degree to which the Fund was able to achieve its objectives:

- ***Objectives of Fund Too Broad*** – A prominent perception emerged among the respondents pertaining to the belief that the objectives of the Fund remained too broad and “hollow” to have a measurable impact in such substantive areas like “policy development” and “making the justice system and justice more efficient and less costly”. Some of the respondents indicated that for this reason, the more specialized and focused initiatives were more likely to have greater impact in some of these areas.

- ***Lack of Clear Direction From Departmental Policy Areas*** – Some of the feedback received in relation to limited impact of the Fund to date centered around the need for improved guidance from the Department’s Policy Sector to further identify what their policy needs are and how they may be best addressed through the Grants and Contributions Fund. Improving the linkages between the Department’s Programs Branch and Policy Sector was seen as fundamental to facilitating and enhancing impact of the Fund in the support of policy development in particular.
- ***Limited Awareness of the Fund within the Department*** – There is a need to promote the Fund within the Department in order to ensure that it is used appropriately and to enhance its ultimate impact in the area of policy development. Many of the respondents indicated that more effective promotion of the purpose and objectives of the Fund would contribute greatly to its improved reputation and enhanced utilization within the Department.
- ***Establishing More Concise and Measurable Indicators of Success*** – One of the greatest difficulties experienced by the respondents in providing informed feedback on the extent to which the Fund was able to achieve its objectives was their inability to identify broader (beyond individual projects) indicators of the Fund’s impact. Most of the respondents struggled in their attempts to provide clear evidence of how the Fund had resulted in changes to justice policy and programs. Not unlike the need to better promote the Fund within the Department, there was also a reported need to establish and monitor clearer measures or indicators of success so that Fund management and staff could speak formally to project successes when promoting the Fund.

In addition to the desired impacts of the Fund, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the Grants and Contributions Fund may have produced any unintended impacts. One of the most commonly cited unintended impacts, according to a number of key informants, was the potential that organizations receiving core funding could become dependent on the Fund and the federal government in general, for long-term financial support. Another, more positive unintended impact was that the Fund provided the opportunity for certain organizations (such as youth organizations and those who would otherwise not receive funding due to their lack of specialization), to have access to monies to develop and test some innovative ideas and programs and to participate in the policy development and implementation process.

5.3 The “Partnership” Component of the Fund

A survey of project partners was undertaken in an effort to understand their role in the Fund. The findings from this line of evidence provided insight into: how and why partners become involved

with the Grants and Contributions Fund; the nature and extent of their involvement in funded projects; the perceived value or benefits of their involvement; and an exploration of how these partnerships can be further enhanced and utilized.

5.3.1 How and Why Partners Become Involved with the Fund

In an effort to understand the factors influencing the decision to become involved with a Fund project, partners were asked to explain why their organization had chosen to partner with a project funded under the Grants and Contributions Fund. The reasons cited for their decision included: the relevance of the project to the ongoing work of the partner organization (82 per cent); the opportunity to work with the sponsoring organization (59 per cent); and the opportunity to share information and experiences with those interested in similar issues (59 per cent).

When asked to identify how the partner organization had become involved with the project, a number of partners indicated that they already had had a long-standing relationship with the sponsoring organization prior to the project in question and merely took advantage of the opportunity to work together on another endeavour. Just under one-half (45 per cent) of the respondents indicated that they had been approached by the sponsoring organization, in comparison to 13 per cent who had been approached by personnel associated with the Fund and an additional 13 per cent who had approached the sponsoring organization themselves. Nearly one-quarter (23 per cent) of the partners surveyed were unable to say how they had initially become involved with the project.

5.3.2 The Nature and Extent of Partner Involvement

The partners were asked to describe the nature of the organization's partnership with the funded project. Just over one-third (36 per cent) described their partnership as one whereby they collaborated on some aspects of the project. A smaller, but still significant proportion of the respondents (23 per cent) indicated that they were full partners and involved in all stages of the project. A further 18 per cent described their involvement as relatively minimal with the funding recipient taking the lead on the project. Finally, the smallest percentage (9 per cent) described their partnership with the projects as a "funding partner only." While the Fund's partners often provided funding as a component of their involvement, they were often more closely involved with other aspects of the project.

The specific nature of partner involvement in the development, implementation, and review aspects of a funded project was explored. Each of the respondents was asked to rate their *expected* versus *actual* level of involvement on a variety of project development, implementation and review activities. Once again, the partners were asked to rate their expected and actual levels of involvement on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 = “No Involvement”, 4 = “Some Involvement”, and 7 = “A Lot of Involvement.” The findings presented in Table 5.3 indicate that partner expectations concerning the nature and extent of their involvement with funded projects were very much in line with their actual involvement. The only notable discrepancies between expected and actual partner involvement appear to be at the back-end of a project, namely reviewing and providing feedback on project reports/evaluations and involvement in the dissemination of project results. level of involvement of partners at the final stages of a project may be related to the scarcity of the results-based information available for review and dissemination rather than the exclusion or omission of partners from these processes.

Ranking of the overall responses to both questions (expected *versus* actual involvement) indicated that partners were most likely to be involved at the front-end of the project rather than during project implementation or at the “back-end”. The reportedly lower level of involvement of partners at the final stages of a project may be related to the scarcity of the results-based information available for review and dissemination rather than the exclusion or omission of partners from these processes.

TABLE 5.3
Level of Expected *versus* Actual Partner Involvement

Project-Related Activity	Expected	Actual
Determining the Amount Of Funding to be Provided by Partner Organization	5.8	6.0
Assisting in the Development of the Project	5.0	5.1
Disseminating Project Results	5.2	4.8
Reviewing and Providing Feedback on Reports/Project Evaluations	5.1	4.5
Monitoring of Ongoing Project Activities	4.5	4.7
Participating in Meetings/Phone Calls with Project Sponsors	4.6	4.2
Developing Funding Proposal	3.8	3.8
Determining Overall Project Budget	3.0	2.8

Finally, the respondents were asked to identify whether their partnership with the Fund had changed over time and, if so, in what ways. Nearly one-third (32 per cent) of the partners surveyed indicated that the partnership had changed very little, 18 per cent indicated that it had

changed “somewhat”, and 14 per cent had experienced a lot of change. In terms of changes in their organizations’ partnership with the Fund, partners indicated that the changes were primarily the result of “improved communications...in meetings involving the Department of Justice and Grantees” and a “better understanding of the program and how it can be used to help the community. [It] allowed us to be more involved and find better ways of making our community safe.” Similarly, partners identified transparent processes and increased involvement of stakeholders: “Justice Canada initiated it in an effort to have a more transparent process and to increase involvement of other stakeholders”“...[It] brought more value to our activities.”

5.3.3 Partners’ Financial Contributions to Projects funded under the G&C Fund

Table 5.4 provides a summary of the financial and in-kind contribution of partners to Fund projects by funding type and by year over the study period. Presented in this table are the total value of the projects funded and the proportion funded by the Grants and Contributions Fund and by Partners by year and funding type. It is important to note that the data presented in Table 5.4 were derived from PCS data. The remainder of the projects either did not involve partnerships or there were no electronic data available on the partnerships involved. It is equally important to note that these data reflect the information provided at the time of application and do not necessarily represent an accurate account of the actual support provided by partners at the end of the project. These data are not reported in the PCS. The key findings are:

- in 1996/97 and 1997/98, financial contributions by partners (with the exception of annual contributions) consistently represented a significant proportion of the total project value/cost (67 per cent - 96 per cent);
- project contributions consistently represented over one-half of the total partnership amounts for each funding year with the highest percentages linked to 1996/97 and 2000/01.
- the total number of projects involving partnerships declined over time with a significant drop in the number of partnerships witnessed in 1998/99;
- with the exception of class grants, the total amount of partnership funding was gradually reduced between 1996/97 to 2000/01; and,
- financial support from partnerships was eliminated for annual grants in the 1998/99 fiscal year and in 2000-01 and for annual contributions.

This analysis indicates that while partnerships were integral to the Fund, their number and the level of support they provided to Fund projects were significantly reduced since 1998/99. One of the reasons for a decrease in partnerships in annual contributions projects may be a “built-in”

disincentive to develop partnerships. That is, monies brought in through partnerships had a direct bearing on the departmental contribution - the more money brought in by partners to a project, the greater the decrease in the departmental funding.

TABLE 5.4
Financial Overview of Projects Involving Partnerships
by Funding Type and Year
(1996/7 to 2000/01)⁴⁹

Year	Breakdown	Annual Grant	Class Grants	Annual Contributions	Contributions (Project)
1996/97	Total ⁵⁰	\$210,400 (1)	\$1,260,112 (25)	\$2,295,221 (12)	\$14,641,468 (60)
	G & C ⁵¹	24%	9%	51%	10%
	Partnership ⁵²	76%	91%	49%	90%
	In-Kind ⁵³	0	9 (36%)	4 (33%)	15 (25%)
1997/98	Total	\$210,400 (1)	\$3,850,251.64 (27)	\$2,325,103 (11)	\$8,967,307 (45)
	G & C	24%	5%	47%	16%
	Partnership	76%	95%	53%	84%
	In-Kind	0	6 (22%)	7 (64%)	12 (27%)
1998/99	Total	-	\$599,728 (8)	\$1,050,653 (3)	\$2,950,940 (28)
	G & C	-	7%	20%	31%
	Partnership	-	93%	80%	69%
	In-Kind	-	1 (13%)	2 (67%)	11 (39%)
1999/00	Total	-	796,558.88 (8)	\$213,730 (1)	\$1,525,845 (14)
	G & C	-	7%	33%	23%
	Partnership	-	93%	67%	67%
	In-Kind	-	2 (25%)	1	4 (29%)
2000/01	Total	-	\$1,368,619 (8)	-	\$1,753,016 (11)
	G & C	-	4%	-	33%
	Partnership	-	96%	-	67%
	In-Kind	-	3 (38%)	-	0

⁴⁹ Project Control System Data Report – *List of Partnerships Given Amount and Contributions – Between 1996-97 and 2000 – 01 as of December 10, 2001*, Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund, I.A.I. Directorate, Programs Branch.

⁵⁰ Represents the total value of all projects involving partnerships per Fund Type per Year. (n) refers to the total number of projects identified as involving partnerships.

⁵¹ Percentage of total project value funded by the Grants and Contributions Fund.

⁵² Percentage of total project value funded through partnership.

⁵³ Percentage of total number of projects that received some form of in-kind contribution.

5.3.4 Perceived Value and Benefits of Involvement to Partners

The extent to which partners have benefited from their involvement with funded projects was also assessed. In particular, the perceived value of their involvement to their organization was explored. Participating partners were asked to rate the extent to which their involvement with the funded project has contributed to their organization on a number of key issues on a scale from 1 to 7, where 1 = “Not At All”, 4 = “Somewhat”, and 7 = “To A Great Extent.” Their responses are summarized in Table 5.5.

TABLE 5.5
Benefits to Partners Arising from Involvement with Fund Project

Nature of Contribution to Organization	Average Response
Strengthened Existing Partnerships/Networks	6.0
Increased Visibility of Partner Organization and Its Work	5.6
Established New Project Partners/Networks	5.1
Helped to Define New Approaches/Policy Directions	4.9
Access to Resource/Training Materials	3.9

It is clear from this data that partners believed that their organizations were deriving benefit from their involvement with a Fund project. Among the most notable findings were that partner involvement served to strengthen existing partnerships and to help establish new ones. Another reported benefit was the enhanced visibility of the partners’ organizations and their work. With respect to how the project contributed to their organizations in other ways, partners identified their role in helping them to fulfill their mandates, while “put[ting] us on the map.”

The positive experiences reported by partners in relation to their involvement with projects funded by the Grants and Contributions Fund suggest they were likely to maintain or to further enhance their relationship with the Fund and/or the project sponsor. When asked to indicate the extent to which the partners would continue to collaborate with the Grants and Contributions Fund of the Department of Justice, only one respondent (5 per cent) indicated that they would not and an additional 6 (27 per cent) indicated they did not know at this stage. The remainder of the partners surveyed (78 per cent) reported that they would continue to collaborate with the Fund on issues of mutual interest and concern.

5.4 Summary

Program success was measured in a number of critical ways including an assessment of the effectiveness of current mechanisms available to measure success and the extent to which the Fund achieved its objectives. The results of the current investigation indicated that the challenges faced by the Grants and Contributions Fund were not in terms of the availability of tools to measure success, but rather the extent to which these tools had been effectively and consistently utilized. Fund management and staff are well aware of these challenges and are in the process of making ongoing improvements to existing tools and resources and are participating in the EiP and the replacement of the PCS.

The evaluation identified the need to formalize and streamline the Fund's application, review and selection process (i.e., utilize formal calls-for-proposals). Funded projects may be more effectively and consistently linked to emerging departmental priorities if guided by a more formal application submission, review and selection process. Enhancements to the current reporting requirements for funded projects were also highlighted. In particular, annualized projects should be subject to annual reviews to ensure that they continue to contribute to the Fund's objectives. Finally, more formal performance measurement tools and resources, such as a performance measurement strategy and full-time performance measurement personnel, were identified and seen as necessary to help ensure that existing monitoring tools and resources were used consistently and effectively.

This evaluation has concluded that the funded projects fit in with and were even likely to have contributed to Fund meeting its objectives. However, the capacity of the current evaluation to speak more formally to the extent to which these projects have resulted in the development and implementation of justice-related policies and programs is extremely limited.

Key informants and funding recipients were questioned about the extent to which individually funded projects had contributed to the achievement of the Fund's objectives. In their view the Fund was most likely to: support the enhancement of partnerships; stimulate innovation; promote access to justice, equality and human rights; and promote consultations and information exchanges amongst various justice organizations. While results-based information concerning the extent to which the Fund and funded projects had contributed to justice-related policy and program development and implementation was difficult to obtain using these lines of evidence, detailed case study undertaken for this evaluation concluded that: one of the projects clearly contributed to development of Department of Justice policy; another contributed to the implementation of justice-related policy; and a third project was deemed likely to contribute to

the development and implementation of justice-related programs once its pilot period was complete. The case studies highlighted some significant findings with respect to the policy implications of the projects reviewed. This demonstrates that with the appropriate level of investment, results can be measured and reported.

Issues that affected the capacity of the Fund to achieve its objectives were: the objectives of the Fund were still too broad to have a measurable impact in such substantive areas as policy development and making the justice system and justice more efficient and less costly; the lack of concise and measurable indicators of success; the lack of clear direction provided by departmental policy areas to ensure that funded projects were directly relevant to existing and emerging policy needs; and limited awareness of the Fund within the Department which undermined the strategic use that could be made of the Fund to maximize its impact.

The final component of the success of the Fund focused on the role of “partnerships” in the Fund. A survey of a sample of funded project partners indicated that most of the partners became involved with the Fund because of the relevance of the project to the ongoing work of the partner organization, and many became involved as a result of an approach made by the sponsoring organization. The majority of the partners surveyed described their partnership with the funded project sponsor as collaborative in nature, with some of the respondents indicating that they were “full” partners in the endeavour. When asked to indicate whether their level of involvement reflected what they had expected, the majority of the respondents reported a close match. The specific nature of partner involvement in funded projects was most likely to include such activities as determining the amount of funding to be provided by the partner organization and assisting in the development of the project. Project partners were less likely to report being involved in the actual development of the funding proposal and in determination of the overall project budget.

The extent to which the partners have benefited from their involvement with projects funded by the Grants and Contributions Fund was also assessed. The partners were most likely to report that their involvement had strengthened existing partnerships/networks, increased the visibility of their organization and their work, and assisted them in establishing new partnerships/networks. When asked to indicate whether they would continue to collaborate with the Fund, the majority of the respondents reported that they would. In addition to the obvious benefits experienced by partners as a result of their involvement with the Fund, they also reported playing a significant role in and contribution to projects in which they are involved.

6. COST-EFFECTIVENESS AND ALTERNATIVES

The final component of the evaluation of the Grants and Contributions Fund involved some assessment of the overall cost-effectiveness of the Fund and an exploration of the extent to which other, more cost-effective alternatives should be considered in the ongoing development of the Fund.

6.1 Fund as a Cost-Effective Component of the Department's Efforts

The extent to which the Fund was viewed as a cost-effective component of the Department's efforts to achieve its overall goals and objectives was assessed largely through the findings stemming from key informant interviews with a variety of internal and external stakeholders. When asked to rate the perceived extent to which the Fund was a cost-effective component of departmental efforts on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 = "Not at All, 4 = "Somewhat" and 7 = "Extremely", the majority (73 per cent) of the respondents provided a rating between 5 and 7. Additional supportive comments provided by the respondents included:

- the funded organizations generally had good reputations in the field thereby providing good value for the money invested;
- the Fund enables departmental lawyers to focus on legislative changes while the Fund explores other, viable alternatives for improvements in justice-related policies and programs; and,
- the Fund is cost-effective in the sense that providing funding to one organization provides the Department with access to a range of other stakeholder groups in the community.

A number of similarly strong perspectives were voiced by respondents who indicated that the Fund could be more cost-effective by:

- better discerning which projects are most likely to result in the greatest impact with the most satisfactory investment;

- ensuring that funded projects actually contribute to justice-related policy and program development; and,
- improving the selection process of applicant proposals so that the distribution of funds is not outside of the parameters of the Fund or based on a “first-come, first-served” basis.

6.2 Appropriateness of Allocated Human and Financial Resources

The extent to which appropriate levels of human resources had been allocated to the Fund brought a mixed response from the respondents. Some of the responses were anecdotal in nature with perspectives provided on the basis of which staff appeared “stressed,” “overburdened,” or “always on top of things.” Regardless of the more general comments provided by some of the respondents, most of the stakeholders indicated that the Fund either had about “the right amount” of human resources or were somewhat under-resourced.

One specific area repeatedly identified as under-resourced was in the area of ongoing monitoring and performance measurement. According to a number of the respondents (and supported by much of the findings stemming from other lines of evidence), additional human resources were required to assist in:

- tracking and reporting on funded project results;
- ensuring that project findings are utilized and integrated by both the Programs Branch and Policy Sector of the Department;
- the development, implementation and monitoring of a more proactive and comprehensive proposal review process; and,
- establishing and maintaining a close working relationship with the policy people within the Department.

Eighty percent of the respondents were likely to indicate that the amount of *financial* resources currently allocated to the Grants and Contributions Fund were “far too few.” Determination of insufficient financial resources was linked to a number of program design, delivery and impact issues including:

- the perception that only a limited amount of financial resources was available once annual grants and contributions monies had been committed. This perception is linked to the notion that if core funding (annual grants and contributions) was not made available, that these resources could and would be used to support other, non-annual projects. However, this is

not necessarily the case as each fund was established as distinct categories with distinct objectives;

- too many priority areas to be addressed with a limited amount of funding; and,
- lack of financial resources available to support the development and implementation of results-based information.

Suggestions offered for addressing the reality and implications of the limited financial resources available within the Grants and Contributions Fund included the need to review current levels of funding to better assess whether the Fund or the various funding types are having a measurable impact on policy development within the Department. According to many of the participating stakeholders, increased funding should be determined by the extent to which the Fund is able to achieve its objectives.

6.3 Cost-Effective Alternatives

The final evaluation issue explored under the area of “cost-effectiveness” was the existence of cost-effective alternatives to the current function, format and/or operations of the Grants and Contributions Fund. A range of suggested alternatives or enhancements to the Fund were identified in the evaluation process and are presented below.

- Provide further clarification and delineation of fund objectives and related funding activities;
- Enhance the flexibility in the management and administration of the Fund to support the ability to readily address emerging policy issues;
- Improve collaboration across funding programs both within the Department and across other federal departments to reduce duplication and create opportunities for more strategic partnerships and alliances;
- Revise the current accountability structure of some of the funding types to ensure greater return for monies invested. For example, provide partial funds to start-up and support the funded project, but maintain an amount of the funding to be provided upon submission of a satisfactory, results-based report or product;
- Develop and maintain cost-effective performance measurement systems (including a revised and more results-based Project Control System) that will facilitate the ongoing monitoring of project and program results and contribute to enhanced funding decision-making;
- Explore the cost-effectiveness of setting up PLEI funded projects as an annual grant rather than an annual contribution;

- Focus on more innovative projects that will better position the Fund as “unique” within the larger umbrella of departmental funding programs; and,
- At the other end of the spectrum, simplify the process required to apply for and report on contributions. It must be noted however, the Department of Justice does not have the authority to change the procedures put in place by the Treasury Board of Canada.

6.4 Summary

The majority of those interviewed believed that the Fund was a cost-effective component of the Department’s efforts to achieve its overall goals and objectives. Despite this finding, the respondents indicated that there were a number of ways in which the Fund could be more cost-effective. In particular, the evaluation found that the perceived cost-effectiveness of the Fund was seriously affected by the extent to which the Fund was seen as able to meet its objectives. There is a need to improve the linkages between the Fund and the departmental policy and program initiatives. Moreover, there is a need to assess which project activities are most likely to support the desired outcomes.

Questions pertaining to the “appropriateness” of the Fund’s existing financial and human resources were addressed in the current evaluation. While human resources were largely seen to be appropriate given the perceived effectiveness of the Fund’s staff, additional human resources were specifically identified as needed to facilitate the development and implementation of ongoing monitoring and performance measurement strategies and in the production and dissemination of project results. The level of financial rather than human resources, was more likely to be viewed as inappropriate or too few. Insufficient financial resources were linked to the existence of too many priorities and the high percentage of Funds already allocated each year to annualized funds such as annual grants and contributions. Once again, it was suggested that results-based information would help to determine where the limited financial resources would best be invested. This information would also help assess which funding types and which activities would be most likely to contribute to policy development and implementation.

Ways of improving the cost-effectiveness of the Fund included: the clarification of the Fund’s objectives, the enhancement of the accountability structure for annual grants and contributions and high cost projects, and the full implementation of a performance measurement system. In addition to these frequently cited factors, the following suggestions were also put forward: introducing more flexibility into the Funds priority-setting process to address emerging policy issues in a timely manner; exploring the cost-effectiveness of establishing PLEI funded projects

as an annual grant rather than an annual contribution; and focusing on more innovative projects to better position the Fund as ‘unique’ within the larger umbrella of departmental funding programs.

7. CONCLUSION

This evaluation of the Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund has confirmed the findings of a series of earlier evaluations, consultations and reviews that have consistently identified many of the same issues as this study. The wherewithal to respond fully to these earlier reports was not forthcoming. While the Programs Branch attempted to respond to these reports in a number of ways, including the development of several monitoring tools and mechanisms, still many of the old challenges remained. Factors that have contributed to this situation include: the lack of resources (both human and financial) dedicated to monitoring performance and reporting on results; the lack of clear role for the Fund that has been shared broadly within the Department; the reduced profile of the Fund following the creation of the special initiatives; and the high staff and management turnover during the study period.

The consolidation and subsequent creation of four funding types did, in fact, contribute to the enhanced flexibility of the Fund and the overall efficiency of its administration. However, these same processes created a new set of challenges, among which included: operating under the auspices of a very broad set of objectives and priorities; and addressing the *perceptions* of increased competition between funding categories.

The Fund demonstrated a number of key successes largely in terms of the overall application and review process and the role that the Fund played in encouraging and facilitating project partnerships. The latter issue was identified repeatedly during the evaluation both with respect to the contribution that the Fund has made to bringing project partners to the table and in terms of helping project sponsors to leverage additional partners. In addition to the gains resulting from these partnerships that were identified by the project sponsors, the partners, themselves, highlighted a range of benefits they had experienced through their involvement with the Fund and with the individual projects with which they partnered.

One of the greatest challenges encountered in this evaluation was the inability to speak more comprehensively about the actual success of the Fund. Most of the findings gleaned through the evaluation process were anecdotal in nature. While this information was useful in isolating

program strengths and key areas for improvement, it provided little concrete evidence required to fully appreciate where to concentrate Fund resources (both human and financial) to best effect. For example, while the projects funded by the Grants and Contributions Fund reflected and were, therefore, deemed likely to have contributed to the overall objectives and priorities of the Department of Justice, there was insufficient results-based information available to make clearer and more effective linkages between priority areas addressed or specific project activities that were most likely to have the greatest impact.

Many of the enhancements proposed for the Fund during the evaluation pointed to the need to develop ongoing monitoring and performance measurement systems further. Programs Branch currently has or is in the process of developing a variety of monitoring mechanisms that could enhance their capacity to effectively identify and report on the Fund's successes. The issue then, is not the lack of mechanisms available but rather the consistency of their use. The needs and interests of the Department are likely to be more fully addressed with the improved utilization and implementation of these mechanisms. In turn, this will help to reposition the Fund within the Department and to further delimit the Fund's objectives and priorities, both of which are likely to enhance the Fund's overall success.

From these findings it is clear that there is a need to make a series of choices. Over the life of the Fund, expectations have far exceeded the Fund's capacity to produce results. The first choice will be whether this Fund will continue to be thought of as a policy development tool or policy implementation tool or both. There are implications for the Fund if it is to be considered a policy instrument, as this concept needs to be fully defined and the links to the various policy centres within the Department need to be strengthened.

There is a need to clarify the overall objectives of the Fund and to ensure that these objectives are aligned with the levels of funding available and are distinctive from those of the other departmental discretionary funding programs. There may be some priorities that have continued to be funded more out of historical inertia than demonstrated merit or links to the Fund objectives. The second choice will be to concentrate funding support on those priorities that best support these objectives.

The third choice will be to determine how best to use the resources to support project management, monitoring and performance measurement, project analysis and communication. The evaluation has noted the paucity of information currently available regarding how the various funded projects are working and the extent to which they support the overall objectives of the Fund. It has also pointed to the need to communicate the results of the funded projects in a

meaningful and effective manner and has documented the implications for failing to do this. The visibility of the Fund will increase when what it does and what it has accomplished are known and widely shared.

The final choice will be to make the necessary choices to strengthen the program and to secure the support from senior management to implement these choices. Without such a commitment, the rationale for the continuation of this Fund is in question.

APPENDIX A

Evaluation Issues and Data Sources

Questions	Key Informant Interviews ⁵⁴														Review of Documents/ Files/PCS	Performance Measurement Review	Case Studies
	PB	PPO	DMO	PSH	IER	CES	JA	PPD	SPD	SI	DE	HR	NGO	OFD			
Relevance																	
1. Is there a continued need for the Fund?	✓*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
2. Is the Fund relevant to the Department's policy and program development needs?	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
3. Is the Fund relevant to the Department's priorities with respect to policy implementation?	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
4. Is there undue overlap between the Fund and other grants and contributions programs either within the Department of Justice or within other departments?	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓				✓	✓		

⁵⁴ **PB** Programs Branch staff and management, **PPO** research policy and program officials, **DMO** Deputy Minister's Office, **PSH** Policy Sector Head, **IER** Intergovernmental and External Relations Division, **CES** Communications and Executive Services – a designated individual, **JA** Judicial Affairs, **PPD** Priorities and Planning Division, **SPD** Strategic Planning Division, **SI** other DOJ staff involved in complementary special initiatives, **DE** Diversity and Equality/Access to Justice Section, **HR** Human Rights Law Section, **NGO** Non-Governmental Organizations, **OFD** other federal government departments.

* Checkmarks (✓) are used to indicate that a specific evaluation issue was posed to or information was sought from the relevant data source identified.

Questions	Key Informant Interviews ⁵⁴														Review of Documents/ Files/PCS	Performance Measurement Review	Case Studies
	PB	PPO	DMO	PSH	IER	CES	JA	PPD	SPD	SI	DE	HR	NGO	OFD			
<i>Success</i>																	
5. What mechanisms are in place to monitor the Fund's success? Are these mechanisms effective decision-making tools?	✓									✓					✓	✓	
6. Has the Fund supported the development of policy?	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
7. Has the Fund served as a lever for change?	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓			✓		✓		✓
8. Has the Fund supported the implementation of departmental policy?	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓					✓	✓	✓
9. Has the Fund supported the development or improvement of justice Programs?	✓	✓		✓						✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
10. To what extent has the Fund contributed to promoting access to justice, equality and human rights?	✓	✓								✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Questions	Key Informant Interviews ⁵⁴														Review of Documents/ Files/PCS	Performance Measurement Review	Case Studies
	PB	PPO	DMO	PSH	IER	CES	JA	PPD	SPD	SI	DE	HR	NGO	OFD			
11. Has the Fund stimulated innovation?	✓	✓								✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
12. Has the Fund stimulated investment in the justice system? Has it contributed to making the justice system more efficient and less costly?	✓									✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
13. Has the Fund enhanced partnerships with (and the efforts of) individuals and professional organizations whose support is important to the attainment of departmental objectives? If so, what benefits has the Department derived to date from these partnerships?	✓	✓	✓	✓						✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Questions	Key Informant Interviews ⁵⁴													Review of Documents/ Files/PCS	Performance Measurement Review	Case Studies	
	PB	PPO	DMO	PSH	IER	CES	JA	PPD	SPD	SI	DE	HR	NGO				OFD
14. Has the Fund promoted consultation and information exchange among other levels of government, various justice organizations and the public? If so, how has this assisted the Department in the attainment of its objectives?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15. What other impacts or effects has the Fund had?	✓	✓								✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
16. What has been the impact of the consolidation of the Department's grants and contributions in relation to the program's capacity to support policy and program development/implementation?	✓	✓								✓					✓		

Questions	Key Informant Interviews ⁵⁴														Review of Documents/ Files/PCS	Performance Measurement Review	Case Studies
	PB	PPO	DMO	PSH	IER	CES	JA	PPD	SPD	SI	DE	HR	NGO	OFD			
17. What has been the impact of the subsequent creation of separate funds?	✓	✓								✓			✓	✓	✓		
18. What is the relative effectiveness of centralised <i>versus</i> decentralised approaches to grants and contributions funding vis-à-vis their capacity to support departmental policy and program development/ implementation?	✓	✓			✓					✓				✓	✓		
<i>Cost-Effectiveness</i>																	
19. Is this program the most cost-effective way of supporting policy development and implementation and improving justice programs?	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓				✓	✓		

Questions	Key Informant Interviews ⁵⁴														Review of Documents/ Files/PCS	Performance Measurement Review	Case Studies
	PB	PPO	DMO	PSH	IER	CES	JA	PPD	SPD	SI	DE	HR	NGO	OFD			
20. Is this program the most cost-effective way of stimulating investment and making the justice system more efficient and less costly?	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓				✓	✓		
21. Is the level of funding sufficient for the achievement of the objectives?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
22. What is the relative cost-effectiveness of the four types of funding provided and the different types of activities they support?	✓													✓			
23. What changes could be made to enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Fund and what would be the likely advantages and disadvantages?	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓			✓

Questions	Key Informant Interviews ⁵⁴														Review of Documents/ Files/PCS	Performance Measurement Review	Case Studies
	PB	PPO	DMO	PSH	IER	CES	JA	PPD	SPD	SI	DE	HR	NGO	OFD			
24. What is the relative cost-effectiveness of centralised <i>versus</i> decentralised approaches to delivery grants and contributions funding?	✓	✓								✓				✓	✓		

APPENDIX B

Key Sources of Information/Documentation Reviewed

GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FUND DOCUMENTATION REVIEW

List of Key Sources.

- Source 1. Grants & Contributions Internal Audit
- Source 2. Application package for proposals to the Department of Justice and Grants and Contributions Unit
- Source 3. Review of the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform. Final Report (2000)
- Source 4. Flett Consulting Group Inc., Report on a Review of Selected Grants in Justice Canada's Grants & Contributions Fund (2000) [this is a review of annual grants distributed by G&Cfund]
- Source 5. Department of Justice Strategic Plan 2001-2005
- Source 6. Lessons Learned Study: Grants & Contributions WORKPLAN – February 2001-07-06
- Source 7. Grants & Contributions Funding Priority Consultations (January 1998)
- Source 8. Office of the Auditor General of Canada, in collaboration with Industry Canada. A Framework for Identifying Risk in Grant and Contribution Programs (November 2000)
- Source 9. Discretionary Funding Programs: Coordination within the Department of Justice (July 2000) prepared by the Departmental Working Group on Program Coordination & Information Sharing.
- Source 10. Minutes from Policy Committee meeting, June 23, 1999
- Source 11. Haug & Associates Management Consultants (March 1998) Study of the Funding Process Grants and Contributions Fund.
- Source 12. Alex Himelfarb (1994) Grants and contributions Subventions et contributions. Interim Report to the Law and Policy Committee
- Source 13. Programs Branch (1997) Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund Presentation to SMC Short-term planning exercise.
- Source 14. Department of Justice Canada Public Legal Education and Information Program. A New Vision for PLEI. Draft Report (March 1995)

APPENDIX C

Previous Evaluations, Reviews and Consultations

PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS, REVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS

This evaluation represents one of a number of review processes that the Grants and Contributions Fund has undergone both in an effort to contribute to its initial establishment and to ensure its ongoing development and success. Several key reports and papers highlighting the nature of the discussions, assessments and results stemming from these review processes and consultations were explored for the purposes of this evaluation. These reports reflect both internal departmental efforts and external assessments provided by third parties in reference to the Department's grants and contributions programs in general and to the Grants and Contributions Fund more specifically. Reports addressing the Fund in particular focused on a number of distinct aspects of the Fund including priorities, program improvement, the funding process, and selected annual grants. The remaining reports addressed departmental discretionary funding efforts in general and include internal audit and risk management assessments, an evaluation of selected funds, and a review of the coordination activities. These reports provide important information pertaining to the context in which the Fund was developed and has since been maintained and offer critical insight into the factors that are likely to have contributed to its current relevance and success.

a) Prior to the Formation of the Fund

As discussed earlier, the Grants and Contributions Fund was created through the centralization or amalgamation of 25 Department of Justice discretionary grants and contributions funds. A range of consultations and review processes were undertaken by a Working Group on Grants and Contributions. This Working Group was established for the sole purpose of developing a discussion paper proposing a strategic framework for the future management of grants and contributions resources and resource reductions for review by Law and Policy Committee of the Department of Justice. The discussion paper presented an overview of each of the Department's 25 discretionary funds and then proceeded to assess the nature and extent to which each of the funds appeared to contribute to or enhance departmental objectives and strategic directions and

offered recommendations pertaining to the management and operations of a centralized fund, the Grants and Contributions Fund.⁵⁵

The Working Group utilized a number of criteria to guide their overall assessment of the appropriateness of existing grants and contribution. While they determined that all grants and contributions appear to support departmental objectives and priorities, a number of recommendations were made to further enhance these linkages and to increase the overall cost-effectiveness of the Fund. One of these recommendations was that short- to medium-term policy development initiatives be supported through contract or salary resources rather than grants and contributions. With respect to grants, the Working Group recommended that a number of additional reviews be conducted including a review of grants provided to international organizations to ensure that they were sufficient to support departmental interests and reviews to further explore the benefit of converting grants to the Uniform Law Conference to contributions and the contribution to the Access to Legal Information to a grant.

Sustaining project and multi-year contributions were also assessed and the nature of the Group's findings indicated that the three major sustaining contributions were believed to contribute significantly to departmental objectives. Project contributions, however, were often seen as very small scale and posed concerns for the Working Group with respect to the overall benefits gained when applied against the costs associated with administering the funds. With respect to multi-year contributions, the Group recommended supporting proposals that focus on justice-related cost-reduction experiments and projects, such as Special Projects Legal Aid, that explore more cost-effective program delivery. Finally, the Working Group assessed continued federal interest in and the benefits of major cost-shared programs. While some concern was raised with respect to the exemption of a number of cost-shared programs from budget cuts and the implications of these exemptions on the Department's ability to meet the objectives of other key mandate areas, the Group recommended maintaining these programs, but developing a resource allocation strategy given their relative unique needs and circumstances.

The results of the Working Group's overall assessment of the Department's discretionary grants and contributions funds contributed to the development of a number of key structural and operational recommendations that have subsequently led to the formation of the Department of Justice Grants and Contributions Fund. One of the recommendations tabled by the Working Group was the need to establish a department-wide process for identifying funding priorities that could then be used to reduce the number of funds into "envelopes", while expanding the "scope of strategic resources". Four broad envelopes or priority areas were suggested including: access,

⁵⁵ Himelfarb, Alex (1994). *Grants and Contributions: Interim Report to the Law and Policy Committee (Draft 4)*. Department of Justice Canada.

equality and human rights; prevention, protection and compliance; justice system improvement; and Aboriginal Justice. The Group also recommended continued and enhanced use of and coordination between the Department and funding partners, such as the Ministry of the Solicitor General. In an effort to reduce the costs of program administration, the Working Group proposed making more effective use of low overhead grants and reducing the number of small scale contributions. Finally, it was suggested that a communications and consultation plan be developed in order to facilitate and manage the transition of the funding process.

Falling from the recommendations of the Working Group, the purpose of the review of international organizations was to discern the extent to which these funding efforts contribute to or further departmental interests. In the spring of 1994, a review of grants provided by the Department of Justice to five international organizations was undertaken.⁵⁶ The results of the review process indicated that while each of the five grants addressed the Department's and Canada's interests and warrants continued funding support, limited resources necessitated that some priority setting be established with respect to which organizations should be funded in the event that insufficient resources exist to support all relevant efforts. The report provided a number of key guidelines that should be used when determining which international organizations to fund and why.

The first criterion was whether the legal programme was delivered by a governmental organization of which Canada is a leading member and whose objectives reflected those of the Department and the federal government in general and whose work was viewed as effective in attaining those objectives. According to the report, these issues were important to consider in that involvement with these organizations was likely to enhance Canada's and the Department of Justice's opportunity to contribute to and assist in the development of international and domestic law. Another key issue for consideration was legal training, which is critical to the Department of Justice in its effort to fulfill its mandates to train lawyers and to promote respect for international law, human rights and the rule of law by offering training to developing countries. A related, but separate consideration was grants to international organizations whose objectives reflect Canada's concern regarding the need to promote international law, human rights and the rule of law. The final consideration was the requirement to compare the Department's with that of international organizations from other, comparable countries. It was suggested that where an organization is funded by a small number of other countries or when Canada was one of the few developed countries supporting the organization, that continued support be considered given the implications associated with Canada's failure to "pay our fair share."

⁵⁶ Dawson, Mary (1994). *Grants and Contributions Review: International Organizations*. Department of Justice Canada.

Based upon these guidelines, the review of the five international organizations supported to date by grants provided by the Department of Justice, ranked them following according to the most likely to warrant funds and the fifth organization least likely to warrant funds in times of fiscal restraint: British Institute of International and Comparative Law; Institut de droit d'expression française; The Hague Academy; the International Commission of Jurists; and UNCITRAL.

The final key document reviewed for the purposes of the evaluation was a report on the “*Evaluation of Selected Discretionary Grants and Contributions Funds*”⁵⁷ which was conducted in the Spring of 1994 and has contributed to the development and implementation of the Grants and Contributions Fund in 1996. In light of ongoing cuts to and reductions in funding available in support of the Department’s grants and contributions, the purpose of the evaluation exercise was to assist the Department in determining how best to achieve the necessary reductions while maintaining its ability to address and contribute to departmental policies and priorities. The evaluation included a detailed assessment of the administration and management of the funds, the continued relevance of grants and contributions given existing and emerging departmental priorities, the extent to which objectives were achieved, and the overall cost-effectiveness of the funds.

The results of the evaluation pointed to a number of key successes and areas for improvement. Among some of the key successes identified in relation to the overall *management and administration of the fund* were: funds were well managed with respect to financial accountability; the objectives of the funds were sufficiently well known; and the relationship between the various parties involved in the administration of the funds were clear. Areas identified as in need of further improvements and considerations were linked to the following results: existence of a few instances where level of funding was insufficient for the achievement of objectives; duplication existed between the terms of reference of some grants and contributions; insufficient consultation regarding policy priorities to be addressed through contribution funding; need for strategic planning; and inadequate feedback on the results of funding to policy makers.

Additional successes and areas for further improvements were identified in the report in relation to the continued relevance of the Department’s discretionary grants and contributions funds. The range of successes identified in relation to this evaluation area were: the majority of grants and contributions met the criterion for continued relevance given their links with and efforts in support of one or more of the Department’s current priorities; and while the linkages between grants provided to international organizations appeared less clear, these projects were seen as

⁵⁷ *Evaluation of Selected Discretionary Grants and Contributions Funds*. Programme Evaluation Division, Department of Justice Canada, 1994.

integral to the Department. Perhaps the most significant findings in relation to continued relevance was the result which indicated that although grants and contributions did not contribute to a “significant” degree” to the *development* of Departmental policies, they continued to be seen as an effective way of supporting the *implementation* of policy and program objectives.

The section on “Objectives Achievement” in the report was limited and this was attributed by the evaluators to the lack of available and appropriate results-based information on which to offer relevant insight and conclusions pertaining to the “impact” of the discretionary funds. Instead the evaluation made use of available output-based information in an effort to offer a more conceptual analysis of objectives achievement. While the evaluation findings indicated that funding decisions resulted in “moderate” achievement of objectives, there were a number of recommendations regarding areas for further improvements based on lessons learned. For example, the evaluation identified the need to enhance ongoing feedback about the outputs of funding decisions and about the nature and extent to which the outputs were utilized. This information was required in order to enable senior management to better assess impacts. Secondly, the evaluation highlighted the inability of grants and contributions to feed into policy development or implementation in the short- or medium term (as was also indicated by the Working Group on Grants and Contributions), but was seen as able to meet the more long-term needs of policy makers.

The final component of the evaluation explored the issue of cost-effectiveness and whether there were other, more cost-effective alternatives to support the development and implementation of departmental policies and priorities. The results of this component of the evaluation process indicated, overall, the Fund was seen as being at least moderately cost-effective based largely on the ongoing need for discretionary funding to address departmental policies and priorities and the recognition that there appeared to be no other organization currently capable of providing this service.

A total of 20 recommendations were made on the bases of the results stemming from this evaluation process. Key recommendations that were relevant to the formation and implementation of the Grants and Contributions Fund included the need: to amalgamate all the existing grants and contributions funds; to establish strategic planning processes and mechanisms to ensure that funding priorities are jointly identified and reviewed by policy-makers and fund managers; and to ensure that policy makers are apprised of the outcomes of any funding through grants and contributions so that the results may be used in the policy development process.

b) Following Formation of the Fund

Following the development and implementation of the Grants and Contributions Fund in April of 1996, a number of informal review processes were carried out in an effort to guide the ongoing development and direction of the Fund. Beginning in the fall of 1997, a number of memos and discussion papers^{58 59} were drafted by individuals within the Department and associated with the Fund that were subsequently tabled for discussion with Fund management and staff. These papers highlighted some of the emerging issues and challenges faced by the Fund shortly following its development and implementation and offered suggestions regarding how some of these challenges could be addressed.

One of the key operational issues identified as a result of an internal review process⁶⁰ was the tendency within the Fund to *respond* to funding proposals rather than promote specific types of projects. Some concerns were raised that this “reactive” process was contributing to a number of negative implications for the implementation and potential success of the Fund: including: a lack of proactive communication to potential applicants pertaining to funding priority areas and the detailed goals and interest of the Department; a lack of strategic planning and strategic funding decisions around the distribution of funds across priorities; an assessment of funding applications on a “first come, first served” basis; and insufficient efforts being made to encourage new and more diverse groups to apply for funding. Similar concerns were raised about the lack of application deadlines. According to the results of this internal informal review, the lack of deadlines was resulting in the consideration of project proposals in isolation without the opportunity to identify the “best” amongst a number of submitted applications addressing similar departmental policy and priority needs. In addition, the lack of application deadlines, which are often used to organize and structure departmental resources, was resulting in delayed responses and decisions on submitted funding applications.

Perhaps one of the most critical concerns identified and raised shortly following the formation of the Fund was the need to better capture, analyze and communicate projects results within and outside of the Department. At the time, delays were being experienced in the production of project summaries for entry into the Department’s Project Control System. Staff resources were linked to this concern as well as to concerns pertaining to insufficient time and resources invested to date in the analysis of project findings and detailed reviews of final reports. The assessment of project results was also criticized for limited assessment of the findings being

⁵⁸ *Suggestion for Improvements: Grants and Contributions Fund*. Evaluation Division, Department of Justice Canada, October 1997.

⁵⁹ *Grants and Contribution Fund: Suggestions for Change*. Department of Justice Canada, November 1997.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

conducted and integrated into the larger, more strategic contexts of the contribution of funded projects to departmental policies and priorities and lessons learned. Finally, the challenges faced by the Fund to disseminate information pertaining to funded projects effectively, both within and outside of the Department, were highlighted.

In an effort to address some of the issues and challenges identified, a number of suggestions for improvement were provided which focused on a number of key planning and operational aspects of the Fund. For example, one internal review recommended that the Fund further delimit the number of priority areas to be addressed on an annual basis and that key goals and activities be developed within each of the reduced priority areas in consultation with relevant sections within the Department. Two application deadlines per year that are linked to specific funding priority areas were also recommended in an effort to more strategically plan and fund projects. In addition, a number of enhancements to the overall selection process were identified including that projects be initially reviewed by project development officers to ensure that the proposal meets the basic criteria and is complete prior to forwarding the proposal for a more detailed review to be conducted by review committees for each priority area. It was suggested that the Programs Branch subsequently evaluate projects within each of respective priority areas and make recommendations for approval and that the Senior Management Committee be kept informed of the Branch's intention to fund certain projects. Finally, the report recommended increasing the use of existing information dissemination devices (such as the mail, ACJNET/Intranet) to distribute information to existing and potential clients pertaining to changes or updates to the Fund such as project summaries, new priority areas, enhanced goals, and application deadlines. Additional processes were also recommended in an effort to facilitate the gathering and analysis of quality final reports that will support the effective analysis of the contribution of the project to the departmental policies and priorities.

One of the fundamental issues that arose within the context of one of the internal review processes⁶¹ was the need to establish and then integrate a strategic process of identifying and reviewing funding priorities for the Grants and Contributions Fund. Beginning shortly thereafter, a series of planning exercises and consultations were sponsored by the Fund in an effort to assist in the identification and definition of priorities for the Department's Grants and Contributions Fund for 1998-99 to 2000-01. The results of the consultations and planning exercises contributed to the development a Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework which lays out each the Fund's six priority areas (Sentencing and Correctional Reform; Equality, Diversity and Access to Justice; Youth Justice; Justice System Design; Victims; and Family Violence) and links each priority with individual objectives and project activities that can be funded in support of the

⁶¹ *Suggestion for Improvements: Grants and Contributions Fund*. Evaluation Division, Department of Justice Canada, October 1997.

priority area.⁶² The purpose of the Framework is to guide, on an ongoing basis, the Fund's funding decisions.

Around the time that the Priority Setting and Strategic Planning Framework was being developed and finalized, a report on a study of the overall funding process utilized by the Grants and Contributions Fund was published.⁶³ The objective of the study was to address emerging concerns and frustrations with the overall funding process by identifying options for improving the flexibility, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the funding process. The investigation focused on the selection and approval processes, the payments process and the Fund's existing review process and was conducted through the use of key informant interviews with program and departmental staff, clients, and representatives of other government departments.

The results of the study pointed to a number of concerns pertaining largely to the budget management process associated with the Fund's contribution agreements. This process was viewed as complicated and time intensive and much more rigorous than that required for other funding programs. A second key issue of concern related to the need for improved communication and teamwork within the Program Unit. Of particular concern were lack of communication and appreciation for each other's position between program managers and financial officers. Recommendations centred on the need to "refocus processes to improve performance." According to the report, there were a number of fundamental issues that, if addressed, may contribute to the development of a more flexible and more acceptable funding process that could facilitate and enhance the Fund's opportunity for success. Among the options for improvement cited were: documenting budget rules in plain language; moving non-essential tasks off the critical path; consider maximizing the use of class grant funding including increasing the level of funding (above \$300,000) and the total value of the grants (above \$10,000); develop decision-making rules on when to approve grants *versus* contributions; and consider linking budget controls to risk and to Fund objectives.

A subsequent study conducted in the latter part of 1999, explored seven of the nine annual grants supported by the Fund.⁶⁴ The purpose of the study was to analyze the efficiency of the administrative processes used in support of these grants and to determine the extent to which the products produced by the recipients supported the ongoing work of the Department. The overall results of the review indicated that only four of the seven grants contribute significantly to the goals and objectives of the Fund and only one of the four grants was regarded as providing good

⁶² *Priority Setting and Strategic Management Framework for 1998-99 – 2000-01*. Department of Justice Canada, 1998.

⁶³ Haug & Associates Management Consultants (1998). *Study of the Funding Process: Grants and Contributions Fund*. Department of Justice Canada.

⁶⁴ The Flett Consulting Group Inc. (2000). *Report on a Review of Selected Annual Grants in Justice Canada's Grants & Contributions Fund*. Department of Justice Canada.

value to the Department of Justice with active departmental users. The three grants identified as not directly relevant to the objectives and priorities of the Fund were grants to three international organizations. Even prior to the establishment of the Fund, the relevance of these organizations to departmental objectives was questioned in a review of departmental discretionary grants and contributions.

Despite the linkages established between the objectives of the Fund and the four other annual grants, concern was raised about the fact that all annual grants are renewed each year without detailed assessments of the extent to which they continue to contribute to the objectives of the Fund and the policies and priorities of the Department. It was recommended that each grant be re-assessed to determine its continued relevance and that new Agreement be established with the recipient. Another recommendation provided in the report referred to the use of a Grant Administration Checklist to ensure that grants are administered more consistently. The final key recommendation proposed focused, once again, on the need for better data entry and an enhanced Project Control System.

Another review of departmental discretionary grants and contributions programs was conducted by the Departmental Working Group on Program Coordination and Information Sharing in the spring of 2000.⁶⁵ This review process focused on the coordination activities of discretionary funding programs within the Department of Justice. Included in the review process were the following discretionary funding programs: the Grants and Contributions Fund; Aboriginal Justice Strategy; Child Support; Community Safety and Crime Prevention; Youth Justice; and Firearms. Both internal and external information-sharing processes and results were assessed. With respect to internal information-sharing activities, the kinds of activities that were deemed useful for the purposes of effective coordination among the funding programs were: the sharing of front-end information (that which contributes to the day-to-day operational tasks of the funding programs such as knowledge of departmental priorities and funding proposals received); back-end information (generated largely through the results of program activities/projects (such as lessons learned and evaluations that feed into the departmental policy planning and implementation process); and “nice-to-know” information (often communicated through newsletters and websites and contributes to the overall visibility of the programs).

An assessment of the internal information-sharing operations and activities of discretionary funding programs within the Department indicated that some coordination and consultation among programs does occur, but that the internal information activities witnessed were largely front-end and *ad hoc* in nature. At the time of the review process, there was no systematic or

⁶⁵ *Discretionary Funding Programs: Coordination within the Department of Justice*. Prepared by the Departmental Working Group on Program Coordination and Information Sharing for the Department of Justice Canada, 2000.

formal process for sharing of information internally. A similar review of the “external” information sharing activities carried-out by the Department’s discretionary funding programs was also conducted. Such activities were identified as critical to the administration of grants and contributions as they were likely to result in the receipt of more appropriate proposals and enhanced partnerships. Once again, the report explored the inherent value of the external sharing of front-end information (such as providing potential applicants and partners with accurate and up-to-date information about the programs), back-end information (offering more detailed information pertaining to funding activities including project results and lessons learned), and “need-to-know” information (as identified above). The report also indicated that much of the information shared outside of the Department of Justice was front-end in nature and that the ways in which the programs shared this information varied.

The report identified the need for improved coordination mechanisms in an effort to enhance program effectiveness and efficiency and to develop informed partnerships. The specific nature of the mechanisms proposed included: an integrated approach to program information management; common procedures and guidelines (to the extent possible); common approaches to risk assessment tools; systematic information sharing; and common core training and training materials. On the basis of the mechanisms identified, the Working Group made three specific recommendation to facilitate the development and integration of these systems including: the establishment of a grants and contributions database for tracking funded projects within the Department; the formation of an ongoing funding programs working group that report to Senior Management Committee and meet regularly; and the utilization of the services of a regional funding program’s staff to help get front-end and back-end messages out.

The final integral report reviewed for the purposes of this evaluation was one published by the Internal Audit Division on the Department of Justice’s Grants and Contributions Programs in the spring of this year.⁶⁶ The purpose of the audit itself was threefold: to assess the adequacy of the management and control processes used to distribute the funds; to assess the extent to which grants and contributions funds are distributed in accordance with applicable policies and procedures and with due regard for the principles of accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, and economy; and to assess the appropriateness of existing mechanisms in ensuring that grants and contributions funds are being used for the intended purposes. The results of the internal audit indicated that while the Department was found to adequately manage and control its processes for distributing funds and that funds were deemed to have been allocated in accordance with applicable policies and procedures, the audit found some inconsistency in the level of documented procedures and assessment/review criteria that are intended to help in the effective analysis of funding proposals and ensuring that project reports are adequately evaluated.

⁶⁶ Internal Audit Division (2001). *Grant and Contribution Programs*. Department of Justice Canada.

A more detailed review of the results of the audit, specifically in relation to the Grants and Contributions Fund, highlighted a number of additional key findings. For example, the audit found that the Fund's objectives matched with departmental objectives. Secondly, in reference to performance measures, the audit indicated that while the evaluation framework for the Fund clearly identified that performance monitoring requires project specific indicators be developed and reported on for each funded project, such indicators were not established for all projects and insufficient information on project results existed. In a review of funded project files, reporting inconsistencies were also identified in terms of final project results or annual. Finally, the Fund was identified in the audit as one of only four funding programs that had documented criteria for approving projects and had one of the most detailed documented procedures for managing funded projects.