EVALUATION OF THE WOMEN'S PROGRAM

VOLUME I – FINAL REPORT

October 2005

Prepared for:

Status of Women Canada

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Women's Program (WP) is a grants and contributions program that was founded in 1973 in response to a recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Originally administered by the former Department of the Secretary of State, the WP has been housed within Status of Women Canada (SWC) since 1995. Its mandate is "to support action by women's organizations and other partners seeking to advance equality for women by addressing women's economic, social, political and legal situation," thus contributing to SWC's overall goal of promoting gender equality and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of Canada.

The WP provides both funding and technical assistance to women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. Its annual grant and contribution budget is approximately $11 million, which included, from 2000 to 2005, approximately $2 million annually from the federal government's Agenda for Gender Equality.

In order to fulfil Treasury Board Secretariat reporting requirements for federal grants and contributions programs, SWC engaged PRA Inc. to conduct a summative evaluation of the WP. Its purpose is to examine the design and delivery, impact, cost-effectiveness/alternatives, and relevance of the WP. As this evaluation is being undertaken in the context of a federal government-wide Expenditure Review exercise, it is also designed to address questions of public accountability and alignment with the priorities of Canadians.

To enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, multiple data sources were used wherever possible to respond to the evaluation questions. Data collection methods included:

- ‣ a review of program documents and administrative data
- ‣ a review of program files (n=45)
- ‣ a survey of applicants (n=215)
- ‣ key informant interviews (n=41)
- ‣ case studies (n=7).

The main conclusions of the evaluation are as follows.

Design and delivery

Overall, stakeholders perceive the design and delivery of the WP to have several important strengths. These include the Program's flexibility, which enables it to accommodate a diverse range of groups, strategies and issues; its social development approach, which is designed to support long-term social change by supporting the capacity of women's organizations to participate more fully in Canadian society; its decentralized structure and presence in communities; and its unique focus on women's equality.

The structure of the WP, consisting of technical assistance and financial assistance components, is seen as basically sound. Program staff and managers and applicants likewise observed that the proposal development process can be demanding, and more so since the introduction of the outcome-based approach.

Successful implementation of the outcome-based approach is currently hampered by a number of significant obstacles. Perhaps most importantly, neither applicants nor all program staff have fully grasped and embraced the outcome-based approach. There is also continuing uncertainty about the appropriateness of the outcome-based approach to social development work among both applicants and program staff. Secondly, although the WP collects a great deal of outcome information via the standardized forms it introduced in 2003-2004, it lacks any strategy for analysing and reporting on these data, and moreover lacks a program database, accessible to regional staff. Some program staff and key informants cautioned against over-reliance on a reporting solution based on the standard forms and a program database. These stakeholders recommended that the WP implement a diversified performance measurement strategy consisting of both the planned "quantitative" methods and objective qualitative methods. A reporting strategy is currently under development, but progress toward a program database has reportedly stalled due to a lack of financial resources, technical capacity, and management commitment.

Recommendation   **1.**   **Mechanisms for greater program management accountability relative to the implementation of the outcome-based approach are necessary.**

– Management's contribution to the successful implementation of the outcome-based approach could be measured in terms of the availability, quality, and timeliness of appropriate documentation (hard copy and/or web-based) and training activities on this approach for program staff, applicants, and potential applicants across Canada.

– Management should be accountable for clarity and consistency in funding recommendations and reporting. In particular, Program Managers should ensure that proposals are not recommended until they clearly articulate an initiative's activities, objectives and expected outcomes. A standard protocol should to be established for changing activities, objectives and expected outcomes during the duration of an initiative. They should also ensure that an initiative's final report is not accepted until it includes the required information concerning outcomes achieved.

– Management should also be accountable for sharing information regarding best practices in the implementation of the outcome-based approach across the regional and local offices of the WP.

Recommendation   **2.**   **The WP should provide training in the outcome-based approach and efficient proposal development to funding applicants and program staff and managers.**

– Training should focus on ensuring an adequate understanding of the outcome-based approach, including its key concepts, definitions, and requirements, in order to realize potential efficiencies in the proposal development process.

– It should also specifically address the purpose and proper use of the standard forms. It should emphasize the importance of consistency in reporting.

The file review component of this evaluation was limited in the extent to which it could meet its second objective, that is, to examine the extent to which the outcome-based approach to reporting was being implemented and to identify any emerging issues that might benefit from further investigation or ongoing monitoring. This was due to the small number of "closed files" available for review from the 2003-2004 fiscal year, and was a consequence of the short period between the implementation of the outcome-based approach and this evaluation.

Recommendation   **3.**   **The WP should repeat such a file review as part of a regular evaluation cycle, as per Treasury Board guidelines, because it would undoubtedly prove much more informative in terms of the implementation successes and challenges related to the outcome-based approach and the extent to which it is understood by applicants and program staff.**

Recommendation   **4.**   **The WP should develop a strategy for reporting on program impact. Consideration should be given to a diversified performance measurement strategy that focuses not only on summarizing effectively the information collected on the standard forms, but also additional objective qualitative methods to illuminate outcomes achieved.**

Some stakeholders indicated that they required assistance to understand the information required on the various forms, and the evaluator did not find the forms useful because of inconsistencies in interpretation of the various requirements, be it by applicants, funded initiatives, or program staff. Stakeholders have also expressed a need for simplifying and making the application and reporting process more flexible.

Recommendation   **5.**   **Although they were introduced relatively recently, the WP could improve upon the standard forms at this stage, as well as address the forms specifically within the recommended training and in the documentation on the outcome-based approach. In order to enhance their value for performance measurement purposes, improvements to the standard forms should be made in consultation with evaluation experts and a representative sample of potential applicants.**

Given the inherent challenges of measuring social change and the need for the WP to collect more useful and relevant outcome information, the Program should focus on more objective qualitative data collection methods.

Recommendation   6.   In order to complement self-reporting by the funded initiatives, the WP should invest in a process of external review of funded initiatives whereby a sample of initiatives would be selected each fiscal year for a review by external evaluators. Given the diversity of initiatives, high-level indicators of each initiative's impact could be applied.

Recommendation   7.   The WP should develop and implement a program database, accessible to staff and managers in all regions, to manage basic aspects of their work and to permit data collection, analysis, and reporting on outcomes.

The evaluation took place in the context of the ongoing investigations of the new Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which in May 2005, recommended that the WP introduce a mix of program funding and project funding. The Committee's hearings confirmed stakeholder views expressed during this evaluation in that the termination of program funding and its corollary, the introduction of initiative funding, remains the most controversial of the 1998 changes to the WP.

The evaluation found that the termination of program funding continues to be perceived as detrimental by some organizations. On the other hand, initiative funding is believed to have increased equity of access to WP funding for organizations that were previously unable to access funding from the Program, and increased the visibility and capacity of these organizations. Survey results confirm that funding applicants are divided in their opinion of the impact of the change.

Neither 18-month nor multi-year funding, both of which were introduced in 1998, are nearly as controversial. Both are seen as positive developments. To a certain extent, stakeholders see 18-month and multi-year funding as compensating for the termination of program funding. However, some program staff and managers noted that multi-year funding is limited by its eligibility criteria. Suggestions for improvement included making multi-year funding available to less experienced organizations and ensuring its availability across the country.

While there is clearly strong support within an element of the WP's constituency for restoring program funding, the larger constituency seems largely content with the existing funding mechanisms. Among program staff, there was little support for restoring program funding, although many acknowledged a need for longer-term funding.

Recommendation   8.   The WP should consider extending multi-year funding beyond three years, consistently across Canada, to support initiatives with longer planning and implementation cycles. However, annual renewal of funding should be contingent on organizations fulfilling performance monitoring and reporting requirements.

Impact

Although this evaluation was intended to be a summative evaluation focusing on outcomes achieved by the WP, it was limited in its ability to discern the overall impact of the Program due to the limitations of the available administrative data and the relative infancy of the outcome-based approach. As a result, evaluation findings pertaining to program impact are based primarily on anecdotal information.

There is widespread, though not unanimous, agreement among stakeholders that the WP has helped to advance women's equality in Canada. However, it is considerably more difficult to pinpoint the extent to which the WP has achieved each of its four objectives – promoting institutional change, influencing public policy, increasing public understanding of action on women's equality issues, and building capacity among women's organizations. While key informants were able to give specific examples of changes related to each objective, they also pointed out that until implementation of the outcome-based approach in 2003-2004, the Program made no systematic attempt to determine its overall impact. Many also observed that it is virtually impossible to isolate the net contribution of the WP due to the equally significant role of external factors, primarily the political climate, in influencing social change.

The evaluation also sought to determine whether the WP has achieved its objectives under the federal government's Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE) initiative. Administrative data show that AGE funds have enabled the WP to realize some success by a total of 122 new groups and 123 files involving new and emerging issues. However, in interviews, many program staff and managers noted that the purpose of AGE was not explicitly identified when the initiative was introduced and that, therefore, any successes were more by accident than by design. The additional funds simply made it possible to invest more money overall.

The evaluation found some ambivalence among program staff and managers regarding the WP's contribution toward achieving SWC's strategic objectives. While most believe that the Program has contributed to a more equitable public policy and a broader range of informed stakeholders, they were divided on the matter of its contribution to departmental effectiveness. These key informants reported that the WP and the rest of SWC work in isolation from one another and do not communicate or collaborate effectively. In short, the WP is not well integrated into the agency, communications with other directorates within the agency are poor, and the WP lacks influence on departmental decision-making. There is a widespread perception that the poor relationship stems from a fundamental philosophical difference regarding the best way to achieve women's equality. The WP uses a social development approach, but this is not, nor reportedly has ever been, the approach taken by SWC. Key informants emphasized the need for improved communications and collaboration among all of the directorates within SWC.

**Recommendation   9.   SWC and the WP should work toward greater integration of
                            the WP and developing more collaborative relationships
                            between the WP and other SWC directorates to ensure that
                            each is benefiting from the work and expertise of the others.
                            For example, considering the wealth of information it collects
                            and frequent contacts with women's groups and other equality-
                            seeking organizations, the WP should be directly involved in
                            policy development and implementation. Collaborative
                            relationships between SWC directorates, including the WP,
                            should be based on a continuous exchange of information.**

Cost-effectiveness/alternatives

Key informants were unanimous that the WP is giving Canadians value for their tax dollar,
observing that the WP encourages community-based organizations to work on issues that are
important to Canadian society "on a shoestring," while relying heavily on volunteer
contributions of time and effort. Available financial information presents a picture whereby a
significant portion of the WP's limited budget goes toward administrative costs. This is likely
due to the social development approach to the work of the WP. Thus, included in the
administrative costs is the provision of technical assistance required for building capacity among
women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. The complexity of women's equality
issues and the social change process, the fact that the WP deals with a number of marginalized
organizations and/or new and emerging organizations, and the Program's decentralized delivery
model can also contribute to increasing the costs associated with providing this form of
assistance.

**Recommendation   10.   The WP should develop a procedure by which it would monitor
                            the portion of administrative costs that are associated with the
                            provision of technical assistance and other duties, which may
                            not be directly related to proposal development, assessment or
                            recommendation, or even related to the WP. Depending on
                            time tracking systems or other administrative reporting
                            requirements already in place at the WP, it could take the form
                            of a fairly simple biannual estimate of the portion of the
                            workload among program staff and managers associated with
                            technical assistance, or at the other end of the spectrum, take
                            the form of detailed daily tracking of time spent on technical
                            assistance versus other tasks.**

As well, efficiencies could potentially be gained by improvements to the standard forms, by
simplifying and/or shortening the proposal preparation process, through training, by providing
staff with better access to technologies, and greater dissemination of information to women's
groups and other equality-seeking organizations as well as the general public via the web and
other appropriate means.

The findings also suggest a need for greater transparency and increased communication with
organizations during and after the assessment process, particularly when it comes to proposals

that are declined. Stakeholders' suggestions for improving the proposal development and approval process included the provision of more staff assistance and clarifying the information available in program documentation and on the WP's web site.

Recommendation	11.	**In the case of proposals that are declined, the WP should provide clear feedback to all applicants on precisely how their proposal does not meet the eligibility criteria for funding. The WP should provide the results of the proposal assessment process to the declined applicant and always include information on how to appeal the decision.**

Recommendation	12.	**Program staff and managers emphasized the need for access to appropriate and adequate technologies to improve the efficiency of program delivery. The WP should support increased efficiency and improved communications by enhancing, where necessary, the equipment, software and support available to program staff and managers, and providing additional access to technologies related to the demands of the program staff and managers' work (e.g., improved technical support at the regional level, cellular telephones and laptops for staff use while traveling, and redesigned electronic forms).**

However, the most significant staff concerns had little to do with the efficiency of program delivery and more to do with its effectiveness. There is a general consensus among program staff and managers that effective delivery of the WP is hampered by problems related to program management. First, program staff and managers believe that the WP suffers from poor internal communications and information sharing among the regions and the national office. Secondly, there is a widespread perception that senior management within SWC does not truly understand, value and support the WP, and that as a result, the WP is not truly integrated into the agency.

Recommendation	13.	**The WP should take steps to improve internal communications by introducing mechanisms for timely communications among the regions and the national office.**

- The WP could make better use of its existing Intranet to improve the dissemination of information.

- Meetings should be held as frequently as appropriate to disseminate information and engage program staff and managers on current issues faced by the Program as well as issues of a more administrative nature. The WP should use available technologies, such as telephone or video-conferencing, to substitute for or further supplement the more costly in-person meetings with program staff and managers across the national, regional, and local offices.

There is a general consensus among stakeholders that the WP does not duplicate any other programs to advance women's equality, primarily because very few other such programs exist. The WP is seen as unique in providing support for advocacy efforts, providing a high level of technical assistance, addressing a full range of equality issues, and focusing its mandate specifically on advancing women's equality.

Stakeholders had few suggestions for alternative delivery models. However, some suggested that the WP may wish to consider the use of contribution funding in certain circumstances, while others suggested community-based models. Of course, there was also considerable support for more sustained or longer-term funding.

The evaluation found little grounds for transferring the WP away from SWC. Stakeholders maintained that the Program should be retained within SWC since it is the only federal organization with a specific mandate to advance women's equality. However, stakeholders also emphasized the need for the WP and SWC to resolve their outstanding differences so that they may work effectively together. Many key informants pointed out that to be effective, the agency needs greater visibility and a stronger voice within the federal government.

Relevance

There is general agreement that the WP is still relevant to advancing women's equality in Canada, since, despite progress in some areas, this goal has not yet been achieved. However, some key informants also expressed concern that, for fear of controversy, the Program has become overly cautious in its funding decisions and therefore risks irrelevance. Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents believe that the Program responds well to new and emerging issues, while 51% agree that it responds well to new and emerging groups.

Recommendation   14.   To be more transparent, the WP should disseminate reports on program impact to the WP's constituency and to the general public.

The evaluation found some disagreement among stakeholders regarding the WP's alignment with federal priorities and the strategic objectives of SWC. Some pointed out that the WP clearly aligns with federal priorities by addressing issues such as violence against Aboriginal women, childcare, trafficking in women, social capital, and democratic processes. However, others argued that the WP's mandate is to promote women's equality and that, quite often, this means supporting groups to challenge the status quo – that is, in terms of public policy and institutional decision-making. The crucial question, from their perspective, is the extent to which the federal government is aligned with the priorities of the WP and women's perspectives are integrated into federal policy – and not the reverse. Similarly, although some program staff and managers believe that the WP aligns well with SWC's strategic objectives, others said that the strategic objectives are vague and do not reflect the priorities of the grassroots women's movement.

1.0   Introduction

The Women's Program (WP) is a grants and contributions program that was founded in 1973 in response to a recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Originally administered by the former Department of the Secretary of State, the WP has been housed within Status of Women Canada (SWC) since 1995. Its mandate is "to support action by women's organizations and other partners seeking to advance equality for women by addressing women's economic, social, political and legal situation," thus contributing to SWC's overall goal of promoting gender equality and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of Canada.

The WP provides both funding and technical assistance to women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. Its annual grant and contribution budget is approximately $11 million, which included, from 2000 to 2005, approximately $2 million annually from the federal government's Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE).

1.1   Purpose of the evaluation

In order to fulfil Treasury Board Secretariat reporting requirements for federal grants and contributions programs, SWC engaged PRA Inc. to conduct a summative evaluation of the WP. Its purpose is to examine the design and delivery, impact, cost-effectiveness/alternatives, and relevance of the WP. As this evaluation is being undertaken in the context of a federal government-wide Expenditure Review exercise, it is also designed to address questions of public accountability and alignment with the priorities of Canadians. This report presents the evaluation findings, offers conclusions, and provides recommendations.

1.2   Outline of the report

This report is divided into several sections. Section 2.0 briefly describes the origins of the WP and provides a program profile. Section 3.0 describes the methodology used to carry out the evaluation, while Section 4.0 presents the evaluation findings. Section 5.0 concludes and provides recommendations.

Four appendices follow the main body of the report. Appendix A presents an organizational chart, Appendix B a detailed logic model. Appendix C contains the evaluation framework, and Appendix D the data collection instruments. Interim reports summarizing the results of individual data collection activities are bound separately in Volume II.

2.0   Program profile

This section of the report provides a detailed profile of the WP, including its mandate and objectives, components, and performance measurement strategy.

2.1   Overview

In its 1970 report, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women acknowledged the special role played by voluntary organizations providing services in their communities. Noting that some federal departments were providing funding to associations, the Commission called on the government to increase financial support to women's associations engaged in projects of public interest, and voluntary associations working in fields of particular concern to women. In response, the WP was created in 1973 within the Department of the Secretary of State.

In 1976, the Government of Canada established SWC as the federal agency "to coordinate policy in respect to the Status of Women and administer related programs."[1] SWC's overall goal is to promote gender equality and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of the country. The organization's current areas of focus are to improve women's economic autonomy and well-being; to eliminate systemic violence against women and children; and to advance women's human rights. Under the responsibility of the Minister of State for the Status of Women, SWC is headed by the Coordinator for the Status of Women and is comprised of seven directorates, including the WP.

The WP was transferred to SWC in 1995 with the intention of providing for "a single access point for Canadians to programs promoting women's equality."[2] The WP is currently the largest of SWC's directorates. The WP has a decentralized structure and is delivered via a national office and five regional offices: Atlantic, Quebec/Nunavut, Ontario, Prairies/Northwest Territories, British Columbia/Yukon, and National. There are currently 16 points of service across the country. Refer to Appendix A for the organizational chart of the WP.

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[1]   *Status of Women Canada 2004-05 Estimates: A report on plans and priorities,* p.5, Status of Women Canada.

[2]   *Women's Program: Accountability Framework,* p.1, Status of Women Canada.

2.2   Mandate and objectives

The mandate of the WP is "to support action by women's organizations and other partners seeking to advance equality for women by addressing women's economic, social, political and legal situation." The Program is further framed by the objectives, guiding principles, and areas of focus enumerated in Table 1.

Table 1: Objectives, guiding principles, and areas of focus of the Women's Program

Objectives

1. To promote policies and programs within key institutions which take account of gender implications, the diversity of women's perspectives and enable women to take part in decision-making processes.

2. To facilitate the involvement of women's organizations in the public policy process.

3. To increase public understanding in order to encourage action on women's equality issues.

4. To enhance the effectiveness of actions undertaken by women's organizations to improve the situation of women.

Guiding principles

1. To involve those most directly affected by the problems in identifying solutions.

2. To recognize the interconnectedness of women's equality issues.

3. To acknowledge the diversity of women and their experiences.

4. To understand the systemic nature of women's inequality.

Areas of focus

1. Eliminating systemic violence against women and the girl-child

2. Improving women's economic status

3. Achieving social justice

Social change approach

The WP funds initiatives that promote social change through citizen participation. The Program supports collective efforts toward women's equality through a strategic approach to social development that is guided by the values of the WP and emphasizes the following elements:

> ‣ The Program maintains an ongoing dialogue with groups which is open, respectful, informed, sustained, and welcomes a range of viewpoints.
>
> ‣ Those women most affected by the issues are central to defining the problem and the need for change, and developing the solutions.
>
> ‣ The social change landscape is dynamic, with players, effective strategies and issues in continual change. Individual women's groups need information and support to connect with others when developing strategies that will have an impact in that changing environment. The Program can assist, facilitate and accompany the group, as appropriate, in this process of reflection and analysis.
>
> ‣ With women's organizations, the WP plays a role in recognizing issues and opportunities for collective action. Through a process of dialogue, exploration and the contribution of expertise from the groups and from the WP, it is possible to identify the issues, strategies and outcomes where they can work together.
>
> ‣ The Program has a range of resources it can make available to groups, including ideas and suggestions, tools and materials, connections to other groups, connections to other funders, and funding. Not all of these resources will be appropriate for every group the Program works with.
>
> ‣ It is important to support a wide range of groups and strategies working for change. Not all strategies or groups supported will reach their original objective as the process of change is not necessarily sequential and linear.
>
> ‣ The Program encourages and supports connection and collaboration among groups who are working for change, learning within and among groups, and making adjustments to strategies as needed to make progress towards outcomes.
>
> ‣ The Program works with existing women's groups to support them to adopt increasingly effective strategies, with new or emerging women's organizations seeking change, and with organizations which the Program may not have historically funded but which offer effective avenues for policy and institutional change for women's equality.
>
> ‣ The Program invests in exploratory, developmental or experimental approaches, in order to help identify effective new strategies.
>
> Women's Program Management Decision, December 16, 2004
> Status of Women Canada

2.3   Program components

The WP consists of two components: technical assistance and financial assistance.

2.3.1 Technical assistance

Through the technical assistance component, the WP provides various forms of non-financial assistance to women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. Examples include assistance with developing proposals for WP funding, developing action strategies, resolving operational concerns, and reporting on the status of funded initiatives, as well as referrals to other sources of funding and opportunities to network and partner with other organizations. Other forms of technical assistance are also available to governmental and non-funded non-governmental organizations, such as sharing information about key women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations working on similar issues.

2.3.2 Financial assistance

The WP also provides financial assistance in the form of grants and contributions. Prior to 1998, financial assistance was available in two forms: program (or core) funding and project funding. In 1996, the WP held consultations with women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. During these consultations, these organizations emphasized the importance of WP funding for their efforts to advance women's equality and recommended, among other things, the continuation of program funding and an increase in the Program's overall budget.[3] However, following these consultations, the WP implemented several changes to its funding mechanisms in 1998.

  ‣ *Initiative funding replaced project and program funding* – Initiative funding was intended to make the WP more equitable, flexible, and accountable. It supports "change-oriented strategies addressing one or more of the Women's Program objectives and areas of focus, which occur within a specified time period and which have clearly articulated plans to achieve results."[4]

  ‣ *Funding for initiatives up to 18 months in duration was made available* – Prior to 1998, project funding had been available for up to 12 months only.

  ‣ *Multi-year funding was made available* – Multi-year funding supports initiatives focusing on institutional or public policy change that are up to three years in duration. Prior to 1998, multi-year funding was not available.

Also in 1998, the WP made the guidelines for assessing applications available to potential applicants.

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[3] *Report on consultations held March-May 1996 and follow-up action plan,* November 1996, Status of Women Canada.

[4] *Women's Program: Accountability Framework,* p.2.

Women's groups and other non-profit voluntary organizations committed to equality for women in Canadian society are eligible for funding from the WP, provided that they demonstrate that:

▸ Their principles, objectives, and activities support the attainment of women's equality as defined in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (UNCEDAW), the Beijing Plan of Action, the AGE, and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

▸ They operate democratically or on an otherwise participatory basis.

▸ The results of the funded initiative will be accessible to other organizations and the public.

▸ The initiative falls within the mandate of the WP and addresses one or more of its objectives and areas of focus.

▸ The initiative involves women who are affected in all aspects.

▸ They have identified other sources of financial or in-kind support.[5]

However, only women's groups can be funded under objectives #2 and #4 (see Table 1).

Organizations seeking multi-year funding must also demonstrate their experience and capacity related to planning and implementing long-term initiatives, and address the institutional or policy change objectives of the WP.

The WP does not fund initiatives that provide direct social or health services; are emotional, spiritual, personal or professional development; or have already taken place or are taking place outside of Canada. Funding cannot exceed $2 million per grant or contribution and does not cover the total costs of a given initiative. Eligible costs include salaries, professional fees, facilities, supplies, travel within Canada and publicity, and exclude capital expenditures, expenses incurred before the funding decision is made, and travel or other expenses incurred outside of Canada.[6]

Program Officers distribute a variety of "tip sheets" and provide information sessions for organizations regarding the application process, the design of outcome-based initiatives, and the development of a budget.[7] Officers can assist directly in the preparation of applications and proposals, for example, by assisting organizations to focus their initiatives and to identify objectives and expected outcomes. Once an application is deemed complete, the approval process is usually completed within 12 weeks. A portion of the funds is paid at the time of the approval, while the remainder is linked to deliverables over the course of the initiative, including but not limited to the interim and final reports.

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[5]   *Women's Program Funding Guidelines,* p. 8, Status of Women Canada. http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/funding/wpguide_e.html (last updated in 2003).

[6]   *Terms and Conditions – Women's Program,* pp.2-3, Status of Women Canada.

[7]   *Women's Program Toolkit,* November 2003, Catalyst Research and Communications.

2.4   Funding

With approximately $14 million in annual spending and 50 FTEs,[8] the WP represents roughly 58% of SWC's spending and 38% of its staff (full-time equivalent basis).[9] In 2003-2004, the WP funded 159 initiatives, spending roughly $11 million on grants and contributions,[10] $2.8 million on salaries and $562,000 on overhead and management costs.[11] The amount of individual grants varied widely, from $1,600 to $339,049. Total grant and contribution funding for the WP fluctuated from $10.2 million in 2001-2002 (funded 175 initiatives), increasing to $12.2 million in 2002-2003 (funded 178 initiatives) and falling back to $11 million in 2003-2004 – the last year for which detailed information is available. The grant and contribution budget is allocated to regions and the national office, which then make funding recommendations based on their strategic plan and public assessment guidelines. All funding recommendations must be approved by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

2.5   AGE funding

In 2000, the Government of Canada implemented the five-year Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE) initiative, whose objectives are to accelerate the implementation of gender-based analysis in public policy decision-making; to engage Canadians in the policy process; to meet Canada's international and treaty obligations and sustain Canada's status as a global leader on gender equality issues; and to enhance voluntary sector participation in support of achieving gender equality.[12] The WP has received approximately $10 million in AGE funds over five years beginning in 2000-2001 (roughly half of the total $20.5 million for this initiative).[13] The Program has used those funds to support community-based initiatives at the local, regional, and national levels for two primary purposes: to support new and emerging issues, and to support new organizations. Currently, some $2.5 million per year in AGE funds flow to the WP.[14] The AGE administrative data were summarized in a separate report on the AGE component of the WP, along with case studies of two AGE-funded initiatives (see Volume II).

2.6   Performance measurement

In April 2003, the WP implemented a new outcome-based approach with an emphasis on highlighting the results achieved by each initiative funded. An important element of the new approach was a full accountability framework, including a logic model detailing the WP's objectives, outcomes, and performance indicators. The WP logic model appears in Appendix B.

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[8]   *Departmental Performance Report 2003-04: Status of Women Canada,* Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, pp.28-29. Administrative data from Status of Women Canada (P. McInnis, June 6, 2005).
[9]   *Status of Women Canada 2004-05 Estimates: A report on plans and priorities,* pp.24, 26-27.
[10]   *Women's Program: Accountability Framework*, p.3.
[11]   Administrative data provided by Status of Women Canada (P. McInnis, June 6, 2005).
[12]   *Evaluation Framework: Agenda for Gender Equality,* pp. 1-3, November 2004, Status of Women Canada.
[13]   *Status of Women Canada 2004-05 Estimates: A report on plans and priorities*, p.27.
[14]   Ibid.

Other elements of the new outcome-based approach include a Risk-based Audit Framework, the Women's Program Procedures Manual, a performance measurement strategy, and a new suite of instruments: a new Application Form and Guide to the Application Form, as well as Interim Report, Final Report and Close-Out Assessment forms (prior to the introduction of these standard forms, different forms were in use in various regions across the country). The new instruments are intended to form the basis for developing outcome-based initiatives, for ongoing performance monitoring and for reporting on results.

3.0   Methodology

This section of the report provides a detailed description of the methodology used to complete the evaluation.

3.1   Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework in Appendix C was prepared to guide the evaluation. The framework is organized around issues typically found in outcome evaluations: design and delivery, program impact, cost-effectiveness/alternatives, and relevance/rationale. The evaluation framework articulates the evaluation issues and questions and links these to the data collection methods.

3.2   Data collection methods

To enhance the reliability and validity of the findings, multiple data sources were used wherever possible to respond to the evaluation questions. Data collection methods included:

- ‣ a review of program documents and administrative data
- ‣ a review of program files (n=45)
- ‣ a survey of applicants (n=215)
- ‣ key informant interviews (n=41)
- ‣ case studies (n=7).

Each of these methods is described in detail below. Throughout the report, the term "stakeholders" refers to a mixture of all groups from which information was collected, unless otherwise specified (e.g., external stakeholders refers to stakeholder groups outside the WP). The data collection instruments are in Appendix D. Detailed reports on the results for each method were prepared. These interim reports are provided in Volume II.

3.2.1 Document and data review

The review of program documentation and administrative data was intended to provide contextual information and to respond directly to many of the evaluation questions. The WP was responsible for providing relevant documentation and data to PRA. These materials include the Women's Program Procedures Manual, Accountability Framework (including logic model), Terms and Conditions, Risk-Based Audit Framework; program application and reporting forms; AGE and WP administrative data; Departmental Performance Reports, Reports on Plans and Priorities, consultation reports and prior evaluation and audit reports. In addition, PRA reviewed relevant documents from other sources within the Government of Canada, such as the Department of Finance, Treasury Board Secretariat, Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, Prime Minister's Office, House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, and the Policy Research Initiative (Privy Council Office), as well as information produced by the United Nations.

A report on the document and data review was submitted as a separate technical report, and elements of it have been integrated into this report. The AGE administrative data were summarized in a separate report on the AGE component of the WP, along with case studies of two AGE-funded initiatives (see Volume II).

3.2.2 File review

The purpose of the file review was, first, to identify the outcomes resulting from funded initiatives and to examine the extent to which these outcomes match with the expected results as first proposed by organizations; and second, to examine the extent to which the outcome-based approach to reporting, introduced in fiscal year 2003-2004, was being implemented and to identify any emerging issues that might benefit from further investigation or ongoing monitoring.

A total of 45 closed WP files from fiscal years 2001-2002, 2002-2003, and 2003-2004 were examined as part of the file review. This included 30 files from fiscal years 2001-2002 (n=17) and 2002-2003 (n=13), and 15 files from fiscal year 2003-2004. The 15 files for 2003-2004 represent all closed files for that year at the time the sample was selected.

For the purpose of the file review, the WP defined closed files as being either "closed complete" or "closed incomplete."[15] For 2003-2004, all closed WP files meeting these definitions were included in the review. For 2001-2002 and 2002-2003, PRA randomly selected a sample of files (five from each of the six regions) based on annual lists of all funded files per region provided by the WP. Because these lists did not identify whether these files were closed, WP staff then reviewed the sample to identify any files that were not yet closed. Open files were replaced by PRA, and the process was repeated until all files in the sample were closed according to the definition above. This process, as well as the fact that the majority of the 15, 2003-2004 files were from the British Columbia/Yukon region, resulted in an uneven regional distribution of files, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of the files reviewed, by region		
Region	**n=45**	**%**
Atlantic	6	13%
Quebec/Nunavut	6	13%
Ontario	6	13%
Prairie/Northwest Territories	7	16%
British Columbia/Yukon	13	29%
National	7	16%
Total	45	100%
Note: An initiative is considered national in scope when it involves at least 3 of the 5 regions of SWC.		

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[15] Files defined as "closed complete" are files that were closed by the region/national office and include a regional/national assessment of the funded initiative. The assessment may be the Close-Out Assessment Form introduced in April 2003 or some other type of close-out assessment done by the region/national office before April 2003. Files defined as "closed incomplete" are files that were closed by the region/national office upon determination that the final report would not be submitted or is not adequate, and that further information could not be expected from the group.

The uneven distribution across the country and limited number of files closed since the implementation of the outcome-based approach to reporting in 2003-2004 presents a significant limitation in terms of the file review's second goal, that is, to assess the extent to which the new approach has been implemented.

3.2.3 Survey of applicants

PRA conducted a survey of all women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations that applied to the WP in the last four fiscal years (2001-2002, 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005). The survey was intended to capture the opinions of applicants on the impact and current relevance of the WP and its components, as well as on program design and delivery and alternatives.

The survey was pre-tested in English and French with a small number of organizations before being mailed to all organizations composing the sample. The packages consisted of an introductory letter, explaining the purpose of the research and encouraging their participation; a questionnaire; and a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope. All organizations received both English and French packages. Respondents had the option of returning the survey to PRA either by mail, in the self-addressed, postage-paid envelope provided or by toll-free fax.

To develop the sample for the survey, PRA asked the WP to identify all organizations that had applied to the Program in the relevant fiscal years and for which the WP had contact information. The initial sample was compiled from various sources by WP staff and provided to PRA. However, when PRA reviewed the sample, numerous errors and inconsistencies were discovered, such as organizations appearing as both "funded" and "unfunded" applicants, duplicate entries, and similar problems. Once the problems with the sample had been resolved, PRA initially sent the survey to a total of 508 organizations, including 412 that had been funded at least once by the Program and 96 that had never been funded. The WP subsequently discovered that two funded organizations had been left off the original sample, and nine of the funded surveys and three of the unfunded surveys were returned to PRA due to incorrect addresses, reducing the final sample to 498.

Each survey had a unique identification number corresponding to a particular organization, enabling PRA to manage the survey process by conducting telephone follow-up with those organizations that had not returned their survey by a stipulated time. A total of 215 completed surveys were returned to PRA, for an overall response rate of 43%.

Table 3 provides a profile of survey respondents.

▸ Two-thirds of respondents (64%) completed the survey in English, while the remainder (36%) completed the survey in French.

▸ A large majority (89%) of respondents had received funding from the WP in the past. The remaining 11% had never been funded.

▸ Respondents represented all six regions, with the largest proportions coming from the National and Quebec/Nunavut regions.

Table 3: Profile of survey respondents (n=215)	
	%
Language	
English	64%
French	36%
Funding status	
Funded	89%
Unfunded	11%
Region	
National	27%
Quebec/Nunavut	22%
Prairie/Northwest Territories	16%
British Columbia/Yukon	14%
Ontario	10%
Atlantic	9%
Unknown∗	1%
Source: Survey of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding. ∗Two surveys were returned with the administrative code number obscured. As a result, the funding region could not be determined.	

The information collected by the survey was data-entered and analysed using SPSS, a statistical software package commonly used in social science research. Results from the survey have been integrated into this report. The various sources and iterative approach used to compile the list of funded and unfunded organizations did not permit stratified sampling across key variables, hence it is not possible to assess whether the profile of survey respondents is closely liked to the distribution of the entire "population" of applicants to the WP.

3.2.4 Key informant interviews

PRA interviewed a total of 41 individuals with particular knowledge of the WP or general expertise in the area of women's equality. Similarly to the survey, key informant interviews were intended to capture the views of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations regarding the WP, and included program staff and managers as well.

The WP was responsible for identifying appropriate key informants and providing PRA with up-to-date contact information. Key informants included WP managers and staff (n=15), program applicants (n=16), and external stakeholders (n=10). Throughout this report, the term "key informant" refers to a mixture of these three groups, unless otherwise specified.

PRA developed a separate interview guide for each of these three categories. The guides were tailored to the unique perspectives that the three groups of key informants were able to offer, but, wherever possible, similar questions were asked of all three groups. This approach helped the evaluation to establish how widely opinions are held across the various stakeholder groups.

Before being contacted by PRA, all key informants in the applicant and external stakeholder categories received a letter on PRA letterhead, describing the purpose and nature of the research

and inviting their participation; program managers and staff were sent an email notification by the WP that they would be contacted. The letter stressed the importance of the study and the important role that each key informant played in its successful execution.

Approximately one week after circulating the introductory letter, PRA began contacting key informants by telephone to schedule interviews. Key informants had the option of completing the interview in English or French. A technical report summarizing the findings from the key informant interviews was submitted as a separate deliverable, and interview findings have been integrated into this report. Typical of key informant interviews, individual informants are able to speak about their own experiences and observations, but are rarely in a position to comment on a program's overall impact. It is not surprising that key informants had considerably more difficulty speaking to the WP's net contribution and its progress toward meeting its objectives, versus other topics discussed (more detail in Section 4.0 – Findings).

3.2.5 Case studies

PRA completed a total of seven case studies as part of the evaluation, including two case studies of AGE-funded organizations, as well as five case studies of organizations funded through "regular" WP funds. The case studies were intended to highlight the outcomes achieved by a sample of initiatives funded by the WP. The AGE case studies included one organization funded by the Ontario region and one funded by the National region (see report in Volume II). The remaining five case studies included one organization from each of the British Columbia/Yukon, Prairies/Northwest Territories, Quebec/Nunavut, Atlantic, and National regions. For each case study, the WP was responsible for securing the organization's agreement to participate in the research. PRA contacted the organizations selected for the case studies only once their agreement to participate had been secured.

Each case study consisted of a file review and interviews (completed by telephone) with one to three key informants. It should be noted that although the purpose of the case studies was to highlight outcomes achieved by selected initiatives, all of the case studies involved initiatives that were developed and carried out before the implementation of the outcome-based approach in 2003-2004. As a result, the documentation contained in the files did not clearly or consistently identify objectives or outcomes, or the extent to which outcomes (as opposed to activities) were achieved.

The results of the file review and the interview(s) were summarized into brief case study reports. The AGE case studies were submitted early in the evaluation as part of the report on the AGE component of the WP, while the remaining five case studies were submitted later in a separate report (see Volume II). Findings from all seven case studies have been included in this report.

4.0   Findings

This section of the report summarizes the findings from all data collection methods.

4.1   Design and delivery

The overall design and delivery of the WP meet with the general approval of stakeholders. Stakeholders perceive the main strengths of the WP to be:

▸ *Its flexibility* – The parameters of the WP, including its eligibility criteria, objectives and priority areas, are sufficiently general to accommodate a wide diversity of groups, strategies, and issues. This flexibility enables the WP to respond to new and emerging issues and to support newer, smaller, non-registered charitable organizations, or organizations that may not have access to other sources of funding.

▸ *Its social development approach* – The WP supports long-term social change by supporting the capacity of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations to participate more fully in Canadian society. In keeping with its social development approach, the WP assists organizations in developing their proposals for funding and provides them with various other forms of non-financial or technical assistance.

▸ *Its presence in communities* – As a result of the decentralized structure of the WP, Program Officers are physically located in communities across the country and can work directly with organizations in those communities. This enables the WP to respond to differing realities across the country.

▸ *Its specific focus on women's equality* – Perhaps most importantly from the perspective of stakeholders, the WP is the only funding program at the federal level that focuses specifically on advancing women's equality.

Nevertheless, the WP is also perceived as having several weaknesses, related mainly to its funding mechanisms, performance measurement system, and program management approach. The WP's strengths and weaknesses will be discussed in detail throughout the rest of this report.

4.1.1 Technical assistance

Through the technical assistance component, the WP provides various forms of non-financial assistance to women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. As the primary vehicle by which the WP pursues its social development philosophy, the technical assistance component is widely seen by stakeholders as one of its major strengths.

Of the large majority of survey respondents who had received technical assistance other than assistance with proposal development and preparation (which is treated separately below), 65% characterized this assistance as *very useful,* explaining that:

‣ Staff were always available and/or approachable.

‣ The information and resources provided were useful.

‣ The assistance helped them to conceptualize the work of their organization.

‣ They received valuable referrals to other funding sources.

‣ The assistance facilitated the development of linkages and partnerships between their organization and others.

‣ Staff understand and support women's issues and/or the organization's work.

> *We're really fortunate in having the Women's Program to support our work. The staff person we work with is very helpful and provides lots of assistance. It's very easy to access her when we need to talk to her. She also has a good understanding of the issues (…). (Case study participant)*

An additional 29% of these survey respondents characterized the technical assistance that their organization received as somewhat useful.

Similarly, applicants who were interviewed agreed that these types of assistance are helpful and have enabled them to either broaden their perspective, access funds from other sources, or operate more effectively and efficiently (i.e., saving them time and effort by connecting them to relevant information or to organizations doing similar work). The most significant form of technical assistance provided by the WP is, without question, the assistance provided by program staff and managers during proposal development. The proposal development and approval process is discussed in detail below.

4.1.2 Proposal development and approval

Within the WP's social development framework, program staff and managers provide considerable direct assistance to organizations in developing their proposals for funding. Before embarking on proposal writing, prospective applicants are encouraged to discuss their ideas with staff to determine whether they fit within the parameters of the WP (sometimes, program staff proactively approach organizations with ideas for initiatives that fit these parameters). If initiatives fit the parameters of the Program, staff invite the organization to prepare a formal application. Program staff and managers provide extensive assistance in preparing proposals for submission. A key consequence of this approach, as several applicants pointed out in interviews, is that formal, written applications for funding are usually approved. Among respondents to the survey of applicants, 21% reported having ever submitted a written request for funding that was not approved.

Program staff and managers believe that this approach to proposal development is an effective risk management strategy, since it enables the WP to avoid funding poorly thought-out initiatives or organizations that lack capacity. However, they also observed that proposal development can be difficult and time-consuming, depending on the level of sophistication of the applicant organization. Moreover, they said, the process has become more protracted since the introduction of the outcome-based approach, with its emphasis on articulating a strong rationale, defensible objectives, and clear outcomes for all funded initiatives.[16]

Applicants who were interviewed expressed similar views. A minority characterized the process as onerous, arguing that the outcome-based approach is an abstract and demanding conceptual model that can be difficult for many organizations, particularly small or inexperienced ones, to grasp.[17] While some acknowledged the value of the model, they also maintained that its complexity favours the more established and sophisticated organizations. However, most said that proposal development, although time-consuming, is relatively straightforward, which they attributed to the assistance provided by staff and to the knowledge they have gained from their own past experiences in developing proposals for the Program.

> *The staff at SWC were very helpful (…) and assisted us in understanding the process and the information we needed to include in the proposal so that we could frame the logic model in a way that met the needs of the association and SWC, so that we could better plan, evaluate and monitor the project. (Case study participant)*

Results from the survey of applicants likewise indicate that most respondents have positive views of the proposal development process. About 80% agreed that during proposal development, their organization was required to demonstrate that it had involved a full diversity of women affected by the issue in the initiative; that the eligibility criteria for funding are clear; and that WP staff were clear in communicating expectations about proposal requirements. Almost three-quarters agreed that the proposal development process helped their organization to clarify the objectives of their initiative, while just over two-thirds agreed that they understand the criteria used to assess proposals for funding and that the proposal development process helped their organization to identify appropriate strategies for their initiative. However, 61% said they understand how funding requests are approved. See Table 4.

Table 4: Survey respondents' views on proposal development and approval process (n=215)	Percent in agreement
The eligibility criteria for funding are clear.	79%
The proposal development process helped our organization to clarify the objectives of our initiative.	73%
The proposal development process helped our organization to identify appropriate strategies for our initiative.	68%
During proposal development, our organization was required to demonstrate that we had involved a full diversity of women affected by the issue in our initiative.	80%
Women's Program staff were clear in communicating expectations about proposal requirements.	78%
I understand the criteria used to assess proposals for funding.	69%
I understand how funding requests are approved.	61%
Source: Survey of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations.	

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[16] The outcome-based approach is discussed in detail in Section 4.1.4.
[17] Some also acknowledged that this is not necessarily inappropriate or different from other government funders.

Of the 44 survey respondents who had submitted a written request for funding that was ultimately declined, two-thirds (64%) agreed that program staff made it clear why their organization's request for funding was not successful, while about 40% agreed that staff provided information on alternate sources of funding for their initiative, and only one-quarter agreed that they were informed of how to have the decision on their funding request reviewed. These findings suggest a need for greater transparency and increased communication with organizations during and after the assessment process, particularly when it comes to proposals that are declined.

Across all groups that participated in the evaluation, stakeholders' suggestions for improving the proposal development and approval process include:

- ▸ providing training in proposal development and the outcome-based approach
- ▸ providing more staff assistance
- ▸ simplifying and making the proposal development process more flexible
- ▸ clarifying the information available in program documentation and on the WP's web site
- ▸ expediting the grant approval process by, for example, introducing and adhering to a standard processing time for applications.[18]

4.1.3 Financial assistance

In 1998, following consultations with women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations, the WP made several major changes to its funding mechanisms, replacing program funding and project funding with initiative funding, and introducing 18-month and multi-year funding. The mechanism through which the WP disperses funds to women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations remains a controversial and widely debated subject. In fact, the new House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, created in November 2004, has recently concluded that the issue of gender equality has receded from the public policy agenda over the last decade and a half; that over the same period the WP's funding (in current dollars) has decreased; and that the absence of program funding from the WP has weakened the women's movement in Canada.[19] The Committee's position includes a recommendation that funding to

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[18]   The timeliness of the grant approval process was an issue for some applicants, who said that long delays can have negative consequences for groups that rely on WP funding, and program managers and staff acknowledged that the process is often less expeditious than groups would like. Since it was beyond the scope of this evaluation to compare the WP's application processing time with that of other federal grant and contribution programs, the evaluation cannot comment on the reasonableness of the time the WP takes to process applications.

[19]   *Increasing Funding to Equality-Seeking Organizations* (February 2005) and *Funding Through the Women's Program: Women's Groups Speak Out* (May 2005), House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

the WP be increased immediately by at least 25%[20] and a recommendation that SWC introduce a mix of core funding and project funding for the WP.[21]

Given the ongoing attention that the subject is receiving in the public policy arena, the impact of the 1998 changes to the WP's funding mechanisms were a significant issue in this evaluation.

Termination of program funding

The termination of program funding was, and remains, the most controversial of the 1998 changes. On balance, most program staff and managers support this change, although they recognize that it may have had detrimental consequences for some organizations. Almost all observed that the termination of program funding has had the positive effect of increasing equity of access to WP funding, which was an important part of the original rationale for the change. Program staff and managers explained that whereas program funding benefited a relatively small number of organizations, its removal and the introduction of initiative funding have enabled organizations that previously were unable to access funds to do so, and some organizations have made significant gains under the current funding arrangements. Moreover, key informants said, all organizations are now on the same playing field, since under initiative funding, the requirements for proposal development and grant approval apply equally regardless of an organization's size, history, or mandate. It is important to note that program funding was evidently not an equally important funding tool in all regions. Where this mechanism was used infrequently, the impact of its removal was minimal.

At the same time, program staff and managers also acknowledged that some organizations, especially national organizations with a broad mandate to advocate for women's equality, felt weakened and destabilized as a result of the termination of program funding.[22] Program funding, unlike initiative funding, could be used by these organizations to cover their operational costs, thereby affording them the necessary stability to pursue their advocacy work as new issues emerged in a context of environmental and political change. Many program staff and managers reported that the termination of program funding was interpreted by many of its prior recipients as symbolizing a lack of ongoing federal commitment to equality work. They said that it has taken a significant amount of time for the WP to rebuild its relationship with these organizations, and that some organizations have not adjusted to or accepted the change.

Survey results corroborate the impressions of program staff and management, to the extent that they demonstrate a lack of consensus among applicants regarding the termination of program funding. Overall, among funded respondents (n=193) 13% experienced the termination of program funding as a positive change and 22% experienced it as negative. However, 26% thought the change had no impact on their organization and 39% either did not know or gave no response. Together, the latter two categories represent fully two-thirds of all funded respondents (see Table 5).

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[20]   *Increasing Funding to Equality Seeking Organizations,* p.4, House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, February 2005.

[21]   *Funding Through the Women's Program: Women's Groups Speak Out,* p.8, House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, May 2005.

[22]   In one region, the main recipients of program funding were not national groups but remote and/or rural women's centres.

Table 5: Survey respondents - Impact of termination of program funding by prior program funding status (n=193)				
	All funded respondents (n=193)	**Previously program-funded (n=66)**	**Never program-funded (n=88)**	**Don't know/no response∗ (n=39)**
Positive change	13%	14%	11%	15%
Neutral	26%	33%	28%	8%
Negative change	22%	32%	14%	26%
Don't know/no response	39%	21%	47%	51%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Source: Survey of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. ∗In response to a series of questions on prior funding history, a total of 39 funded respondents either indicated that they did not know whether they were previously program funded or did not answer the question. As a result, we do not know whether they ever received program funds.				

What is perhaps more unexpected is the degree of ambivalence that exists even among prior recipients of program funding. As Table 5 shows, previously program-funded applicants were more likely than others to see the termination of program funding as a negative change – 32%, compared to 14% of those who never received program funding and 26% of those whose prior funding history is unknown. However, prior recipients of program funds are far from united in viewing the termination of program funding as detrimental. In fact, while one-third (32%) said the change was negative for their organization, the same proportion (33%) said it had essentially no impact, and one-fifth (21%) did not know or did not respond. Furthermore, there was little difference in the proportion of respondents in the three groups who thought the change was positive.

In both interviews and their survey responses, applicants who see the termination of program funding as a negative change argued that women's organizations need stable funding in order to function effectively. From their perspective, its absence means difficulties in retaining permanent staff, difficulties in maintaining office infrastructure, discontinuation of certain organizational activities, inability to plan ahead, inability to respond to new issues as they arise, and "mission drift." Some also objected to the more burdensome application process and the need to tailor their activities to meet the priorities of the WP. On the other hand, applicants who believe the termination of core funding was a positive change explained that change-oriented strategies are positive and/or more responsive to women's needs; that the result was increased visibility and capacity for their organization; that they experienced increased cooperation and interaction with other groups; and that they benefited from a wider perspective or vision.

Taken together, these results show a lack of consensus within the WP's constituency on the question of program funding. Evidently, program funding is seen as crucially important by a portion of this constituency, the nature of whose work may not be easily accommodated by initiative funding, but is seen as less important by others. Indeed, in response to an open-ended survey question on how the WP could be improved, more applicants recommended increasing the overall budget for the Program (24%) than recommended restoring program funding (19%). These were the two most frequently mentioned suggestions for improvement. All others were mentioned by 8% or less of survey respondents. In interviews, several applicants emphasized a need for both types of funding, arguing that program funding is necessary for organizations with permanent employees and a broad advocacy mandate, while initiative funding is well-suited to organizations without permanent staff and those with a narrower mandate or focus.

Among program staff and managers, there was little support for restoring program funding, although many identified a need for longer-term funding that would enable organizations to plan several years in advance, to respond to their needs with respect to organizational development, and to devote less time and fewer resources to the application process, while still requiring them to define precise objectives and undertake rigorous evaluation. It was suggested, for example, that five-year funding be available for more experienced, established groups, and those with a longer relationship with the WP.

Introduction of initiative funding

Many key informants consider the termination of program funding and the introduction of initiative funding as two sides of the same coin, and after giving their opinion of the impact of the former, most did not offer any further commentary when asked about the latter. Program staff and managers reiterated the view that equity has improved as the number of organizations that have access to WP funding has increased, although some previously program-funded organizations have had difficulty adapting to the current funding arrangements.

Several program staff and managers also observed that initiative funding is better able than program funding to assist organizations in the longer term, since it is more focused and clearer in its expectations and therefore more likely to produce and assist in identifying results. From their perspective, accountability was poor under program funding, since recipients were not required to justify their receipt of government funds, to submit any kind of strategic plan, or to demonstrate progress toward or success in achieving some goal. These areas have improved substantially with the introduction of initiative funding in 1998. However, others argued that the introduction of initiative funding has not necessarily resolved the WP's accountability issues, and that the Program might have had more success at improving accountability had it identified organizations that were not performing under program funding and developed a strategy for dealing specifically with them.

Table 6 shows how funded respondents regard the introduction of initiative funding. Overall, 34% of these respondents believe that initiative funding was a positive change, while 13% said it was negative. Almost one-quarter (24%) were neutral, and 30% did not know or gave no response. Although previously program-funded respondents were more likely than others to characterize the introduction of initiative funding as a negative change or to be neutral on this question, this can be explained to a considerable extent by the much larger proportion of respondents in the other two categories who either did not know or did not provide a response. Indeed, as was also the case with respect to the termination of program funding, similar proportions of respondents in all three categories said the change was positive.

Table 6: Survey respondents - Impact of introduction of initiative funding by prior program funding status (n=193)				
	All funded respondents (n=193)	**Previously program-funded (n=66)**	**Never program-funded (n=88)**	**Don't know/no response∗ (n=39)**
Positive change	34%	30%	35%	36%
Neutral	24%	36%	22%	10%
Negative change	13%	24%	5%	10%
Don't know/no response	30%	9%	39%	44%
Total	101%	99%	101%	100%
Source: Survey of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. Note: Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding. ∗In response to a series of questions on prior funding history, a total of 39 funded respondents either indicated that they did not know whether they were previously program funded or did not answer the question. As a result, we do not know whether they ever received program funds.				

In interviews and their survey responses, applicants who see the introduction of initiative funding as a negative change explained that the new approach entails a heavier administrative burden; that they are unable to do long-term planning; that initiative funding is too inflexible and/or required them to change the nature of their work; and that it is difficult to continuously develop new and innovative initiatives. Those who see initiative funding in a positive light most often argued that it results in more focused, coherent, or complex projects, and that it enabled their organization to be funded.

Introduction of 18-month and multi-year funding

Virtually all program staff and managers consider the introduction of 18-month and multi-year funding to be positive developments. They said that for staff, 18-month funding entails less work, although the same is not necessarily true of multi-year funding, which requires more attention to risk management and more upfront research to assess proposals. For organizations, both 18-month and multi-year funding permit greater flexibility, require less paperwork, and allow more time to achieve outcomes. To a certain extent, according to program staff and managers, 18-month and multi-year funding compensate for the termination of program funding.

Survey results show applicants to be generally supportive of these changes, although it is also clear that some lacked the experience with these types of funding that would enable them to form an opinion. As shown in Table 7, 61% of respondents said the availability of 18-month funding is a positive change, while 45% said the same about multi-year funding. In both cases, organizations that had received these types of funding were more likely than others to view them positively. In addition, significant proportions of survey respondents could not comment on the impact of the changes, likely because they had never received these types of funding themselves.

Table 7: Survey respondents - Impact of availability of 18-month and multi-year funding (n=193)		
	18-month funding	**Multi-year funding**
	%	**%**
Positive change	61%	45%
Neutral	15%	18%
Negative change	1%	1%
Don't know/no response	23%	36%
Total	100%	100%
Source: Survey of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations.		

In interviews and their survey responses, applicants echoed program staff and managers in identifying advantages of 18-month and multi-year funding. They argued that these longer-term types of funding are beneficial because they permit more time to develop and execute initiatives; make it easier to achieve outcomes; permit more complex and substantial initiatives; promote greater continuity and stability within their organization; and entail less administration and paperwork.

Overall, stakeholders identified very few drawbacks to either of these funding mechanisms. A small number of applicants cited the difficulty of predicting what issues will be relevant to the women's movement three years in advance and the possibility of being "stuck" working on outdated issues should they gauge the issues incorrectly, and argued that organizations have to balance the need for longer-term funding against the need to remain relevant.[23] Program staff and managers said that multi-year funding is limited by its eligibility criteria, which exclude organizations without a history of funding with the WP, and by its inconsistent use across the country. While some regions use multi-year funding quite often, others use it only minimally and one region, not at all; the latter reportedly because of the difficulty of predicting the environmental and political context three years in advance. Suggestions for addressing these limitations included making multi-year funding available to less-experienced organizations and ensuring that it is equally available in all regions. In relation to the need for multi-year funding and the difficulty associated with predicting issues, a key informant who participated in a case study indicated that:

> *Modifying public perceptions and influencing policy-making requires long-term efforts, as visible results in terms of influencing public policy can take a long time to materialize. (The organization) would like to see funding mechanisms better adapted to the reality of the work required to influence policy. (Case study participant)*

4.1.4 Outcome-based approach

The most recent change to the WP occurred in April 2003, when the Program implemented a new outcome-based approach with an emphasis on highlighting outcomes achieved. Important elements of the new approach included an accountability framework, a logic model, a performance measurement strategy, and a new suite of instruments and forms. Training was provided to managers and staff on the new approach three months prior to its implementation, and workshops were held a year later to familiarize them with a new tool kit to support the implementation of the approach. A key issue for this evaluation was to determine the extent to which the outcome-based approach has been implemented and to identify areas where improvements are necessary. Overall, the evaluation found that while stakeholders generally see the outcome-based approach as a positive development and some progress has been made toward its implementation, it is not without shortcomings and would benefit from a number of improvements.

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[23]   Note that multi-year funding is not necessarily three years in duration, but is the term used to describe funding that is between 18 and 36 months in duration.

Program staff and managers observed that the new approach resulted in a difficult period of adjustment for all involved as program staff, managers, and applicants became familiar with the concepts and language, and despite a more complex and protracted proposal development process, has produced more focused, strategic, and effective initiatives. Similarly, a majority of applicants who were interviewed reported that implementation of the outcome-based approach either had a positive impact on or made little difference to their organization. Several specifically praised the outcome-based approach for helping to keep their initiatives focused on objectives and concrete outcomes.

As table 8 indicates, the survey of applicants shows that despite some success at implementing the outcome-based approach, there is clearly room for improvement. Two-thirds of funded survey respondents reported that WP staff have clearly explained the outcome-based approach to their organization, while the same proportion said that assistance from WP staff has helped them to identify realistic outcomes and indicators. Almost 60% agreed that the new Application Form and Guide are easy to understand and that the Interim and Final Reports are easy to use. However, less than half agreed that they are able to plan more effectively as a result of the outcome-based approach and that the outcome-based approach has helped them to demonstrate the results of their work. This suggests that applicants may not be fully at ease with the outcome-based approach nor convinced of its benefits as an aid to strategic planning and reporting.

Table 8: Survey respondents' views on outcome-based approach (n=193)	
	Percent in agreement
Women's Program staff have clearly explained the outcome-based approach to our group.	67%
Assistance from Women's Program staff has helped our group to identify realistic outcomes and indicators.	65%
As a result of the outcome-based approach, our group is able to plan more effectively.	49%
The outcome-based approach has helped our group to demonstrate the results of our work to our members, to the community at large, and/or to other funders.	49%
The Application Form and Guide are easy to understand.	56%
The Interim and Final Reports are easy to use.	57%
Source: Survey of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations.	

More broadly, it is evident from the results of this evaluation in general that successful implementation of the outcome-based approach is hampered by a number of significant obstacles.

1) Lack of understanding of the outcome-based approach and related concepts among both program staff and applicants

Perhaps most importantly, neither applicants nor all program staff and managers have fully grasped and embraced the outcome-based approach and its related concepts, terminology, and requirements. Many key informants observed that the outcome-based approach is an abstract and demanding conceptual model that has been challenging for some applicants, especially small organizations that lack resources and experience, to understand and apply. Moreover, some applicants and external stakeholders also believe that the WP itself does not fully understand the outcome-based approach, an observation that was corroborated by program staff and managers themselves, who acknowledged that there continues to be substantial debate within the Program regarding the concepts and terminology.

> *I like this approach but am uncomfortable with how WP has understood it. I have to change my results to fit what they believe are results. It would be helpful if there were more consistency among the departments in the government on what is result-based management. (Participant in key informant interviews)*

Results from the file review lend credence to these impressions. The file review found that crucial terms associated with the outcome-based approach are often used inconsistently, and indeed interchangeably, on the part of both applicants and program staff. As a result, the activities, objectives, and expected outcomes of a given initiative are seldom readily apparent. For example, the review found that despite some progress since implementation of the outcome-based approach in 2003-2004, it is not uncommon for applicants to identify different objectives and expected outcomes in their initial applications and final reports.

The problem, moreover, is not limited to applicants. The file review found that recommendations for approval frequently contain different objectives and expected outcomes than original proposals.[24] It is not clear whether this pattern is indicative of misunderstanding on the part of program staff, or an attempt to clarify the logic of the proposed initiative. However, it seems obvious that notwithstanding the social development approach, proposals should not proceed to the recommendation for approval stage until they articulate objectives and expected outcomes in a satisfactory way, and that once a proposal is deemed acceptable, all documents pertaining to a given initiative should articulate the same objectives and expected outcomes for that initiative.

All of these findings suggest that the outcome-based approach continues to be problematic for both applicants and program staff and managers. When asked what the WP could do to make it easier for them to apply the outcome-based approach, survey respondents most commonly suggested in-person workshops, training, or seminars in the outcome-based approach, and additional examples, guidance, and one-on-one support and assistance during the proposal development process.

2) Lack of a strategy for analysing and reporting on program outcomes

Although the WP has developed an accountability framework, logic model and reporting forms, a second major obstacle to successful implementation of the outcome-based approach is the absence of any strategy or tool for analysing and reporting on program impact. While the WP collects a considerable amount of information via the various forms it introduced in 2003-2004, at present it does not "roll-up" or synthesize these data, at either the national or the regional level. As a result, the Program is unable to report in any systematic way to Parliament and to Canadians on the results it has achieved.

Key informants reported that an analysis and reporting strategy is currently under development and will hinge on information contained within the standard forms, particularly the Final Report Form and the Close-Out Assessment Form. While the evaluation did not have access to the details of this strategy, it is clear that its success will depend on the forms first, being completed

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[24]   The same could be said of Close-Out Assessment Forms, although these may legitimately contain different objectives and expected outcomes because of an approved revision to the original objectives.

consistently and second, containing information that can be synthesized and analysed with relative ease.

With respect to the first point, the file review found that all 15 of the 2003-2004 files reviewed contained a Close-Out Assessment Form, while Final Reports using the standard form were included in just over half of the files. Where the standard Final Report Form was not used, a final report in an alternate format was included, since substituting the standard form with a final report prepared for another funder is permissible. However, in these cases, the final reports tended to describe the initiative rather than respond directly to the outcome-based questions posed by the standard form, clearly complicating the task of synthesis and analysis.

It is important to acknowledge here that the file review component of this evaluation was limited in the extent to which it could meet its second objective, that is, to examine the extent to which the outcome-based approach to reporting was being implemented and to identify any emerging issues that might benefit from further investigation or ongoing monitoring. This was due to the small number of "closed files" available for review from the 2003-2004 fiscal year, and was a consequence of the short period between the implementation of the outcome-based approach and this evaluation.

With respect to the second point, the information provided on the Final Report Forms seems to consist largely of self-assessments by the funded organizations. Generally speaking, this type of information is difficult to validate, synthesize, and analyse without risking a significant loss of meaning. Given the inherent difficulties of measuring social change, several program managers questioned whether the WP is collecting useful and relevant outcome information, and recommended that the WP diversify its performance measurement approach by focusing on more objective qualitative data collection methods, as well as "quantitative" methods using the standard forms.[25]

3) Inadequate program database to capture information collected and facilitate reporting on outcomes

A third obstacle is the inadequacy of the current program database. It is not accessible to regional managers and staff, and it does not permit analysis of and reporting on activities and outcomes achieved at the regional level and across the Program as a whole. Key informants reported that it is outdated, accessible only at the national level, difficult to manipulate, and incapable of producing necessary or useful information.[26]

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[25]   Strictly speaking, the information collected via the standard forms is not quantitative data but rather qualitative assessments by organizations and program staff and managers.

[26]   These impressions were corroborated in various ways throughout the evaluation. For example, the WP provided the evaluation team with basic administrative data derived from their grant and contribution database, but more detailed requests for data were not put forward since the team was told that any data extracts would be difficult and time-consuming to produce. Similarly, the WP could not produce an up-to-date electronic database or spreadsheet of all organizations that had applied for funding (whether funded or not) within a specified time period, along with their contact information, for the purpose of the survey sample.

Many program staff and managers pointed out that a functioning program database is absolutely essential if the WP is to meet its performance monitoring and accountability obligations, particularly given the near impossibility of performing the necessary analysis manually. The development of such a database is under discussion as part of a larger information management project at the departmental level.[27] However, there is a perception among program staff that progress toward it has stalled, which they attributed to lack of financial resources, technical capacity, and management commitment.

At the same time, however, several cautioned against over-reliance on a database solution, arguing that information generated in this way may risk superficiality or irrelevance if not understood in its proper context or as part of a larger whole. Again, these key informants advocated a diversified performance measurement strategy that uses qualitative as well as quantitative approaches.

4) Uncertainty over appropriateness of outcome-based approach to social development work

Finally, there is continuing uncertainty about the appropriateness of the outcome-based approach to social development work. In interviews and the survey, many applicants expressed concern that the WP has unrealistic expectations when it comes to measuring and reporting on results. Applicants pointed out that social change, as the ultimate goal of their work, is not easily measured in the way the outcome-based approach requires it to be. They observed that the sought-after outcomes of social development work are affected (sometimes negatively) by external factors, are frequently difficult to measure because of their intangible nature, and often cannot be realized, much less measured, in the short term – yet they remain a worthy target and the work to achieve them must be done. For these applicants, the Program's reporting expectations are not consistent with the nature of social development work.

Given the long-term nature of social development work, the difficulty of measuring many expected outcomes, and the limited funds the Program makes available, many applicants recommended that the WP modify its reporting expectations. For example, it was suggested that for reporting purposes, the Program should place less emphasis on measuring outcomes and more emphasis on documenting activities undertaken with WP funding – and accept the assumption that if planned activities have been carried out, some progress toward outcomes has likewise been achieved.

> *Not all systemic change is easily measured in the way that the reports require them to be. (…) I think there needs to be room for some assumptions in the reporting strategy. (Participant in key informant interviews)*

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[27] In 2004, a Database Working Group was established to study the WPdatabase requirements and how to move from a system that collects mostly administrative data to one that will collect and analyse outcome information from the Close-Out Assessment Forms. The Database Working Group recommended that SWC purchase the GCIMS database from Justice Canada (*Grants and Contributions Database Analysis*, Women's Program Database Working Group, May 6, 2005).

4.2 Impact

Because it is a summative evaluation, a primary goal of this study was to determine the extent to which the WP has achieved its four objectives; namely, promoting institutional change, influencing public policy, increasing public understanding in order to encourage action on women's equality issues, and building capacity among women's organizations. Unfortunately, the evaluation was limited in its ability to discern the overall impact of the Program in these areas.

The evaluation had very little administrative data available to it for analysis, since prior to implementation of the outcome-based approach in 2003-2004, the WP did not *systematically* collect information on outcomes achieved. Thus, although the evaluation reviewed a sample of program files with the objective of collecting outcome information, it was ultimately impossible to perform this analysis due to inconsistent identification of activities, objectives, and outcomes across documents within the files; missing documents; failure of final reports to establish a clear link to original applications; and failure of final reports to provide evidence to support assertions that outcomes had been achieved. Moreover, although the WP introduced standardized forms in 2003-2004 to collect information on outcomes, to date this information remains paper-based and therefore difficult to synthesize and analyse (in any case, at the time of data collection, there were only 15 closed files from that year). As a result of the poor quality of the outcome information in the earlier files, and the relative infancy of the outcome-based approach, the evaluation relies primarily on anecdotal information on program impact gained through key informant interviews, case studies, and the survey of applicants.

4.2.1 Achievement of WP objectives

The evaluation found a broad consensus among stakeholders that the WP has had a positive impact. Most key informants are convinced that the WP has helped to advance women's equality in Canada, and, as Table 9 shows, funded survey respondents overwhelmingly agreed that WP funding has enabled their organization to undertake initiatives it otherwise would not have been able to pursue (93%), and that WP funding has helped their organization to achieve some of its objectives in advancing women's equality (91%).

Table 9: Survey respondents' views on impact of the Women's Program (n=193)	
	Percent in agreement
Women's Program funding has enabled our organization to undertake initiatives it otherwise would not have been able to pursue.	93%
Women's Program funding has helped our organization to achieve some of its objectives in advancing women's equality.	91%
Women's Program funding has helped our organization to leverage other sources of funding.	63%
Source: Survey of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations.	

It is considerably more difficult to pinpoint the extent to which the WP has achieved each of its four objectives. Based on the survey results, the WP has made its greatest contribution towards increased public understanding; 37% of funded survey respondents reported increased awareness or understanding of women's issues and needs as a result of their initiative. Another 25% reported some type of increased civic engagement by women. This category, which includes

involvement in institutional and public policy decision-making, advocacy efforts and politics, encompasses the institutional change, public policy, and capacity-building objectives of the WP. Table 10 provides a complete summary of responses.

Table 10: Survey respondents - Thinking about what your organization has accomplished with Women's Program funding, what has changed as a result of those initiatives? (n=193)	
Changes	**%**
Increased awareness/understanding of women's issues/needs	37%
Increased civic engagement by women (includes involvement in institutional and public policy decision-making, advocacy, and politics)	25%
Establishment of partnerships/networks/collaboration	13%
Organization's resources/tools are being used by other parties	12%
More women involved in a particular economic/industrial sector	8%
Increased organizational capacity/expertise/positioning	6%
Increased availability/accessibility of services for women	5%
Public policy/legislative change	5%
Increased self-confidence/self-esteem on part of women	4%
More women leaving abusive relationships/seeking help	3%
Increased financial independence/reduced poverty for women	2%
Other	9%
Nothing – initiative not yet concluded	3%
No response	11%
Source: Survey of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. Note: Total does not sum to 100% due to multiple responses.	

Key informants, for their part, believe that the WP has made the most progress toward its public understanding and public policy objectives, and that progress toward institutional change and increased capacity of women's organizations has been more difficult to achieve. Speaking from their own experiences and personal observations, they gave numerous examples of changes relating to each of the WP's four objectives.

Promoting institutional change

Key informants believe that promoting institutional change has been one of the more difficult of the WP's objectives to achieve. They also find it difficult to measure progress toward achieving this objective. Several key informants indicate their awareness of significant changes in various institutional policies toward increasing equality, but also indicate that very little is known about the implementation and impact of these changes.

Case Study: MediaWatch

MediaWatch is a national non-profit organization whose mandate is to promote and advocate social justice and equality in the media for women by educating media industries, government and the public, conducting research, and encouraging consumer advocacy. Major activities of the "Bridging the Gap: Advancing a New Model of Regulation" initiative included working in partnership with self-regulatory organizations (SROs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) to understand their interest in developing a new regulatory model for radio and television broadcasting and the Internet, conducting a national survey of Canadians including youth, conducting focus groups with youth and parents of youth, and conducting key informant interviews with CSO representatives. The information gathered was provided to CSOs, SROs, federal government agencies concerned about regulation, and the broadcasters and regulators themselves.

Influencing public policy

Key informants believe that considerable success has been realized on the public policy front, and they cited numerous examples of changes that have resulted in part from the efforts of WP-funded organizations. These include the federal government's recent announcement of the National Child Care Agenda, changes to maternity benefits and leave, the halting of the *Secure Care Act* in British Columbia, the introduction of the *Victims of Domestic Violence Act* in Alberta, successful lobbying for provincial funding for transition houses in Ontario, incorporation of indigenous women's issues into the Beijing +10 process, and increasing participation of Aboriginal women in Aboriginal government and self-government structures in Yukon and Northwestern Ontario. They cited other successes such as changes to the justice system response to family violence in some provinces, and introduction of harassment policies in educational, health, and correctional institutions. Despite the fact that key informants believe that considerable success has been realized, only 5% of funded survey respondents said that public policy or legislative change occurred as a result of their initiative, while 25% reported increased civic engagement by women.

Case Study: Le Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail (CIAFT)

CIAFT is made up of approximately 50 member organizations, all women's groups located in the province of Quebec. Together, they work to improve women's access to and conditions while in the labour market. CIAFT has led various research, awareness-raising and training initiatives, such as "Améliorer la situation des femmes sur le marché du travail" (2001-02), "Reconnaître le travail des Québécoises"(2002-03) and "L'avenir de l'autonomie économique des femmes dans le contexte actuel de précarisation des conditions de travail" (launched in 2004). The council is active at a political level and in terms of supporting its member organizations, specifically via consultations, networking, research and information-sharing. CIAFT has maximized the impact of its analyses, consultation activities, and reports and has also raised awareness among representatives of the provincial government and employers with regard to the reality faced by and specific needs of women relative to the labour market.

Case Study: Justice For Girls (JFG) Outreach Society

JFG is a feminist anti-violence organization, formed in response to a perceived lack of programs and services specifically addressing the needs of girls dealing with homelessness, poverty and violence. JFG monitored R. v. Dezwaan, *the case of a white male charged with murdering a young First Nations girl. Following the trial, JFG issued a press release calling for an inquiry into the possible mishandling of this case by the police and the courts. The Attorney General of British Columbia asked JFG to prepare a brief on its concerns about the case.*

Using data gathered through court, police, and corrections monitoring, JFG, together with law students, an articling student, and an incarcerated young woman, is writing a practice guide that provides instruction in how to effectively advise and represent young women charged with criminal offences under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act.* Ultimately, the purpose of the guide is to decrease the incarceration of teenage girls by giving lawyers the tools they need to advocate effectively on their behalf. The guide is to be published in the coming year. In another example, JFG and other community organizations successfully mobilized in opposition to the *Secure Care Act,* which would have allowed for the detention of young women without arrest. The Province

of British Columbia has never enforced the Act. (More details as to other activities and outcomes of selected initiatives are available in the interim report on case studies, in Volume II.)

Increasing public understanding

Key informants reported increased public understanding on a diverse range of issues as a result of WP-funded initiatives, including pay equity, sex trafficking, violence against Aboriginal women, *sharia* law, female genital mutilation, child care, the differential impact of budgets on women, poverty and welfare, and legal aid and family law issues pertaining to women. As already noted, according to the survey of applicants, increased public understanding was the most common outcome resulting from WP-funded initiatives, with 37% of funded respondents identifying this outcome.

Case Study: Changing Together – A Centre for Immigrant Women

Changing Together – A Centre for Immigrant Women is a charitable organization operated by immigrant women for immigrant women. Its mission is to help Edmonton and area immigrant women and their families overcome personal and systemic barriers that keep them from participating fully in Canadian society. Through a series of interviews and focus groups, Changing Together has increased awareness among live-in caregivers in Edmonton of the services available to them, their rights as employees in Canada, and their rights under the federal Live-in Caregiver Program. The initiative also increased awareness among employers of their roles and responsibilities under the Program.

Building capacity of women's groups

Key informants believe that the WP has realized limited success in building the capacity of women's organizations. In fact, some argued that women's organizations have suffered a "backward spiral" in this regard, which they attributed to the elimination of program funding. On the other hand, others reported increased capacity of a diverse range of women's organizations, representing sex workers, Aboriginal women, women with mental illness, and immigrant/refugee women's groups. Some gave specific examples of ways in which the capacity of these organizations has improved, including establishment of organizations as formal coalitions and their participation in the women's movement, increased visibility of organizations, and increased ability to support other organizations. Based on the survey of applicants, increased capacity was a relatively common outcome of funded initiatives, with 13% of funded respondents reporting increased partnerships, networks, and collaboration as a result of their funded initiative, 12% reporting that other organizations are using tools they developed, and 6% mentioning increased organizational capacity, positioning, or expertise.

Case Study: CWCEDC

The Canadian Women's Community Economic Development Council (CWCEDC) is an association of volunteer practitioners that serves women-centred programs and community economic development (CED) organizations in terms of research, awareness-raising with stakeholders and mainstream organizations, advocacy, networking, and partnership development. The council conducted extensive consultations with governments, foundations, mainstream CED organizations and other private and non-governmental organizations and designed a multi-year national strategic action plan to further women's CED in Canada.

Case Study: Equay-wuk Women's Group

Equay-wuk is an Aboriginal women's group in Northwestern Ontario. In 1999, Equay-wuk was established to address the relative lack of knowledge among Nishnawbe women of First Nations political organizations and structures, and their low rate of involvement in First Nations governance structures. Its workshops, radio broadcasts, and community gatherings have provided information to Aboriginal women throughout the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) region, creating a constituency of Aboriginal women who have been educated and mobilized around governance issues. Equay-wuk's work has also increased awareness among NAN leadership of the importance of women's participation in Aboriginal governance, as evidenced by the passing of several NAN resolutions. Finally, Equay-wuk's work has contributed to the growing involvement of women in Aboriginal governance in the NAN region.

Overall contribution toward achieving WP objectives

Key informants observed that it is virtually impossible to pinpoint the net contribution of the WP in these areas, due to the equally significant role of other factors in influencing social change. The most important of these, they believe, is the political climate. Thus, while the WP supports women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations and contributes to advances to the extent that it can, progress is ultimately a matter of political will. As a result, change is often slow in coming and, more importantly, can be quickly erased. Other factors thought to influence social change include the dedication and hard work of women's organizations; demographic changes; the state of the economy; the impact of globalization; media exposure; the contribution of other funders, donors, and supporters; the attitudes and actions of provincial governments; the number of women in positions of political power; the support of key politicians; and the existence of a critical mass of public understanding leading to pressure for action.

4.2.2 Achievement of AGE objectives

Since 2000-2001, the WP has received $2 million in additional funding per year as part of the AGE initiative. Within the WP, AGE funding is intended primarily to broaden the scope of organizations receiving financial support and to increase the Program's ability to support action on new and emerging issues.

Administrative data from the WP showed that AGE funds have enabled the WP to support a total of 122 new organizations and 123 files involving a wide range of new and emerging issues. New issues include women in the fisheries industry, trade and globalization, sexual exploitation and sex tourism-trafficking, date rape/dating violence, reproductive rights, AIDS and infectious diseases, Aboriginal self-government, violence against Aboriginal women, women in technology and e-economy, *sharia* law, genital mutilation, extreme urban poverty, rural issues, and federal maternity and parental benefits. New organizations include those working on these issues, such as, but not limited to, Aboriginal groups, immigrant and ethnocultural groups, organizations involved with trade, technology, and/or globalization, and rural groups. According to key informants, one region has reportedly used the AGE to fund "mixed" groups (groups with both male and female membership), while another used AGE funds to support region-wide issues, which has helped to improve networking and collaboration among groups across the region.

However, several program staff and managers also noted that they could have funded these issues and organizations even in the absence of the AGE. These key informants reported that the purpose of the AGE was not explicitly identified when this funding was made available. Therefore, any successes in achieving AGE objectives were realized more by accident than by design. The additional funds simply made it possible for the WP to invest more money overall.

4.2.3 Achievement of SWC strategic objectives

In 2004-2005, the strategic objectives of SWC were *strengthened and more equitable public policy, a broader range of informed stakeholders,* and *increased departmental effectiveness.* While most program staff and managers believe that the WP has contributed, although to varying degrees, to achieving a more equitable public policy and a broader range of informed stakeholders, they were divided on the matter of its contribution to departmental effectiveness. Several said that the WP has contributed greatly in this regard since the introduction of the outcome-based approach and the accountability framework, and a few argued that SWC would not achieve any of its strategic objectives were it not for the Program.

However, many program staff and managers were more ambivalent, reporting that the WP has a poor relationship with the rest of SWC. According to them, the WP and the rest of SWC work in isolation from one another and do not communicate or collaborate effectively. In short, according to these key informants, the WP is not well integrated into the agency, communications with other directorates within the agency are poor, and the WP lacks influence on departmental decision-making – including influence on the development of the agency's strategic objectives. There is a widespread perception that the root of the problem is a fundamental philosophical difference regarding the best way to achieve women's equality. The WP uses a social development approach, but this is not, nor reportedly has ever been, the approach taken by SWC. These key informants emphasized the need for improved communications and collaboration among all of the directorates within SWC.

4.2.4 Unexpected impacts

The evaluation did not find evidence of significant unexpected impacts resulting from the WP, either positive or negative. Among funded survey respondents, about half reported that their initiative had unintended positive consequences, such as the development of new or unexpected partnerships or allies; use of the organization's resources by other groups; increased visibility or credibility for the organization; increased membership in the organization; and unexpected political mobilization of women. Key informants gave similar examples. However, it should be noted that these impacts are not, strictly speaking, unexpected, given the objectives of the WP. Only 9% of funded survey respondents reported that their initiative had unintended negative consequences. The latter were too few and divergent to be summarized.

4.3   Cost-effectiveness/alternatives

4.3.1 Efficiency of program delivery

The evaluation explored several aspects of program delivery to determine whether the WP is delivered efficiently, including the proposal development and approval process, the community's access to program staff, staff access to adequate technologies, and staff supports.

Proposal development and approval

In 2003-2004, the WP spent roughly $11 million on grants and contributions,[28] $2.8 million on salaries, and $562,000 on overhead and management costs.[29] This translates into an administrative efficiency ratio of approximately 31¢ per dollar awarded (i.e., the administrative cost to deliver one dollar of funding is 31¢). Since it is not possible to distinguish among various administrative costs, the ratio does include costs likely associated, in large part, to the WP's social development framework. Within this framework, program staff provide considerable assistance to organizations in developing their proposals for funding as well as other forms of technical assistance, with the goal of building the capacity of women's organizations and ultimately strengthening the capacity of the women's movement as a whole. In addition, we note:

▸ The complexity of women's equality issues and the social change process can contribute to making the proposal development process more time consuming.

▸ Marginalized organizations and/or new and emerging organizations can require more assistance.

▸ The decentralized delivery model of the WP, by providing greater accessibility, can prove more costly.

▸ Technical assistance can be provided to groups who never receive funding.

▸ Regional staff are also responsible for other SWC duties, in addition to the delivery of the WP, and it is not clear what portion of the costs associated with these other duties is included with the administrative costs of the WP.

Given the social development framework and, more recently, the additional requirements of the outcome-based approach, the need for efficiency in program delivery cannot easily be separated from the question of effectiveness. Many program staff and managers emphasized that while the WP's approach to proposal development is complex and time consuming, it is also an effective risk management strategy that enables the WP to avoid funding poorly thought-out initiatives and organizations that lack capacity. That being said, stakeholders gave two main suggestions for improving the efficiency of the proposal development process: simplifying the process so that it is less complex and time consuming, and providing workshops and training in proposal

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[28]   *Women's Program: Accountability Framework*, p.3.
[29]   Administrative data provided by Status of Women Canada (P. McInnis, June 6, 2005).

development and the outcome-based approach to applicants so that they are better positioned to prepare proposals without extensive staff assistance.

With respect to grant approval, applicants expressed concern that it is often subject to long delays, which they said can have negative consequences for organizations that rely on WP funding. Applicants observed that, compared to other funding sources, the Program's proposal and reporting requirements are more detailed and rigid and the proposals and reports require more time to prepare; however, the amount of funding provided by WP is generally larger. Program staff and managers acknowledged that the process is less expeditious than applicants would like and suggested that the Program introduce and adhere to a standard processing time for applications.

Staff access to adequate technologies

Lack of staff access to adequate technologies emerged as a major issue in this evaluation. As already discussed, program staff and managers emphasized the need for a program database, accessible to regional staff, to capture data and facilitate data analysis and reporting on outcomes. In addition, program staff had numerous other concerns regarding their access to appropriate technologies, including poor or merely adequate computers; lack of technical support at the regional level; lack of cellular telephones and laptops for staff use while travelling; poorly designed electronic forms; under-utilization of the WP's Intranet; and excessive reliance on in-person meetings at the management level when technology-based approaches would also work.

Community's access to staff

From the perspective of program staff and managers, WP staff are as responsive and accessible as possible given their numbers and financial resources. Staff from several regions stressed the importance of in-person contact with organizations in their own communities and said that they lack the personnel, as well as the travel budget, to serve all communities and groups within their region equally (although others emphasized other ways of ensuring accessibility through, for example, 1-800 lines and selective travel). Indeed, program staff and managers commonly cited insufficient staff resources as a weakness of the WP. However, survey results do not support the notion that the WP's constituency considers access to program staff to be problematic.

Staff supports

Program staff and managers reported that efficient program delivery is hampered by poor internal communications and limited information-sharing among the regions and the national office. To a great extent, they reported, WP staff "work in silos" and are unaware of the work being done by their colleagues in other regions and even the way the WP operates in other regions. There was widespread agreement that the Program needs a mechanism for effective, timely communications among staff and managers in the national and regional offices.

Finally, as already noted, there is a widespread perception among program staff and managers that senior management within SWC does not truly understand, value, and support the WP and the social development approach and that, as a result, the WP is not well integrated into the agency. Key informants identified the need for a more supportive and collaborative relationship among all of the directorates within SWC, arguing in particular that the grassroots work funded

by the WP needs to be better connected with and "feed into" the agencies' policy development processes.

4.3.2 Duplication

There is a general consensus among stakeholders that the WP does not duplicate any other programs to advance women's equality in Canada, primarily because very few similar programs exist. Some examples include Canadian Heritage's Aboriginal Women's Program, Québec's *Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome* and *À égalité pour décider,* and, in some provinces, women's directorates and advisory councils. Key informants consider the WP to be unique in providing financial support for advocacy efforts, in providing a high level of technical assistance, in addressing the full range of equality issues, and in its specific mandate to advance women's equality. However, although key informants do not believe that the WP duplicates any other programs, several said that it can be perceived to work at cross-purposes with other federal programs because it funds organizations to influence government policy and legislation.

WP funding varies in importance for applicants who were interviewed, representing between 2% and almost 100% of their total funding. While some noted that WP funding is critical to the survival of their organizations, others said that its importance has declined, particularly since the termination of program funding. Applicants observed that WP is the only funder focusing specifically on advancing women's equality. Like other key informants, applicants did not identify any duplication with other programs.

4.3.3 Alternative delivery models

Key informants had few suggestions for alternative delivery models, arguing that generally speaking, the model used by the WP is appropriate. Several pointed out that determining an appropriate delivery model is a very complicated matter, particularly given the diversity of groups that form the Program's constituency, the Program's limited resources, and the imperative, not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future, to demonstrate results to Parliament and to Canadians. Others said that none of the alternatives they knew of would constitute an improvement. The most common recommendations were:

> ‣ *Contribution funding* – A few key informants recommended that the WP consider the use of contribution agreements in certain specific circumstances, and in particular, for longer-term and more complex initiatives. These key informants argued that while grants are appropriate for short-term initiatives, larger initiatives could benefit from the greater degree of collaboration and shared responsibility that contribution agreements entail. However, opposition to contribution agreements was also expressed on the grounds that they do not allow recipients sufficient flexibility.

> ‣ *More sustained or longer-term funding* – Key informants recommended various forms of longer-term funding, including the reintroduction of program funding and the extension of multi-year funding to a maximum of five years from the current three. Among survey respondents, 19% recommended restoring program funding, while another 3% recommended making more multi-year funding available.

‣ *Community-based delivery model* – A few key informants suggested that the WP consider the use of a community-based model of program delivery. In such a model (key informants gave the model used by the National Homelessness Secretariat as an example), a committee or working group of community representatives makes recommendations for funding and administers the program. The perceived benefits of this approach include regular consultation with the community and an arm's-length relationship with the political process. On the other hand, some key informants were opposed to community-based delivery, observing that where this model has been used, it has been subject to conflicts of interest. These key informants believe that government delivery is more transparent and equitable.

‣ *Social Development Canada's Social Development Partnership Program* – Finally, a few key informants recommended that the WP consider a model similar to Social Development Canada's Social Development Partnership Program, which offers both program and project funding in relation to specific competitions.

4.3.4 Alternative delivery agents

The evaluation found little support for transferring the WP from SWC to another delivery agent. Key informants emphasized the importance of maintaining the Program within the federal government, given its commitment to and responsibility for gender equality under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.* Moreover, although a few key informants speculated about the possibility of relocating the WP to another federal department such as Social Development Canada, on balance the vast majority was adamant that the Program be retained within SWC, primarily on the grounds that this is the only federal organization with a mandate to advance women's equality. In fact, several pointed out that the Program was transferred to SWC in the first place to consolidate within a single organization the various federal bodies that were pursuing women's equality and, ultimately, to encourage "synergies" and permit collaborative efforts to flourish. Nonetheless, as noted elsewhere in this report, key informants emphasized the need for the WP and SWC to resolve their outstanding differences so that the two may work effectively together. For these key informants, the synergies and collaboration anticipated to result from the relocation of the WP to SWC have not yet materialized.

4.3.5 Other options

Key informants emphasized the ongoing need for the WP, but also identified other strategies. Most often, they identified a need for SWC to have greater visibility and a stronger role within the federal government. Currently, the organization is small, has limited financial resources, and, as a federal agency under the Department of Canadian Heritage, lacks autonomy and influence. As a result, SWC is limited in the extent to which it can support the WP – be it in terms of funding, visibility or clout – and in the extent to which it can advance women's equality more generally.

These key informants said that ideally, a stand-alone ministry of women's equality should be established at the federal level with a coordinating role with respect to gender equality issues. Related to this point, many key informants argued that SWC should be responsible for

monitoring the implementation of gender-based analysis across the federal government and for holding departments and ministries accountable for its implementation.

4.3.6 Value for money

Key informants were unanimous that the WP is giving Canadians value for their tax dollar, observing that the WP encourages community-based organizations to work on issues that are important to Canadian society "on a shoestring," while relying heavily on volunteer contributions of time and effort. In short, key informants characterized the WP as an under-funded program that has accomplished exceptional results despite a limited budget. That being said, it bears repeating that a significant portion of the WP's budget goes toward administrative costs, including the provision of technical assistance.

4.4   Relevance[30]

Among the WP's stakeholders, there is widespread agreement that the WP is still relevant to advancing women's equality in Canada because, despite progress in some areas, women's equality has not yet been achieved. In fact, many key informants argued that the WP is now more relevant than ever, as new and complex issues emerge in a social and political context that some characterized as increasingly indifferent to women's equality. Several key informants pointed out that the Program is particularly relevant to the most marginalized women in Canada, including Aboriginal women, women in the sex trade, immigrant and refugee women, and women in rural, northern, and isolated areas.

On the other hand, key informants also suggested that, for fear of controversy, the Program has become overly cautious in its funding decisions (i.e., in the types of organizations and issues that it funds) and therefore risks irrelevance. This impression was corroborated, to some extent, by results from the applicant survey. While 90% of respondents agreed that the WP is still relevant to advancing women's equality in Canada, considerably fewer believe that the Program responds well to new emerging issues (58%) and responds well to new and emerging groups (51%) (see Table 11).

Table 11: Survey respondents' views on relevance of the Women's Program (n=215)	
	Percent in agreement
The Women's Program responds well to new and emerging groups.	51%
The Women's Program responds well to new and emerging issues.	58%
The Women's Program is still relevant to advancing women's equality in Canada.	90%
Source: Survey of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations.	

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[30]   According to the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada: "Relevance issues might include whether the policy, program or initiative is the most appropriate response to an identified need. There may also be issues around whether the identified need which led to the implementation of the policy, program or initiative has changed." http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/pubs/RMAF-CGRR/RMAF_Guide_e.pdf , p.23 (August 17, 2005).

Survey respondents and key informants predicted detrimental consequences for women's organizations and women's equality in general if the WP did not exist. They argued that some women's organizations would disappear, while many others would curtail their activities or change their mandate (by, for example, becoming service providers only); the diversity of women's voices would be diminished; the federal government would lose the mechanism that connects it to the grassroots women's movement; the women's movement as a whole would lose coherence and effectiveness; and, ultimately, the advancement of women's equality in Canada would slow, stall, or possibly even regress. In short, given the absence of other significant players in the field, stakeholders consider the WP to be of critical importance to the health of the women's movement and to the advancement of women's equality in Canada.

4.4.1 Alignment

Program staff and managers were divided on the question of the WP's alignment with federal priorities. Some believe that the WP aligns well with these priorities, citing examples such as addressing issues involved in violence against Aboriginal women, child care, trafficking in women, social capital, and democratic processes. However, many questioned the implicit assumption that the WP *should* align with federal priorities. They pointed out that the Program's mandate is to promote women's equality and that, quite often, this means supporting groups to challenge the status quo – that is, in terms of public policy and institutional decision-making. For these key informants, the crucial question is the extent to which the federal government is aligned with the priorities of the WP and women's perspectives are integrated into federal policy – and not the reverse.

Similarly, program staff and managers had differing opinions on the extent to which the WP aligns with the strategic objectives of SWC. While a few said that the WP aligns well with the agency's strategic objectives, others said that the strategic objectives are vague and do not reflect the priorities of the grassroots women's movement. These key informants argued that the WP should be consulted in the development of the strategic objectives, and in departmental planning processes more broadly, to ensure that community, local, and regional concerns are appropriately reflected.

5.0   Conclusions and recommendations

This final section of the report summarizes the evaluation findings, draws conclusions, and provides recommendations.

Design and delivery

Overall, stakeholders perceive the design and delivery of the WP to have several important strengths. These include the Program's flexibility, which enables it to accommodate a diverse range of groups, strategies and issues; its social development approach, which is designed to support long-term social change by supporting the capacity of women's organizations to participate more fully in Canadian society; its decentralized structure and presence in communities; and its unique focus on women's equality.

The structure of the WP, consisting of technical assistance and financial assistance components, is seen as basically sound. Program staff and managers and applicants likewise observed that the proposal development process can be demanding, and more so since the introduction of the outcome-based approach.

Successful implementation of the outcome-based approach is currently hampered by a number of significant obstacles. Perhaps most importantly, neither applicants nor all program staff have fully grasped and embraced the outcome-based approach. There is also continuing uncertainty about the appropriateness of the outcome-based approach to social development work among both applicants and program staff. Secondly, although the WP collects a great deal of outcome information via the standardized forms it introduced in 2003-2004, it lacks any strategy for analysing and reporting on these data, and moreover lacks a program database, accessible to regional staff. Some program staff and key informants cautioned against over-reliance on a reporting solution based on the standard forms and a program database. These stakeholders recommended that the WP implement a diversified performance measurement strategy consisting of both the planned "quantitative" methods and objective qualitative methods. A reporting strategy is currently under development, but progress toward a program database has reportedly stalled due to a lack of financial resources, technical capacity, and management commitment.

Recommendation   **1.**   **Mechanisms for greater program management accountability relative to the implementation of the outcome-based approach are necessary.**

– Management's contribution to the successful implementation of the outcome-based approach could be measured in terms of the availability, quality, and timeliness of appropriate documentation (hard copy and/or web-based) and training activities on this approach for program staff, applicants and potential applicants across Canada.

− Management should be accountable for clarity and consistency in funding recommendations and reporting. In particular, Program Managers should ensure that proposals are not recommended until they clearly articulate an initiative's activities, objectives and expected outcomes. A standard protocol should to be established for changing activities, objectives and expected outcomes during the duration of an initiative. They should also ensure that an initiative's final report is not accepted until it includes the required information concerning outcomes achieved.

− Management should also be accountable for sharing information regarding best practices in the implementation of the outcome-based approach across the regional and local offices of the WP.

Recommendation   **2.**   **The WP should provide training in the outcome-based approach and efficient proposal development to funding applicants and program staff and managers.**

− Training should focus on ensuring an adequate understanding of the outcome-based approach, including its key concepts, definitions, and requirements, in order to realize potential efficiencies in the proposal development process.

− It should also specifically address the purpose and proper use of the standard forms. It should emphasize the importance of consistency in reporting.

The file review component of this evaluation was limited in the extent to which it could meet its second objective, that is, to examine the extent to which the outcome-based approach to reporting was being implemented and to identify any emerging issues that might benefit from further investigation or ongoing monitoring. This was due to the small number of "closed files" available for review from the 2003-2004 fiscal year, and was a consequence of the short period between the implementation of the outcome-based approach and this evaluation.

Recommendation   **3.**   **The WP should repeat such a file review as part of a regular evaluation cycle, as per Treasury Board guidelines, because it would undoubtedly prove much more informative in terms of the implementation successes and challenges related to the outcome-based approach and the extent to which it is understood by applicants and program staff.**

Recommendation	**4.**	**The WP should develop a strategy for reporting on program impact. Consideration should be given to a diversified performance measurement strategy that focuses not only on summarizing effectively the information collected on the standard forms, but also additional objective qualitative methods to illuminate outcomes achieved.**

Some stakeholders indicated that they required assistance to understand the information required on the various forms, and the evaluator did not find the forms useful because of inconsistencies in interpretation of the various requirements, be it by applicants, funded initiatives, or program staff. Stakeholders have also expressed a need for simplifying and making the application and reporting process more flexible.

Recommendation	**5.**	**Although they were introduced relatively recently, the WP could improve upon the standard forms at this stage, as well as address the forms specifically within the recommended training and in the documentation on the outcome-based approach. In order to enhance their value for performance measurement purposes, improvements to the standard forms should be made in consultation with evaluation experts and a representative sample of potential applicants.**

Given the inherent challenges of measuring social change and the need for the WP to collect more useful and relevant outcome information, the Program should focus on more objective qualitative data collection methods.

Recommendation	**6.**	**In order to complement self-reporting by the funded initiatives, the WP should invest in a process of external review of funded initiatives whereby a sample of initiatives would be selected each fiscal year for a review by external evaluators. Given the diversity of initiatives, high-level indicators of each initiative's impact could be applied.**

Recommendation	**7.**	**The WP should develop and implement a program database, accessible to staff and managers in all regions, to manage basic aspects of their work and to permit data collection, analysis, and reporting on outcomes.**

The evaluation took place in the context of the ongoing investigations of the new Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which in May 2005, recommended that the WP introduce a mix of program funding and project funding. The Committee's hearings confirmed stakeholder views expressed during this evaluation in that the termination of program funding and its corollary, the introduction of initiative funding, remains the most controversial of the 1998 changes to the WP.

The evaluation found that the termination of program funding continues to be perceived as detrimental by some organizations. On the other hand, initiative funding is believed to have increased equity of access to WP funding for organizations that were previously unable to access

funding from the Program, and increased the visibility and capacity of these organizations. Survey results confirm that funding applicants are divided in their opinion of the impact of the change.

Neither 18-month nor multi-year funding, both of which were introduced in 1998, are nearly as controversial. Both are seen as positive developments. To a certain extent, stakeholders see 18-month and multi-year funding as compensating for the termination of program funding. However, some program staff and managers noted that multi-year funding is limited by its eligibility criteria. Suggestions for improvement included making multi-year funding available to less experienced organizations and ensuring its availability across the country.

While there is clearly strong support within an element of the WP's constituency for restoring program funding, the larger constituency seems largely content with the existing funding mechanisms. Among program staff, there was little support for restoring program funding, although many acknowledged a need for longer-term funding.

Recommendation **8.** **The WP should consider extending multi-year funding beyond three years, consistently across Canada, to support initiatives with longer planning and implementation cycles. However, annual renewal of funding should be contingent on organizations fulfilling performance monitoring and reporting requirements.**

Impact

Although this evaluation was intended to be a summative evaluation focusing on outcomes achieved by the WP, it was limited in its ability to discern the overall impact of the Program due to the limitations of the available administrative data and the relative infancy of the outcome-based approach. As a result, evaluation findings pertaining to program impact are based primarily on anecdotal information.

There is widespread, though not unanimous, agreement among stakeholders that the WP has helped to advance women's equality in Canada. However, it is considerably more difficult to pinpoint the extent to which the WP has achieved each of its four objectives – promoting institutional change, influencing public policy, increasing public understanding of action on women's equality issues, and building capacity among women's organizations. While key informants were able to give specific examples of changes related to each objective, they also pointed out that until implementation of the outcome-based approach in 2003-2004, the Program made no systematic attempt to determine its overall impact. Many also observed that it is virtually impossible to isolate the net contribution of the WP due to the equally significant role of external factors, primarily the political climate, in influencing social change.

The evaluation also sought to determine whether the WP has achieved its objectives under the federal government's Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE) initiative. Administrative data show that AGE funds have enabled the WP to realize some success by a total of 122 new groups and 123 files involving new and emerging issues. However, in interviews, many program staff and managers noted that the purpose of AGE was not explicitly identified when the initiative was

introduced and that, therefore, any successes were more by accident than by design. The additional funds simply made it possible to invest more money overall.

The evaluation found some ambivalence among program staff and managers regarding the WP's contribution toward achieving SWC's strategic objectives. While most believe that the Program has contributed to a more equitable public policy and a broader range of informed stakeholders, they were divided on the matter of its contribution to departmental effectiveness. These key informants reported that the WP and the rest of SWC work in isolation from one another and do not communicate or collaborate effectively. In short, the WP is not well integrated into the agency, communications with other directorates within the agency are poor, and the WP lacks influence on departmental decision-making. There is a widespread perception that the poor relationship stems from a fundamental philosophical difference regarding the best way to achieve women's equality. The WP uses a social development approach, but this is not, nor reportedly has ever been, the approach taken by SWC. Key informants emphasized the need for improved communications and collaboration among all of the directorates within SWC.

Recommendation   9.   SWC and the WP should work toward greater integration of the WP and developing more collaborative relationships between the WP and other SWC directorates to ensure that each is benefiting from the work and expertise of the others. For example, considering the wealth of information it collects and frequent contacts with women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations, the WP should be directly involved in policy development and implementation. Collaborative relationships between SWC directorates, including the WP, should be based on a continuous exchange of information.

Cost-effectiveness/alternatives

Key informants were unanimous that the WP is giving Canadians value for their tax dollar, observing that the WP encourages community-based organizations to work on issues that are important to Canadian society "on a shoestring," while relying heavily on volunteer contributions of time and effort. Available financial information presents a picture whereby a significant portion of the WP's limited budget goes toward administrative costs. This is likely due to the social development approach to the work of the WP. Thus, included in the administrative costs is the provision of technical assistance required for building capacity among women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. The complexity of women's equality issues and the social change process, the fact that the WP deals with a number of marginalized organizations and/or new and emerging organizations, and the Program's decentralized delivery model can also contribute to increasing the costs associated with providing this form of assistance.

**Recommendation   10.   The WP should develop a procedure by which it would monitor
                                the portion of administrative costs that are associated with the
                                provision of technical assistance and other duties, which may
                                not be directly related to proposal development, assessment or
                                recommendation, or even related to the WP. Depending on
                                time tracking systems or other administrative reporting
                                requirements already in place at the WP, it could take the form
                                of a fairly simple biannual estimate of the portion of the
                                workload among program staff and managers associated with
                                technical assistance, or at the other end of the spectrum, take
                                the form of detailed daily tracking of time spent on technical
                                assistance versus other tasks.**

As well, efficiencies could potentially be gained by improvements to the standard forms, by
simplifying and/or shortening the proposal preparation process, through training, by providing
staff with better access to technologies, and greater dissemination of information to women's
groups and other equality-seeking organizations as well as the general public via the web and
other appropriate means.

The findings also suggest a need for greater transparency and increased communication with
organizations during and after the assessment process, particularly when it comes to proposals
that are declined. Stakeholders' suggestions for improving the proposal development and
approval process included the provision of more staff assistance and clarifying the information
available in program documentation and on the WP's web site.

**Recommendation   11.   In the case of proposals that are declined, the WP should
                                provide clear feedback to all applicants on precisely how their
                                proposal does not meet the eligibility criteria for funding. The
                                WP should provide the results of the proposal assessment
                                process to the declined applicant and always include
                                information on how to appeal the decision.**

**Recommendation   12.   Program staff and managers emphasized the need for access to
                                appropriate and adequate technologies to improve the
                                efficiency of program delivery. The WP should support
                                increased efficiency and improved communications by
                                enhancing, where necessary, the equipment, software and
                                support available to program staff and managers, and
                                providing additional access to technologies related to the
                                demands of the program staff and managers' work
                                (e.g., improved technical support at the regional level, cellular
                                telephones and laptops for staff use while traveling, and
                                redesigned electronic forms).**

However, the most significant staff concerns had little to do with the efficiency of program
delivery and more to do with its effectiveness. There is a general consensus among program staff
and managers that effective delivery of the WP is hampered by problems related to program

management. First, program staff and managers believe that the WP suffers from poor internal communications and information sharing among the regions and the national office. Secondly, there is a widespread perception that senior management within SWC does not truly understand, value and support the WP, and that as a result, the WP is not truly integrated into the agency.

Recommendation   **13.**   **The WP should take steps to improve internal communications by introducing mechanisms for timely communications among the regions and the national office.**

– The WP could make better use of its existing Intranet to improve the dissemination of information.

– Meetings should be held as frequently as appropriate to disseminate information and engage program staff and managers on current issues faced by the Program as well as issues of a more administrative nature. The WP should use available technologies, such as telephone or video-conferencing, to substitute for or further supplement the more costly in-person meetings with program staff and managers across the national, regional, and local offices.

There is a general consensus among stakeholders that the WP does not duplicate any other programs to advance women's equality, primarily because very few other such programs exist. The WP is seen as unique in providing support for advocacy efforts, providing a high level of technical assistance, addressing a full range of equality issues, and focusing its mandate specifically on advancing women's equality.

Stakeholders had few suggestions for alternative delivery models. However, some suggested that the WP may wish to consider the use of contribution funding in certain circumstances, while others suggested community-based models. Of course, there was also considerable support for more sustained or longer-term funding.

The evaluation found little grounds for transferring the WP away from SWC. Stakeholders maintained that the Program should be retained within SWC since it is the only federal organization with a specific mandate to advance women's equality. However, stakeholders also emphasized the need for the WP and SWC to resolve their outstanding differences so that they may work effectively together. Many key informants pointed out that to be effective, the agency needs greater visibility and a stronger voice within the federal government.

Relevance

There is general agreement that the WP is still relevant to advancing women's equality in Canada, since, despite progress in some areas, this goal has not yet been achieved. However, some key informants also expressed concern that, for fear of controversy, the Program has become overly cautious in its funding decisions and therefore risks irrelevance. Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents believe that the Program responds well to new and emerging issues, while 51% agree that it responds well to new and emerging groups.

Recommendation   **14.**   **To be more transparent, the WP should disseminate reports on program impact to the WP's constituency and to the general public.**

The evaluation found some disagreement among stakeholders regarding the WP's alignment with federal priorities and the strategic objectives of SWC. Some pointed out that the WP clearly aligns with federal priorities by addressing issues such as violence against Aboriginal women, childcare, trafficking in women, social capital, and democratic processes. However, others argued that the WP's mandate is to promote women's equality and that, quite often, this means supporting groups to challenge the status quo – that is, in terms of public policy and institutional decision-making. The crucial question, from their perspective, is the extent to which the federal government is aligned with the priorities of the WP and women's perspectives are integrated into federal policy – and not the reverse. Similarly, although some program staff and managers believe that the WP aligns well with SWC's strategic objectives, others said that the strategic objectives are vague and do not reflect the priorities of the grassroots women's movement.

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APPENDIX A

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

WP/RO Organization Chart

(National 15.5 FTE and Regional 34.75 FTE)

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                                    ┌──────────────┐
                                    │   Director   │
                                    │   General    │
                                    └──────────────┘
                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │    Admin     │
                          │  Assistant   │
                          └──────────────┘
```

Chief, Program Delivery	Chief, Prog Analysis & Development	Chief, Prog. Regional Coord Services	Regional Director BC/Yukon	Regional Director Prairies/NWT	Regional Director Ontario	Regional Director Qué/Nunavut	Regional Director Atlantic
Program Clerk	Policy & Planning Officer (3.5)	Regional Liaison Officer	Admin Assistant	Admin Assistant	Admin Assistant	Clerk (1.5)	Admin Assistant
Prog & Dev Officer		G&C Admin Assistant	Prog & Dev Officer	Prog & Dev Officer	Prog & Dev Officer	Prog & Dev Officer	Prog & Dev Officer

APPENDIX B

WOMEN'S PROGRAM FUNDING LOGIC MODEL

WOMEN'S PROGRAM FUNDING LOGIC MODEL

OBJECTIVES

Institutional change | Public policy | Public understanding | Enhancing effectiveness

SHORT TERM OUTCOMES

- Organization members and women affected by the issue understand and are mobilized to engage key institutions
- Organization members and women affected by the issue understand and are mobilized to engage in the public policy process
- Organization members and women affected by the issue understand and are mobilized to engage the public
- Enhanced capacity of women's organizations to address women's equality issues

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Institutions understand and are engaged in addressing the issues
- Women participate in institutional decision-making processes
- Governments and publicly elected bodies understand and are engaged in addressing the issues
- Women participate in public policy decision-making processes
- Public understands and supports women's equality issues
- Effective action by women's organizations to advance women's equality issues

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

- Key institutions have integrated the diversity of women's perspective in policies and programs
- Government and publicly elected bodies have integrated the diversity of women's perspective in public policies

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Institutional change	Public policy	Public understanding	Enhancing effectiveness
Short term • development of resource materials that demonstrate that those who produce material understand the issue • deepened understanding of the issue • organization has developed an appropriate strategy to move issue forward	**Short term** • development of resource materials that demonstrate that those who produce material understand the issue • deepened understanding of the issue • organization has developed an appropriate strategy to move issue forward	**Short term** • development of resource materials that demonstrate that those who produce material understand the issue • deepened understanding of the issue • organization has developed an appropriate strategy to engage the public	**Short term** • improved skills **Medium term** • improved effectiveness
Medium term • institution demonstrates interest and commitment to the issue • institution forms links with women's organizations • institution allocates resources to address the issue, policy or program • women participate in decision-making processes and are accountable and responsible to their community's understanding of the issue	**Medium term** • government demonstrates interest and concern on the issue • government has formed links with women's organizations • government has allocated resources to address the issue, policy or program	**Medium term** • collective or individual support and/or action on the issue by the public or targeted public • increased profile of the issue in all types of media indicating an informed public dialogue about the issue	
Long term • new policies, programs created or old policies, programs amended to include women's perspectives • women report how women are better served by new/revised policy or program • institutional management is committed to change	**Long term** • new policies, programs created or old policies, programs amended to include women's perspectives • women report how women are better served by new/revised policy or program • governmental management is committed to change		

APPENDIX C

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Evaluation Framework for the Evaluation of the Women's Program		
Evaluation issues and questions	**Potential indicators**	**Potential data sources**
RELEVANCE/RATIONALE		
1. How closely does the Women's Program (WP) align with the current priorities and strategic objectives of the federal government and Status of Women Canada (SWC)?	▸ Comparison of program objectives with departmental and federal priorities and strategic objectives ▸ Key informant opinion	Document review Key informant interviews
2. Is the WP still relevant to the advancement of women's equality in Canada?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion ▸ Case study results ▸ Number of applicants/funded projects per year ▸ Types of projects funded ▸ Types of groups funded	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants Case studies Administrative data analysis/file review
3. What would be the consequence for the advancement of women's equality in Canada if the WP did not exist?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion ▸ Case study results	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants Case studies
IMPACT		
4. To what extent has the WP succeeded in enhancing the organizational capacity of women's groups in order to address women's equality issues? What changed as a result of that increased organizational capacity?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion ▸ Number of groups funded for this purpose ▸ Types of projects funded ▸ Reported results ▸ Case study results	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants Administrative data analysis File review Case studies
5. To what extent has the WP succeeded in facilitating the mobilization of women in order to promote institutional change? What changed as a result of that mobilization?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion ▸ Number of groups funded for this purpose ▸ Types of projects funded ▸ Reported results ▸ Case study results	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants Administrative data analysis File review Case studies
6. To what extent has the WP succeeded in facilitating the mobilization of women in order to promote public awareness and understanding? What changed as a result of that mobilization?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion ▸ Number of groups funded for this purpose ▸ Types of projects funded ▸ Reported results ▸ Case study results	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants Administrative data analysis File review Case studies
7. To what extent has the WP succeeded in facilitating women's engagement in public policy processes? What changed as a result of women's engagement in public policy processes?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion ▸ Number of groups funded for this purpose ▸ Types of projects funded ▸ Reported results ▸ Case study results	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants Administrative data analysis File review Case studies

Evaluation Framework for the Evaluation of the Women's Program		
Evaluation issues and questions	**Potential indicators**	**Potential data sources**
8. To what extent has AGE funding enabled the WP to: ▸ broaden the scope of groups receiving support? ▸ increase its ability to support action on new and emerging issues?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ AGE case study results ▸ Number of new groups receiving AGE funding ▸ Number of new issues receiving AGE funding ▸ Types of new issues receiving AGE funding ▸ Reported results	Key informant interviews Case studies (AGE only) Administrative data analysis File review
9. To what extent has the WP helped to achieve the strategic objectives of SWC?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Comparison of reported results against strategic objectives	Key informant interviews Document review File review
10. What unexpected impacts has the WP had, either positive or negative?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion ▸ Case study results ▸ Reported results	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants Case studies File review
11. Are the expected outcomes of the WP clear enough to measure? Does the program need to clarify its expected results in order to improve performance measurement?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Ability of measures to support evaluation ▸ Evidence of comprehensive/clear interim and final reports submitted by funded projects	Key informant interviews Document review (esp. review of RMAF) File review
12. Is the current performance measurement strategy capturing adequate and useful information for assessing program impact? If not, how could the performance measurement strategy be improved?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Adequacy and usefulness of performance measurement strategy	Key informant interviews Document review (esp. review of RMAF) File review
DESIGN AND DELIVERY		
13. Are there any fundamental weaknesses in the design or delivery of the Technical Assistance component of the WP? What are the strengths of this component?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants
14. Are there any fundamental weaknesses in the design or delivery of the Financial Assistance component of the WP? What are the strengths of this component?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants
15. Is the WP delivered efficiently? How could its efficiency be enhanced?	▸ Description of delivery mechanisms (e.g., complexity of application procedures, mechanisms for accessing WP staff, number of service centres, etc.) ▸ Potential efficiencies identified in documents ▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion	Document review Key informant interviews Survey of applicants File review
16. What has been the impact of changes made to the Women's Program over the past few years (i.e., termination of program funding, introduction of initiative funding, availability of 18-month funding, availability of multi-year funding, introduction of outcome-based approach)? How have these changes affected women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations? How have they affected program staff?	▸ Key informant opinion ▸ Applicant opinion ▸ Evidence of changing funding levels	Key informant interviews Survey of applicants Administrative data

Evaluation Framework for the Evaluation of the Women's Program		
Evaluation issues and questions	**Potential indicators**	**Potential data sources**
17. What, if any, changes to program design or delivery would make the WP more effective in achieving its stated objectives and the strategic outcomes of SWC?	‣ Changes identified in documents ‣ Key informant opinion ‣ Applicant opinion	Document review Key informant interviews Survey of applicants
COST-EFFECTIVENESS/ALTERNATIVES		
18. Are there any alternatives to the WP that would be more effective in achieving its stated objectives and the strategic outcomes of SWC?	‣ Alternatives identified in documents ‣ Key informant opinion ‣ Applicant opinion	Document review Key informant interviews Survey of applicants
19. How does the cost of WP delivery compare to that of similar federal grants and contributions programs? Given the outcomes achieved by the WP, is the program delivery approach cost-effective?	‣ Comparison of WP administrative costs to those of other similar programs	Document review
20. Does the WP supplement/complement, duplicate/overlap with, or work at cross-purposes with any other federal programs or initiatives?	‣ Existence of other programs ‣ Key informant opinion	Document/literature review Key informant interviews
21. Is SWC the most appropriate organization to deliver the WP, or could the program be transferred to another federal department, to the provinces, to the private sector, or to voluntary sector organizations?	‣ Other potential delivery agents identified in documents/literature ‣ Key informant opinion ‣ Applicant opinion	Document /literature review Key informant interviews Applicant survey

APPENDIX D

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

File Review

1. **Name of organization:** _____

2. **Title of initiative:** _____

3. **Fiscal year (from database):** _____

4. **Length of funding:**
   __ Less than 18 months   __ 18-36 months (multi-year)

5. **Duration of initiative (FR)**
   From (mm/dd/yy): _____   To (mm/dd/yy): _____
   __ Can't determine

6. **Was the duration of the initiative extended?**
   __ Yes   __ No   __ Can't determine

7. **If yes to Q. 6, to what date? (This should match final date in Q. 5)**
   (mm/dd/yy): _____ __ Can't determine

8. **Date final report received (mm/dd/yy):** _____   __ Can't determine   __ Report not submitted

9. **Region:**
   __ Atlantic   __ BC/YK
   __ National   __ Ontario
   __ Prairie/NWT   __ QC/Nunavut

10. **Priority funding area:**
    __ Improving women's economic status   __ Eliminating systemic violence
    __ Achieving social justice
    __ Other _____
    __ Can't determine

11. **Total cost of initiative:**
    $_____
    __ Can't determine

12. **Funding requested:**
    $_____
    __ Can't determine

13. **Funding received:**
    $_____
    __ Can't determine

14. **Was supplemental funding received for this initiative?**   __ Yes   __ No   __ Can't determine

14a. **Amount of supplemental funding $** _____

15. **The total amount of funding from sources other than SWC (REC budget) DO NOT include in-kind contributions or the initiative's own contributions.**

    $_____

    __ Not applicable, no other sources of funding

    __ Can't determine

16. **Please indicate the other sources of funding, if any. (REC budget) DO NOT include in-kind contributions or the initiative's own contributions.**
    __ Other federal departments   __ Provincial government
    __ Municipal government   __ Foundation
    __ Other _____

    __ Not applicable, no other sources of funding

    __ Can't determine

17. **Brief description of initiative (2 or 3 sentences). (REC – Section 12)**

_____

18. Primary group of women affected by the initiative. (REC – Section 13D and E)

__ Women in general

__ Lesbians

__ Women with disabilities

__ Aboriginal, Métis and/or Inuit women

__ Visible minority women

__ Immigrant/refugee women

__ Rural, remote, or northern women

__ Official language minority women

__ Low income

__ Young women (16-25)

__ Other _____

__ Can't determine

19. Which of the following Women's Program objectives does the initiative address? Cite sources.

__ Promote policies and programs within key institutions

__ Facilitate the involvement of women's organizations in the public policy process

__ Increase public understanding in order to encourage action on women's equality issues

__ Enhance the effectiveness of actions undertaken by women's organizations to improve the situation of women

__ Can't determine

Source(s): _____

Using the documents indicated below, complete the table below. Objectives may have more than one expected outcome: use one line per outcome.

20. Objectives and outcomes of initiative		
Objectives **(AP, REC, LET)**	**Expected outcomes** **(AP, REC, LET)**	**Outcomes achieved** **(IR, FR and CL)**
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine
		__ Yes, fully __ Yes, partially __ No __ Can't determine

21. Were the objectives reported in the AP and FR consistent?
__ Yes   __ No   __ Can't determine

22. Were the expected outcomes reported in the AP and FR consistent?
__ Yes   __ No   __ Can't determine

23. Were the expected outcomes linked to specific objectives?
__ Yes, all   __ Yes, some   __ No   __ Can't determine

24. Did the FR report on whether expected outcomes (as opposed to objectives) were achieved?
__ Yes   __ No   __ Can't determine

25. Did the CL report on whether each of the expected outcomes identified in the FR were achieved?
__ Yes   __ No   __ Not applicable – no CL report (standard or non-standard)   __ Can't determine

26. *Did the initiative report that its objectives, activities, or budget changed during the funding period?*
__ Yes   __ No   __ Can't determine

26a. Describe and note reason for change. Cite sources.

_____

_____

_____

Source(s): _____

27. Did the initiative experience any difficulties in meeting its objectives?
__ Yes   __ No   __ Can't determine

27a. Describe any difficulties. Cite sources.

_____

_____

_____

Source(s): _____

28. If the Close-out Assessment Form was used for this initiative, indicate the outcomes from the Women's Program Accountability Framework that were met by this initiative.
__ Not applicable – form not used.

Institutional Change	**Public Policy**	**Public Understanding**	**Enhancing Effectiveness**
__ Short-term outcome 1	__ Short-term outcome 2	__ Short-term outcome 3	__ Short-term outcome 4
__ Intermediate outcome 1A	__ Intermediate outcome 2A	__ Intermediate outcome 3	__ Intermediate outcome 4
__ Intermediate outcome 1B	__ Intermediate outcome 2B		
__ Long-term outcome 1	__ Long-term outcome 2		

29. *Does the file document any unexpected outcomes of the initiative, either positive or negative?*
__ Yes, positive   __ Yes, negative   __ No

29a. Describe any unexpected outcomes. Cite sources.

_____

_____

_____

Source(s): _____

30. *Does the Final Report on the initiative indicate plans to continue its activities in the funded area?*
__ Yes   __ No   __ Can't determine

31. Please indicate if there appear to have been any difficulties in reporting.
__ No difficulties   __ National/regional office did not accept final report   __ Incomplete documents
__ Inconsistent information   __ Missing documents

__ Failure to fulfil reporting requirements (substantively lacking).

Describe.

_____

_____

__ Other. Describe.

_____

_____

__ Can't determine

_____

_____

32. For 2003-04 files, check the documents that were included in the file:
    __ Proposal/Application form (AP)
    __ Recommendation for approval (REC)
    __ Follow up letter (LET)
    __ Interim report (IR)
    __ Interim report review (IRR)
    __ Final report (FR)
    __ Close-out assessment (CL)

33.   Note any difficulties with reviewing file (missing documents, incomplete information, etc)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

34.   Additional comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Evaluation of the Women's Program
Interview Guide for Applicants

Background

1.   Please tell me about your organization. When was it established? What is its mandate?

2.   How familiar are you with the Women's Program (WP)?

Design and delivery

3.   Has your organization received any non-financial assistance from the WP? If yes, what types of assistance has it received? *(Probe: referrals to other funding sources, help in developing an action strategy, advice on operational concerns such as incorporation or financial administration, assistance with proposal preparation)*

4.   How useful was the assistance you received? What difference did it make to your organization? Is there anything else that would have been useful?

5.   Has your organization ever received funding from the WP? *(Probe: Was this prior to or after 1998? If prior to 1998, did your group receive program or project funding? If after 1998, has your group ever received 18-month funding? Multi-year funding?)*

6.   Has your organization ever submitted a written request for funding that was *not* approved? Did program staff explain the decision and your options? Do you have any concerns about the way your funding request was handled?

7.   Thinking about your organization's experience in developing proposals for WP funding, overall, how would you describe the process? *(Probe: Is it straightforward or onerous, and why?)*

8.   Do you have concerns about any aspects of the proposal development/approval process? *(Probe any concerns with respect to: clarity of eligibility criteria, proposal assessment criteria, or approval process; assistance provided by staff; staff communication of expectations).* What suggestions do you have for improving the proposal development/approval process?

9.   As you may know, the WP has evolved over the years. How has each of the following changes affected your organization's ability to work on advancing women's equality? *(Probe: Have the changes been positive or negative, and why? How, if at all, has your level of funding been affected?)*

     ‣ Termination of program funding
     ‣ Introduction of initiative funding
     ‣ Availability of 18-month funding
     ‣ Availability of multi-year funding

10. As you may know, the WP introduced its most recent change in 2003, when it implemented an outcome-based approach that focuses on measuring results achieved by initiatives. What has been the impact of the outcome-based approach for your organization? *(Probe: Ability to identify outcomes and indicators; plan effectively; demonstrate results)*

11. Do you have any concerns about the outcome-based approach? What could the WP do to make it easier for your organization to apply the outcome-based approach?

12. In your opinion, how could the WP be improved? *(Note to interviewer: Ask for specifics)*

Impact

13. What has WP funding or assistance enabled your organization to do? What has changed as a result of these activities? *(Note to interviewer: Make sure interviewee distinguishes between activities and outcomes)*

14. Besides the WP, what other factors might have contributed to these changes?

15. Has the WP had any unexpected impacts for your organization, either positive or negative?

Cost-effectiveness/Alternatives

16. Does your organization receive funding from other sources? If yes, what is the relative importance of WP funding for your organization? How is the WP different from these other programs? How is it similar?

17. Could the WP be better delivered by an organization other than Status of Women Canada? If so, by whom, and why?

18. In your opinion, is there anything that Status of Women Canada could do that would be *more effective* than the WP in advancing women's equality? Is there anything that Status of Women Canada could do *in addition to* the WP to be more effective in advancing women's equality?

Relevance/Rationale

19. Is the WP still relevant to women in Canada? Why or why not?

20. What would be the effect on your organization if there were no WP? In general, what would be the effect on women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations? On the advancement of women's equality in general?

21. Do you have any other comments?

Evaluation of the Women's Program
Interview Guide for Program Managers and Staff

Background

1.   Please tell me about your role in the Women's Program (WP). *(Probe: How long have you been involved with the WP? With gender equality policy and programming more broadly?)*

Design and delivery

2.   What are the strengths of the Women's Program? Please consider the design and delivery of both its funding activities and its non-funding activities.

3.   Are there any fundamental weaknesses in the design or delivery of the WP? Again, please consider both its funding activities and its non-funding activities.

4.   Is the WP delivered efficiently? How could its efficiency be enhanced? Please consider the following aspects of program delivery:

> ‣ Proposal development/approval process
> ‣ The community's access to WP staff
> ‣ Timeliness of grant approval process
> ‣ Staff access to appropriate technologies.

5.   Do you have the necessary supports to do your job well? What would help?

6.   As you know, the WP has evolved over the years. How have the changes affected you as program staff? How have they affected the women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations with whom you work? Please consider each of the following changes:

> ‣ Termination of program funding
> ‣ Introduction of initiative funding
> ‣ Introduction of 18-month funding
> ‣ Introduction of multi-year funding
> ‣ Introduction of the outcome-based approach (including logic model, new reporting requirements, and new forms)

7.   How could the design and delivery of the Women's Program be improved? *(Note to interviewer: Ask for specifics)*

Impact

8.   Since you have been involved with the WP, what progress has been made toward achieving the program's four objectives, i.e.:

  ‣ Promoting institutional change?
  ‣ Influencing public policy?
  ‣ Increasing public understanding?
  ‣ Building capacity of women's groups/other equality-seeking organizations?

    Can you give some examples of changes in these areas? To what extent do you think the WP contributed to these changes?

9.   What other factors might have contributed to these changes?

10.   Since 2000-2001, the WP has received $2 million in additional funding per year as part of the Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE) initiative. Based on your observations, has this additional funding allowed the WP to:

  ‣ Broaden the scope of groups receiving support?
  ‣ Increase its ability to support action on new and emerging issues?

    Please give specific examples for each to support your opinion.

11.   In your opinion, to what extent has the WP helped to achieve the strategic objectives of SWC? *(Note: strategic objectives for SWC in 2004-05 are strengthened and more equitable public policy; a broader range of informed stakeholders; increased departmental effectiveness)*

12.   Do you think the WP has had any unexpected impacts, either positive or negative?

13.   In your opinion, are the expected outcomes of the WP clear enough to measure? How could the expected outcomes be clarified?

14.   In your opinion, is the new performance measurement strategy capturing adequate and useful information for assessing program impact? *(Probe: This includes both the reporting system and the administrative database.)* To your knowledge, have all regions and the national office implemented the strategy? If not, why not? How could the performance measurement strategy be improved?

Cost-effectiveness/Alternatives

15.   Are you aware of alternative models of program delivery that would be helpful for the Women's Program to consider? *(Probe especially funding mechanisms used by other funders)*

16.   In your opinion, is there anything that SWC could do that would be *more effective* than the WP in advancing women's equality? In achieving the strategic outcomes of SWC?

17.   How is the WP different from other programs to advance women's equality in Canada? How is it similar? Is there any duplication with other programs? Does the WP work at cross-purposes with any other programs?

18.   Could the WP be better delivered by an organization other than SWC? If so, by whom, and why?

19.   In your opinion, is the WP giving Canadians value for their tax dollar?

Relevance/Rationale

20.   Is the WP still relevant to women in Canada? Why or why not? What would be the consequence for women's equality if the WP did not exist?

21.   How closely does the WP align with the current priorities of the federal government (i.e., from SFT, budgets, recent policy statements, etc.)? What changes to the program would help to ensure better alignment?

22.   How closely does the WP align with SWC's strategic objectives? What changes to the program would help to ensure better alignment? How could the WP more effectively contribute to the development of SWC's strategic objectives?

23.   Do you have any other comments?

**Evaluation of the Women's Program
Interview Guide for External Stakeholders**

Background

1.   Please tell me something about yourself and/or your organization. How are you involved in working on women's equality?

2.   How familiar are you with the WP?

Design and delivery

3.   In your opinion, what are the strengths of the Women's Program? Please consider the design and delivery of both its funding activities and its non-funding activities.

4.   As far as you know, are there any fundamental weaknesses in the design or delivery of the WP? Again, please consider both its funding activities and its non-funding activities. *(Probe: Give some examples of non-funding assistance if necessary).*

5.   Is the WP effective at collaborating with external stakeholders such as other federal departments/agencies, other orders of government, community groups, and the private sector, to advance women's equality? Please explain.

6.   In your opinion, how could the WP be improved?

Impact

7.   As you may know, the WP has four objectives: promoting institutional change; influencing public policy; increasing public understanding of action on women's equality issues; and building capacity among women's groups. Since you have been involved with women's equality issues, what progress have you observed in each of these areas? Can you give some specific examples?

8.   To what extent do you think the WP contributed to these changes? What other factors might have contributed?

9.   As far as you are aware, has the WP had any unexpected impacts, either positive or negative?

Cost-effectiveness/Alternatives

10.   Are you aware of alternative models of program delivery that would be helpful for the Women's Program to consider? *(Probe especially funding mechanisms used by other funders)*

11.   In your opinion, is there anything that SWC could do that would be more effective than the WP in advancing women's equality?

12.   How is the WP different from other programs to advance women's equality in Canada? How is it similar? Is there any duplication with other programs? Does the WP work at cross-purposes with any other programs?

13.   Could the WP be better delivered by an organization other than Status of Women Canada (SWC)? If so, by whom, and why?

14.   In your opinion, is the WP giving Canadians value for their tax dollar?

Relevance/Rationale

15.   In your view, is the WP still relevant to women in Canada? Why or why not? What would be the consequence for the advancement of women's equality if the WP did not exist?

16.   Do you have any other comments?

Survey of Women's Groups and Other Equality-Seeking Organizations

Evaluation of the Women's Program

Status of Women Canada (SWC) has contracted PRA Inc., an independent research firm, to evaluate the Women's Program.

The evaluation is a requirement of the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada for all federal grants and contributions programs. Its purpose is to examine the design and delivery, impact, cost-effectiveness, and relevance of the Women's Program. As this evaluation is being undertaken in the context of a government-wide Expenditure Review exercise, it is also designed to address questions of public accountability and alignment with the priorities of Canadians.

The views of women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations are very important to the evaluation. We would greatly appreciate it if a senior representative of your organization, together with whoever is most familiar with the Women's Program, would take the time to complete this survey.

All of your responses will remain confidential to PRA and will be reported only in aggregate. SWC will not have access to your individual responses. The administrative number appearing on the last page of this survey is to enable PRA to manage the survey process.

If you have any questions about the survey, please telephone Natalie Baydack of PRA toll-free at 1-888-877-6744. If you would like to receive an electronic (Word) copy of the survey on disk, please contact PRA.

Please return the survey in the envelope provided
or by toll-free fax at
1-800-717-5456

Your early attention to this survey is appreciated.
Please return the survey by
April 15, 2005

Part A: Background information

This first section of the questionnaire gathers background information to help us understand the context for your responses.

1. Is your organization a women's group or another equality-seeking organization? *(Check one response only)*
   __ Women's group
   __ Other equality-seeking organization

2. What is the principal mandate of your organization? *(Check one response only)*
   __ Public education
   __ Advocacy
   __ Research
   __ Service delivery (e.g., counselling, training, shelter, etc.)
   __ Other *(specify)* _____

3. What is the primary constituency of your organization? *We realize that you may serve more than one of the constituencies listed below. However, we are interested in the main constituency that you serve, so please check one response only.*
   __ Women in general
   __ Lesbians
   __ Women with disabilities
   __ Aboriginal, Métis and/or Inuit women
   __ Visible minority women
   __ Immigrant and refugee women
   __ Rural, remote or northern women
   __ Official language minority women
   __ Other *(specify)* _____

4. What is the primary issue area that your organization works on? *(Check one response only)*
   __ Economic
   __ Violence
   __ Social justice
   __ Other *(specify)* _____

5. How long has your organization been in existence? *(Check one response only)*
   __ Less than 1 year
   __ 1-2 years
   __ 3-5 years
   __ 6-10 years
   __ 11-15 years
   __ 16-20 years
   __ 21 years or more

6. What is the scope of your organization? *(Check one response only)*
   __ International
   __ National
   __ Interprovincial/interterritorial
   __ Provincial/territorial
   __ Regional
   __ Municipal/local

7. What is the approximate membership of your organization? *(Check one response only)*
   __ Less than 20
   __ 20-49
   __ 50-100
   __ More than 100
   __ Don't know

8. How familiar are you with the Women's Program?
   __ Very familiar
   __ Somewhat familiar
   __ Not at all familiar

Part B: Design and delivery of the Women's Program

Through the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada offers various types of support to women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations working in Canada to advance women's equality. This section of the survey asks you to consider the way the program is designed and delivered.

---

9. To your knowledge, has your organization ever received any of the following types of assistance from Women's Program staff?

		Yes	No	Don't know
a.	Help with developing an overall action strategy or plan for your organization	__	__	__
b.	Referrals or references to other funding sources	__	__	__
c.	Advice on operational issues, such as incorporation and financial administration .	__	__	__
d.	Referrals to other resources in your community that might be of assistance to your organization	__	__	__
e.	Help with networking, communication, and partnerships between your organization and others	__	__	__
f.	Use of facilities and/or equipment (e.g., photocopier, meeting rooms)	__	__	__
g.	Issue/conflict resolution	__	__	__
h.	Identifying/providing relevant resources, documents or tools	__	__	__
i.	Other *(please describe; do not include funding assistance)* _____	__		

_____

If you answered "Yes" to any part of question 9, please complete questions 10 and 11. Otherwise, please go directly to question 12.

10. How would you describe the help you received from the Women's Program?
    __ Very useful
    __ Somewhat useful
    __ Not at all useful

11. Please explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. The Women's Program also provides financial assistance to equality-seeking organizations for eligible initiatives, defined as *"change-oriented strategies addressing one or more of the Women's Program objectives and areas of focus, which occur within a specified time-period and have clearly articulated plans to achieve results."* To your knowledge, has your organization ever...

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Submitted a written request for funding that was **NOT** approved?..............	—	—	—
b. Received funding from the Women's Program?..	—	—	—

Please answer questions 13 and 14 if your organization has ever submitted a written request for funding that was *NOT APPROVED.* Otherwise, please go directly to question 15.

13. Please read each statement below and check the response that best represents your opinion.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. Program staff made it clear why our organization's request for funding was not successful	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. Staff provided information on alternative sources of funding for our initiative......................................	—	—	—	—	—	—
c. We were informed of how to have the decision on our funding request reviewed	—	—	—	—	—	—

14. Do you have any concerns about how your funding request was handled? If so, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

__ No concerns

All respondents please answer questions 15 and 16.

15. The next series of questions is about the proposal development/approval process. As you are aware, applicants are encouraged to contact Program staff early in the development of their funding idea so that staff can provide information, discuss issues, determine eligibility, assist in developing the initiative, and assess its potential for funding.

    Please read each statement below and check the response that best represents your opinion.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. The eligibility criteria for funding are clear.	__	__	__	__	__	__
b. The proposal development process helped our organization to clarify the objectives of our initiative	__	__	__	__	__	__
c. The proposal development process helped our organization to identify appropriate strategies for our initiative..	__	__	__	__	__	__
d. During the proposal development process, our organization was required to demonstrate that we had involved a full diversity of women, affected by the issue, in our initiative	—	—	—	—	—	—
e. Women's Program staff were clear in communicating expectations about proposal requirements	__	__	__	__	__	__
f. I understand the criteria used to assess proposals for funding	—	__	—	—	—	—
g. I understand how funding requests are approved	__	__	__	__	__	__

16. Do you have any suggestions for improving the proposal development/approval process? Please explain.

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

    __ No suggestions

If your organization has ever received funding from the Women's Program, please complete questions 17 to 24.

Otherwise, please go directly to Part D.

17.   As you may know, the Women's Program has evolved over the years. Several major changes occurred in 1998:

- **Initiative funding replaced project and program funding**. Initiative funding was intended to make the Program more equitable, flexible, and accountable. It supports change-oriented strategies that address one or more of the Women's Program objectives and areas of focus and that have clearly articulated plans to achieve results.

- **Funding for initiatives up to 18 months in duration was made available**. Prior to 1998, project funding had been available for up to 12 months only.

- **Multi-year funding was made available**. Multi-year funding supports initiatives focusing on institutional and public policy change for up to three years in duration. Prior to 1998, multi-year funding was not available.

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. Prior to 1998, did your organization receive program funding?	—	—	—
b. Prior to 1998, was your organization ever *refused* program funding?	—	—	—
c. Since 1998, has your organization received 18-month funding?	—	—	—
d. Since 1998, has your organization received multi-year funding?	—	—	—

18.   How have the 1998 changes to the Women's Program affected your organization's ability to work on advancing women's equality? Please explain your answer in the space provided below each question.

	Positive change	Neutral	Negative change	Don't know
a. Termination of program funding	—	—	—	—

Please explain your answer. _____

_____

_____

_____

	Positive change	Neutral	Negative change	Don't know
b. Introduction of initiative funding	—	—	—	—

Please explain your answer. _____

_____

_____

_____

	Positive change	Neutral	Negative change	Don't know
c. Availability of 18-month funding	__	__	__	__

Please explain your answer. _____

_____

_____

_____

	Positive change	Neutral	Negative change	Don't know
d. Availability of multi-year funding	__	__	__	__

Please explain your answer. _____

_____

_____

_____

19. The Women's Program introduced its most recent change in 2003, when it implemented an outcome-based approach that focuses on measuring results achieved by initiatives. At that time, a new Application Form and Guide to the Application Form were introduced, as well as Interim and Final Report Forms. Please read each statement below and check the response that best represents your opinion.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. Women's Program staff have clearly explained the outcome-based approach to our group............	__	__	__	__	__	__
b. Assistance from Women's Program staff has helped our group to identify realistic outcomes and indicators...	__	__	__	__	__	__
c. As a result of the outcome-based approach, our group is able to plan more effectively	__	__	__	__	__	__
d. The outcome-based approach has helped our group to demonstrate the results of our work to our members, to the community at large, and/or to other funders	__	__	__	__	__	__
e. The Application Form and Guide are easy to understand.	__	__	__	__	__	__
f. The Interim and Final Reports are easy to use. ...	__	__	__	__	__	__

20. What could the Women's Program do to make it easier for your group to apply the outcome-based approach? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

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_____

__ No suggestions

Part C: Impact of the Women's Program

This section of the survey asks you to consider the impact of the Women's Program. Please answer Part C only if your organization has ever received funding from the Women's Program.

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21. Please read each statement below and check the response that best represents your opinion.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. Women's Program funding has enabled our organization to undertake initiatives it otherwise would not have been able to pursue........................	__	__	__	__	__	__
b. Women's Program funding has helped our organization to achieve some of its objectives in advancing women's equality	__	__	__	__	__	__
c. Women's Program funding has helped our organization to leverage other sources of funding	__	__	__	__	__	__

22. Thinking about what your organization has accomplished with Women's Program funding, what has changed as a result of those initiatives?

> **Please do not describe your organization's activities.**
> **Instead, describe the *outcomes* of those activities, or what has changed because of them.**
>
> Example of an *activity*: Preparing an instruction manual on how to run for political office
> Example of an *outcome*: More women running for political office

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

23. Have any of your organization's initiatives had unintended consequences, either positive or negative?
    __ Yes, positive unintended consequences
    __ Yes, negative unintended consequences
    __ No unintended consequences *(Go to Part D)*
    __ Don't know *(Go to Part D)*

24. Please describe any positive or negative unintended consequences of your initiatives.

Positive	**Negative**
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Part D: Relevance of the Women's Program

The final section of the survey asks you to consider the ongoing relevance of and need for the Women's Program.

---

25. Please read each statement below and check the response that best represents your opinion.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
a. The Women's Program responds well to new and emerging groups	—	—	—	—	—	—
b. The Women's Program responds well to new and emerging issues	—	—	—	—	—	—
c. The Women's Program is still relevant to advancing women's equality in Canada	—	—	—	—	—	—

26. What would be the consequence for **your organization** if the Women's Program did not exist?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

__ No opinion/don't know

27. What do you think would be the consequence for the **advancement of women's equality in Canada** if the Women's Program did not exist?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

__ No opinion/don't know

28. In your opinion, how could the Women's Program be improved?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

__ No opinion/don't know

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
Please return it in the enclosed self-addressed, postage-paid envelope to:

PRA Inc.
500 – 363 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3N9

Or you can fax it back to us toll-free at:
1-800-717-5456

Evaluation of the Women's Program
Case Study Interview Guide

1.   To start, please tell me something about your organization.
   ‣ When was it established?
   ‣ What is its mandate?
   ‣ Whom does it represent?
   ‣ What kinds of activities does it engage in?

2.   How often has your organization received funding from the Women's Program (WP)?
        For what initiative(s)?

3.   We are interested in knowing more about your initiative(s).
   ‣ What need or issue was the initiative designed to address?
   ‣ What were the goals and objectives?
   ‣ How did it seek to achieve its goals and objectives (i.e., what were its strategies
        and activities)?
   ‣ What partnerships did it involve, either financial or non-financial?

4.   As you know, each initiative funded by the WP is expected to align with one or more
        objectives of the WP and address one or more of the WP's areas of focus. Which
        objective(s) was your initiative designed to address? Which area(s) of focus was your
        initiative designed to address?

5.   What outcome(s) was/were expected to result from your initiative(s)?

6.   *(Ask each of the following sub-questions for each expected outcome)*
   ‣ Has your initiative been successful in achieving or making progress toward
        (expected outcome)?
   ‣ If yes, what evidence demonstrates its success? Please give examples to
        demonstrate its success.
   ‣ What factors contributed to this success?

7.   Has your initiative had any unexpected outcomes, either positive or negative?

8.   Does your organization plan to continue working on this issue/in this area? If yes, please
        describe any plans you may have for future related initiatives.

9.   In your opinion, is the WP relevant to the advancement of women's equality? Why or
        why not? What would be the consequence for your organization if the WP did not exist?

10.   What lessons have been learned from the experience of your initiative?

11.   Do you have any other comments?

EVALUATION OF THE WOMEN'S PROGRAM

VOLUME II – INTERIM REPORTS

October 2005

Prepared for:

Status of Women Canada

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‣ Case study Report (rptCaseStudies_V4_LOGO.pdf)

‣ AGE: Report on Case Studies and Administrative data (rptAGE_CaseStudies_V5.doc)