# EVALUATION OF THE
# SUPPORT FOR OFFICIAL-LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES
# PROGRAM
## (A component of the Promotion of Official Languages Program)

**PREPARED FOR
CANADIAN HERITAGE
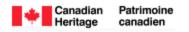PREPARED BY
ARC APPLIED RESEARCH CONSULTANTS**

**June 25, 2003**

Canada

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A. OVERVIEW OF THE SUPPORT FOR OFFICIAL-LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES

Part VII of the *Official Languages Act (OLA)* requires the federal government to take special measures to assist the development of English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada. The Department of Canadian Heritage delivers several programs and activities to help linguistic minority communities, such as the Support for Official-Language Communities, a component of the Promotion of Official Languages Program. This is a report on an evaluation of the Support for Official-Language Communities Program, which will be referred to as "the Program".

The objectives[1] of the Program are:

- Awareness building in Canadian institutions through advocacy activities in order to achieve legislative, political and administrative recognition of the communities' language rights in various sectors of activities.

- Development of communities' own institutions delivering services important to vitality (to be maintained and consolidated).

- Creation, enhancement and delivery of direct services to communities in their own language in various activity components when not otherwise available.

- Mobilization, consolidation, coordination and promotion of the communities to strengthen their sense of identity and belonging and capacity for collective action.

- Training and development of organization's staff and volunteers to enrich activities and increase their capacity to effectively serve the communities they represent.

The Program has two components: the Canada-Community Agreements component and the Strategic Development Fund.

There are currently 15 Canada-Community Agreements, one for each province and territory, one with the *Société nationale de l'Acadie,* and one with the twenty-one national Francophone organizations. Within these agreements, official language minority communities set their own development priorities and enjoy stable funding. All agreements have a five-year term, ending March 31, 2004. Approximately 350 community organizations receive program and/or project funding annually, with awards totaling approximately $27.5 million. Financial

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[1] Source: Internal document, Official Languages Support Branch

support to most organizations is modest; approximately 60% of community organizations receive less than $25 000 per year for advocacy, awareness building, education and communications (press and community radio), and activities relating to culture, youth and women.

The Strategic Development Fund is essentially a discretionary fund of approximately five million dollars per year to allow the Department to finance large-scale projects and inter-regional or pan-Canadian projects.  In 2001-02, there were 44 funded projects, ranging from $9,892 for a web-site development project to $1,124,500 for the *Rendez-vous de la Francophonie*.

In each community, an organization is designated (lead organization) to represent the community in its dealings with the Department of Canadian Heritage.  This lead organization is responsible to set up a committee responsible to review funding applications submitted by community organizations and make funding recommendations.  This committee includes members of the community as well as Department staff.
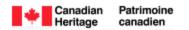
## B.    METHODOLOGY

There were several data sources for this evaluation.  Two surveys were conducted: one of the 540 community organizations that received funding from the Program between 1999-2000 and 2002-2003, and the other of 57 provincial and territorial coordinators of French-language services and officers in federal departments and agencies that contribute to the development of official language minority communities.  Approximately 90 key informant interviews were conducted with PCH regional and headquarters staff, official language minority community representatives in each province and territory, and representatives of national organizations for official language minority communities.  As well, an expert panel was organized for knowledgeable individuals from outside the minority official language organization network.  As well, various documents were reviewed and information extracted and summarized.

A limitation of the methodology was the lack of feedback from official language minority community members who are meant to benefit from the activities and services of community organizations funded by the Program.  Identifying and seeking the perspectives of these individuals would have required a significantly higher expenditure for the evaluation.

## C.    EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

## 1.    Program Rationale and Relevance

Based on the research, there continues to be an important role for the federal government in supporting official language minority communities.  The *Official Languages Act* gives the Department of Canadian Heritage, amongst other federal institutions, responsibility for supporting and assisting the development of French and English linguistic minority communities in Canada.  One federal support mechanism is the Support for Official-Languages Communities Program.

The rationale for official language minorities support programs was reinforced by the 2002 Speech from the Throne, which stated, "competitive cities and healthy communities are vital to our individual and national well-being. (The federal government) will support the development of minority communities, and expand access to services in their language in areas such as health." The Action Plan for Official Languages tabled by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Stéphane Dion, in March 2003, presented the Government of Canada's response to this commitment. It committed new resources of $751.3 million over five years, including $19 million for initiatives to strengthen the lives of official language minority communities by supporting community centers, community radio stations and cultural broadcasts.

Implicit in the *Official Languages Act* and the 2002 Speech from the Throne is the assumption that a strong community infrastructure is a key to the vitality of official language minority communities. This is also view of many community representatives interviewed in the course of this evaluation. There was general agreement from all evaluation respondents that the Program is still needed, as official language communities remain minorities, often small and fragile.

## 2.  Program Impact and Success

To assess the impact of a program, it must have clearly defined objectives and expected results. The objectives of the Support for Official-Language Communities Program are broad allowing some flexibility to address varying priorities and issues across communities. However, the Program lacks clear expected results and performance indicators, so it was difficult to assess the extent to which the Program's objectives are being achieved.

Overall, most of the community organizations surveyed and community and government representatives interviewed believe the Program has sustained many community organizations and therefore is successful. The following are excerpts of feedback from community organizations:

- "Our institutions and community organizations offer services and activities that contribute to the vitality of the community. In remote regions they permit us to live in our own language."

- "Without the Program, the majority of our organizations would not be able to continue to offer services nor to improve or develop new services."

- "It is through our institutions that we succeed in transferring our language and culture to the next generation."

- "By maintaining and improving community services, the Program encourages members of minority language communities to remain in their communities and contributes to the development of a greater sense of belonging within the community."

- "The Program facilitates the mobilization of the community around common issues. It increases the capacity of the community and institutions to work collectively in developing the community".

- "Without the financial contribution of the Program, organizations would not be able to maintain their base programs, and some could cease to exist, since self-financing from membership fees is impossible with a limited population base. Program funding ensures a certain stability in organizations."

Overall, 72% of the community organizations surveyed believe that the Program has *contributed directly* to the preservation of existing institutions (day care centers, community radio stations, cultural centers, community centers and newspapers were the ones most frequently cited), and more than 60% believe that it has contributed to *improvements* of existing community institutions. Many indicated that the survival of most community organizations is a direct result of the Program.

Eighty percent (80%) of community organizations surveyed believe that the Program has ensured the preservation of such services as libraries, referral services, children's programs, and space for community meetings. More than 60% said that it has improved community services (e.g. community consultations) and more than 70% said that it has produced new services (e.g. communications (internet) services and training).

The evaluation was unsuccessful at assessing the impact of the other Program component - the Strategic Development Fund - because the majority of respondents have little awareness of it.

There are official language minority communities in every province and territory. In Canada, their total population is close to two million people (2001 Census). The size and geographic dispersion of these communities vary, with large, relatively concentrated populations in some provinces/territories and small, relatively dispersed populations in others. Despite the Support for Official Language Communities Program, recent Census data indicate that official language minority communities in some provinces (e.g. Newfoundland, Saskatchewan and Manitoba) are shrinking. A number of factors have contributed to this, for example, intermarriage, population aging, and an exodus of youth to jobs and education programs in other areas. A program such as the Support for Official-Language Minority Communities Program cannot be expected to reverse the decline. In addition, some of the current preoccupations, such as healthcare and education, fall within the jurisdiction of the provincial or territorial governments and not the federal government.

## 3. Program Design and Delivery

**Canada-Community Agreements**

In general, evaluators have concluded that the Canada-Community Agreement approach is working, but some modifications are necessary to address frequently raised design issues:

1 Cost-effectiveness: The lead organizations that represent official language minority

communities in dealings with the Department of Canadian Heritage receive 5-10% of the funding envelope for each Canada-Community Agreement, which represents a total of $1.5-3 million annually. These funds are meant for organizing community consultations, recommending the allocation of remaining funds and other implementation duties, and evaluating the Agreement, and also for coordinating programs and services in their areas. However, little evidence was found that the lead organizations are fulfilling this latest function. The level of satisfaction with the efficiency of the lead organizations varies, but across the board, the management process is perceived as heavy.

2   <u>The relevance of annual consultations and the limited participation</u>:  The management of Agreements typically involves annual consultations on priorities, organized by lead organizations.  Concerns were expressed in some areas that only the members of the lead organizations are included.  It seems that non-member organizations are invited only to the consultations that precede negotiation of new Agreements, i.e. every five years.  This limited outreach is seen as inappropriate.  Nor is it clear that annual consultations are necessary:  the process is onerous and costly, and priorities tend not to change so frequently.

3   <u>Lack of strategic and focused priorities</u>:  The community's global development plans (many of them are annexed to the Canada-Community Agreements) are broad. Hence virtually all projects or programs can be deemed eligible for funding, providing the committees responsible for funding recommendations little guidance for selection judgment.

4   <u>Proliferation of community organizations that receive funding</u>:  Interviewees, from official language minority communities and government both, were concerned about the proliferation of minority official language community organizations funded from this Program. It is their view that the numbers have increased because the committees responsible for funding recommendations have been reluctant to withdraw funding from community organizations if this action might cause them to close. This is not to say that the majority of community organizations should not continue to be funded.

5   <u>Lack of transparency of funding decisions</u>:  In some provinces, the concentration of power is a cause for concern.  It is not appropriate for lead organizations that receive funds to manage Agreements to also have one or more members on the committees that determine funding.  Approximately 60 % of community organizations surveyed did not find the allocation process easy to understand and transparent.  The selection criteria are unknown; there is conflict of interest and no appeal process.

6   <u>Lack of clear expected Program results and performance indicators</u>:  What the Program is trying to achieve in relation to its objectives is unclear.  Consequently, assessing Program's success is difficult.  This applies to both Program components.

Issues relating to Program delivery are as follows:

1  The multi-layer approval process:  Eligible organizations submit their funding applications annually to the Department of Canadian Heritage.  An organization seeking both project and program funding must apply twice.  Requests are first assessed by the Committee responsible for funding recommendations in each province/territory.  Then, the Committees make their recommendations for funding to the Department.  Regional PCH managers review the recommendations to ensure activities meet criteria and then submit them to national headquarters.  At headquarters, the files undergo a due diligence review.  Finally, the recommendations are sent to the Minister.

2  The length of time required for decisions on funding application:  Concerns about the length of time required for processing of funding applications were widespread, in community organizations and the Department, as implications for community organizations have included stress and uncertainty for employees who are not paid for a period of time, decreases in services offered by organizations, staff lay-offs, delays in project implementation, and temporary closures of organizations.

3  The role of PCH staff in the decision-making process:  To date, funding recommendations have been developed by Committees, which are invariably dominated by community members.  In most regions, Canadian Heritage staff is more or less rubber-stamping the recommendations.  There is a need for a clearer definition by the Department of its co-management role.

A number of key informants, both from the community and from government, proposed alternative modes of Program delivery that they thought would improve efficiency.  Some proposed issuing a single cheque to the lead organization for each region, which in turn would be responsible for all aspects of delivery of the Program, including funding allocations and reporting.

The second alternative approach proposed by interviewees was to give responsibility for managing the funding process and reporting on results over to a third party, outside the community network, such as a *Caisse populaire*. This third party would have to be agreed to by both the community and the Department. The rationale behind this option is that the funding process would be faster and community organizations would receive their funding sooner.

**Strategic Development Fund**

The Strategic Development Fund is meant to complement the Canada-Community Agreements process.  Large-scale projects that would require a large portion of a Canada-Community Agreement should be eligible.  However, it appears that a good number of projects funded by the Fund could have been funded through Agreements.  This may be due to the predilection for maintaining historic funding levels of community organizations, lack of funding criteria for the Fund, and lack of flexibility of the Canada-community allocation process.

The allocation process for the Fund is unstructured and not transparent, and there is a perception that the Strategic Development Fund is benefiting a select group of organizations.

## D.    RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:**    The Department should ensure that only community organizations that address the stated priorities and needs of their communities and can demonstrate broad community support for their programs or services receive Program funding.

Management response:  The Program agrees with the recommendation. Community support and linkage to community priorities are two important considerations when assessing the merit of a funding request. It is also important to mention that the analysis of the applications conducted by the Canadian Heritage officers will be based not just on quantitative information but also on an evaluation of the community dynamic so as to also take into account the linkage to departmental priorities and the group's ability to achieve the desired results effectively and efficiently.

The purpose of the agreements mechanism was to involve the community in the evaluation of the merit and representativity of the groups receiving funding. The establishment and review of comprehensive development plans was designed to provide a framework with which to better situate, identify and validate the relevance of the various groups' activities.

The analytical grid developed by Canadian Heritage over the course of the past two years is designed to respond to the objectives of this recommendation and it will continue to be refined in order to ensure the merit of the groups receiving funding and their respect for democratic principles, transparency and accountability.

*Implementation schedule:* Ongoing once the cooperation agreements are renewed.

**Recommendation 2:**    The Department should consider multi-year funding (programming only) for the period covered by the Canada-Community Agreement to organizations that can strongly contribute to Program results.

Management response: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation. Since 2002-2003, multiyear funding has been formally offered as a program funding option to organizations that demonstrate a recognized capacity to attain the desired results and that have the accountability and accounting mechanisms required by the Program. Measures must be taken however to provide the flexibility to add or remove beneficiaries on the basis of performance or emerging needs.

*Implementation schedule:* Underway

**Recommendation 3:**    The Department should clearly articulate what it expects to accomplish through this Program and how it will measure progress.  Collaboration with minority communities will be required to develop results measures and performance indicators that are in line with Program results.  Each community is unique. Although some indicators are

expected to be common to all communities, other indicators could be unique to reflect differing geographic and demographic realities. Data collection processes should be put in place to ensure required performance data are systematically collected. A clear delineation of responsibility for collecting data is also necessary. These steps will strengthen the Agreements.

Management response: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation's objective. Created to support the *Official Languages Act*, the Program is an intervention tool designed to enhance the development of minority official language communities. Its terms and conditions established general objectives consistent with social development activities. The Program made an initial change of direction in 2001-2002 by integrating into its application and funding recommendation processes a planning and reporting requirement based on measurable results. In addition, the new management and accountability framework should make it possible to more fully articulate the program objectives and identify more measurable results.

In order to be better able to attribute any social, economic or demographic changes to the Program's investments, the OLSPB intends in the next 24 months to develop, in cooperation with the academic and community sectors, a range of significant community development indicators that should make it possible to more accurately establish states of affairs and measure the impact of program investments on community realities.

*Implementation schedule:* Underway, and ongoing after that.

**Recommendation 4:**     It is strongly recommended that the Department of Canadian Heritage improve the design and delivery of this Program. Specifically,

4.1   Department staff should play a more meaningful/challenging role on the Committees responsible for funding recommendations to ensure funding is allocated more strategically. The Department, not community organizations, is fully accountable to Parliament for the use of Program funds.

Management response: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation. This question was already raised during the most recent program audit in 2002. Both in regional and headquarters offices, program officers work closely with prospective applicants to review and refine their funding applications. Working files do not fully reflect all the preparatory work prior to the official submission of an application and which is intended to maximize the impact of the proposed project by ensuring detailed and strategic planning by the applicants.

During the renewal of the agreements, this accountability and self-evaluation requirement will be one of the cornerstones of any new cooperation agreement. Individual roles and responsibilities will be more precisely defined within the agreements.

*Implementation schedule:* Will be integrated into new cooperation agreements.

> 4.2    The Department should assess the value for money provided by lead organizations in managing the Canada-Community Agreements.  It should ensure that these organizations meet all their obligations under the Agreements and perhaps, add new responsibilities.  New responsibilities could relate to the collection and reporting on Program results.  Lead organizations, or other entities charged with this responsibility, should also be responsible for sharing this information with Canadian Heritage, community organizations, and official language minority community members at large. Alternatively, the Department should reduce the responsibilities of lead organizations (e.g. annual consultations) and use freed-up resources for a more strategic allocation to community organizations.

Management response: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation's objective. As part of the discussions for the renewal of the agreements, the Program will raise the findings of the evaluation with the advocacy organizations and determine whether there is reason to require them to compile the information and report on the results. The Program recognizes that the funded advocacy organizations have a limited responsibility and capacity to gather and evaluate the results of the Program's funding. Moreover, the absence of reliable community development indicators at the local level forces us to focus, for the moment, on gathering outputs at the regional level and a more comprehensive analysis of the results at the national level under the Program's responsibility rather than the responsibility of the recipient groups.

*Implementation schedule:* Will be integrated into the new cooperation agreements.

> 4.3    The Department should address the dissatisfaction about the length of time required to process funding applications by exploring options for speeding the process.

Management response: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation. The application processing delays are attributable to the community recommendation process, the program officers' analysis measures and the processing and approval mechanisms and process at headquarters. In 2001, the Program set up a working group involving representatives of departmental services, the Program and the community in order to identify potential solutions. The multiyear funding of the programs of effective groups and the various transitory administrative measures have already responded in large part to the criticisms. As part of the renewal of the agreements, the review of the recommendation mechanisms and schedule should also help speed up processing and reduce delays. The more strategic presentation of the information in the application forms that appears to be generalized will also help to reduce the
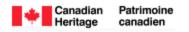
preparation burden for the groups on the one hand, as well as the timeframe for analysis and recommendation by the joint committees and the Department on the other. Finally, the Department has set up a grants and contributions centre of expertise whose objective is to optimize the administrative processes while respecting the accountability and accounting requirements.

*Implementation schedule*: Underway, and ongoing after that.

> 4.4    The Department should make the funding application process more transparent for both Program components. Clear funding criteria should be established for the Strategic Development Fund.  The criteria should be consistently applied.  Funding should not be used for projects that can be funded through the Agreements.  The Fund should be a "strategic" fund.

Management response: The Program recognizes the need for greater transparency in the management and communication on the use of the Strategic Development Fund resources. The Fund's objectives have been presented on the Program's Web site for several years now, but they were not disseminated proactively. Measures will be taken during this fiscal year to respond to various aspects of the recommendation, such as the establishment and dissemination of specific objectives, clear funding criteria and a report on the use of the funds.

*Implementation schedule*: Ongoing once the cooperation agreements are renewed.

# I    INTRODUCTION

## A.    OVERVIEW OF THE SUPPORT FOR OFFICIAL-LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

The Official-Languages Support Branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage currently delivers three programs: Official Languages in Education Program, Promotion of Official Languages Program and Language Acquisition Development Program. The Support for Official-Language Communities Program falls under the Terms and Conditions of the Promotion of Official-Languages Program.

The objectives of the Support for Official-Language Communities Program are:

- Awareness building in Canadian institutions through advocacy activities in order to achieve legislative, political and administrative recognition of the communities' language rights in various sectors of activities.

- Development of communities' own institutions delivering services important to vitality (to be maintained and consolidated).

- Creation, enhancement and delivery of direct services to communities in their own language in various activity components when not otherwise available.

- Mobilization, consolidation, coordination and promotion of the communities to strengthen their sense of identity and belonging and capacity for collective action.

- Training and development of organization's staff and volunteers to enrich activities and increase their capacity to effectively serve the communities they represent.

The Support for Official-Language Communities Program is divided into two components: the Canada-Community Agreements and the Strategic Development Fund. There are currently 15 Canada-Community Agreements, one in each province and territory as well as one with the Société nationale de l'Acadie and one with the national Francophone organizations. Funding to community organizations amounts to approximately $27.5 million annually. Over 500 organizations received either program and/or project funding through the Program from 1999-2000 to 2002-2003.  All agreements are negotiated for a five-year period ending on March 31, 2004. The principal sectors of activity include: advocacy, promotion, awareness, culture, youth, women, education, communications (press and community radio) and delivery of services.

The Strategic Development Fund is essentially a discretionary fund of approximately five million dollars annually intended to finance large-scale projects or projects involving more than one community such as inter-regional or pan-Canadian projects and others.

## B.    FUNDING MECHANISM

Under the Canada-Community Agreements, communities set their own development priorities and enjoy stable funding for the term of the Agreement (generally 5 years).   Appendix A provides the following information relating to each existing Agreement: funding envelope, breakdown between project and program funding, date signed and the signing organization(s).

In order to access funding, eligible community organizations submit a request for funding to the Department of Canadian Heritage, usually in December of each year, for funding for projects or programming for the upcoming federal government fiscal year. Requests are assessed in each province/territory by a committee (Joint or Management Committee)[2], which includes members of the community as well as Department staff, based on the community's development priorities, how well the proposed activities fit within the objectives of the Program and the suitability of the amount requested. Based on its assessment of the requests received, the Joint or Management Committee will, in general, provide regional Canadian Heritage managers with recommendations for funding. Regional managers then review these recommendations and, once satisfied that they meet all the necessary criteria, submit them to national headquarters and to the Minister for final approval.  This process may vary slightly from region-to-region.
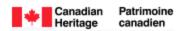
The process works similarly at the national level. The 22 national Francophone organizations that are signatories to the Agreement submit an annual request for funding for both program and project funding. However, there are no priorities at the national level thus funding decisions are made based on the best judgment of the National Management Committee which includes representatives from the Department and the community organizations.

There is no systematic method for evaluating requests for funding for the Strategic Development Fund, i.e. no structured funding allocation mechanism. Projects are assessed by departmental staff. They must fit within the objectives of the Program and must be deemed to have a positive impact on the community.

## C.    THIS EVALUATION

This evaluation of the Support for Official-Language Communities Program addresses issues related to Program relevance, success, design, delivery and cost-effectiveness.  The evaluation responds to the following questions:

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[2] Process may vary in certain regions.

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| **RELEVANCE** |
| 1. Does the original need for the Program still exist? How much has the situation of official-language communities (OLCs) changed over the past few years? How does it compare to the Canadian population as a whole? Are the objectives of the Program still relevant? |
| **SUCCESS** |
| 2. Most Canada-Community Agreements have been renewed since 1999. How was it determined if previous agreements had met their objectives? |
| 3. Do consultation processes exist to establish OLC development priorities for all agreements? If so, how do they work? If not, what is there instead? |
| 4. Under the agreements, who is designated to represent the community? How is representation guaranteed at the sectoral and geographic levels? |
| 5. What progress has the community made in asserting its rights with Canadian institutions? |
| 6. How can we ensure that the funds from Canada-Community Agreements are allocated in accordance with OLC priorities? |
| 7. How are OLCs informed about the allocation of Program funds (Agreements and Strategic Development Funds) with regard to their development priorities? Are they? Do they know why applications are turned down? Is the funding allocation process transparent? |
| 8. What initiatives and projects have been financed through the Strategic Development Fund over the past five years? How were they selected? How much of an impact did they make? What links were there with community development priorities? How transparent are the decisions? Is there complementarity between projects financed through the Strategic Development Fund and the Agreements? |
| 9. Were communities able to provide new services, and maintain or improve existing services? Were communities able to keep or improve their institutions? |
| 10. How well informed are program officers, OLC representatives and community organizations about the objectives of the Support for Official-Language Communities Program? Do they know about the mechanisms introduced and financed by PCH in order to meet these objectives? How did they find out? |
| 11. What processes are in place to facilitate or promote inter-organizational, inter-institutional, inter-community, inter regional and inter-sectoral projects partnerships? Who is responsible for taking the lead? |
| 12. With regard to program objectives, how satisfied are the OLCs with the development taking place in their communities? Do they feel that their most pressing needs are being met? That progress has been made? That they are able to live in their own language in their own environment and participate fully in all sectors of Canadian society? |
| **DESIGN and DELIVERY** |
| 13. Is the level of funding of the Program adequate to meet the objectives? |
| 14. How was the portfolio for each Agreement established? What factors are taken into account in this formula? Was this formula validated? If so, by whom? |
| 15. a) In its current form, has the Program had unexpected effects, positive or negative on the target clientele? <br> b) Are there any deficiencies with the Program in its current form? Are there pressing needs that the Program is not addressing? Which ones and why? |
| 16. Are funding applications from community organizations processed within a reasonable period of time? |
| 17. Are Canada-Community Agreements still seen as an effective way to deliver the Program? What are its main advantages and disadvantages? (For example, does it meet the communities' emerging priorities? Is the operating and management structure of the agreements effective? Do the issue tables operate the way they should?) |
| 18. Have the clauses concerning interdepartmental coordination led to collaboration between the federal departments and agencies and the communities |
| **COST-EFFECTIVENESS** |
| 19. Are there more effective ways to implement the Program? |

## D.    METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this evaluation incorporated data from a wide range of sources, including surveys, key informant interviews, analysis of files, and an expert panel discussion.

The study is limited by the absence of feedback from official language minority community members who directly benefited from the activities and services implemented by organizations receiving funding through this Program. The identification of these beneficiaries, for the purpose of this evaluation, would have been prohibitively costly. However, the Official-Language Support Branch conducted a pan-Canadian survey in the Fall 2002. This survey reached a significant number of official language minority community members and collected data on a variety of topics. The results of this survey will complement this evaluation.

The following data collection methods were used in the course of this evaluation:

## 1.    Surveys

### a)    *Survey of Community Organizations*

The survey of community organizations was conducted as a census; questionnaires were sent to all community organizations that had received funding from the Support for Official-Language Communities Program since the 1999-2000 fiscal year.

Of the 540 questionnaires sent, 174 were completed, for a response rate of 32%. We note that the length of the questionnaire, the timing of the evaluation (summer/fall of 2002) and the "volunteer nature" of the majority of organizations surveyed likely influenced the response rate. The response rate was sufficient to show the range and patterns of opinions of organizations in general. However, the limited number of responses from some regions and the small number of organizations in smaller regions limit the extent to which we are able to provide an analysis of the survey for these regions. Appendix B summarizes the number of responses received by region (province/territory) and the number of national organizations that participated.
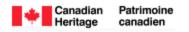
### b)    *Survey of Program Officers from other Federal Departments and Provincial Governments*

A survey was sent to provincial coordinators of French services, a network maintained by the Official-Language Support Branch and program officers from other federal departments and agencies whose organizations contribute to the development of minority language communities. Of the 57 questionnaires sent, 16 completed questionnaires were received for a response rate of 28%. In this report, these respondents will be designated as the external agencies. The list of external agencies may be found in Appendix C.

## 2.    Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with 89 individuals, including:

- Program officials at headquarters (6);

- Program officials in the regions (29);

- Community representatives in each province and territory (49 representing 34 organizations);

- Community representatives from national organizations (Fédération culturelle canadienne-française, Alliance des radios communautaires, Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada, Alliance canadienne des responsables et des enseignants et enseignantes en français langue maternelle).

A list of interviewees may be found in Appendix C.

## 3.    Review of Documents and Data

A review and analysis of documents and data was conducted including:

- Statistics from the 1991, 1996 and 2001 Census;

- CGIMS database;

- Relevant studies and research;

- Canada-Community Agreements;

- Jurisprudence for the past five years of cases involving minority communities;

- Funding allocations records from Joint or Management Committees; and

- Sample of projects funded from the Strategic Development Fund.

## 4.    Focus Group

A focus group was conducted with an expert panel of four individuals from outside of the organization network that were selected for their knowledge about linguistic minority communities in Canada.  Their names are provided in Appendix C.

## 5.    Analysis and Compiling of Information

Information from all sources was compiled and analyzed in order to address the evaluation questions and provide recommendations. Data collection instruments are included in Appendix D.

## E.    CONTEXT FOR THIS EVALUATION

The context of the Support for Official-Language Communities Program has evolved significantly since the signing of the majority of the existing Agreements in 1999.

Within the federal government, there is an evolving awareness of the obligations of federal departments and agencies, under section 41 of the *Official Languages Act.* This has resulted in some community organizations seeking and/or obtaining funding from federal organizations other than Canadian Heritage.

In addition, there has been an increased emphasis on due diligence[3] and management by results within the federal government in recent years. This has resulted in the Department of Canadian Heritage requiring more justification for how funds were spent by organizations. The impacts of this are being felt both within the Department as well as by community organizations.

Finally, there has been an evolution in the management capacity of many communities. This is not surprising since most communities are in their second generation of Agreements and have been able to use the structure of the Agreements to build management capacity.

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[3] Due diligence is a process intended to ensure that funding will contribute to the intended objectives and is based on reliable information.
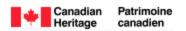
## II    PROGRAM RELEVANCE

### A.    LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

In 1969, Parliament enacted the *Official Languages Act* which was subsequently amended in 1988. A number of federal institutions have special responsibilities under this Act. Those most directly concerned are the Department of Justice, the Treasury Board, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Intergovernmental Affairs at the Privy Council Office, the Federal Court of Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Department of Justice is responsible for Part III of the Act, which pertains to the administration of justice. The Treasury Board Secretariat is responsible for Parts IV (Communications with and Services to the Public), V (Language of Work), VI (Participation of English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians in the federal public service) and VIII (Responsibilities and Duties of Treasury Board in Relation to the Official Languages of Canada). The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, which reports to Parliament, is responsible for ensuring compliance with the *Official Languages Act* and for providing citizens with information on different aspects of the Act, on its importance to Canadian society and on services provided by the Commissioner. Its role is outlined in Parts IX and X of the *Official Languages Act.* The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs is responsible for coordinating official language issues and for formulating a new framework for action to support the comprehensive implementation of the *OLA.* The Federal Court of Canada offers legal recourse to the public in the event that a federal agency fails to comply with certain rights and responsibilities, particularly with regard to service to the public.

The Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of sections 41 and 42 of Part VII of the Act. Under Section 41, the federal government is committed to fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society, and to supporting and assisting the development of English and French linguistic minority communities throughout Canada. This commitment seeks not only to ensure that minority communities had access to services in their language, but also to ensure that federal institutions were actively involved in their growth and development. Under Section 42, the Department is charged with encouraging and promoting a coordinated approach to the implementation by federal institutions of the commitments set out in Section 41, particularly among the 29 federal agencies and departments assigned to play vital roles with respect to official language minorities. Every year the Department of Canadian Heritage reports to Parliament on the main achievements of federal agencies and departments in this regard.

The Speech from the Throne 2002 which includes the government of Canada's priorities states that "competitive cities and healthy communities are vital to our individual and national well-being.  It (the federal government) will support the development of minority communities, and expand access to services in their language in areas such as health".

The Official-Languages Support Branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage delivers several programs and initiatives supporting the federal department commitment under Section 41. The 2001-2002 Canadian Heritage Official Languages Annual Report indicates that approximately $227 million were spent during that fiscal year to support minority communities by implementing the following programs and initiatives:

- Support for official-language communities ($33.6M);

- Administration of justice in the two official languages ($0.5M);

- Francophonie Youth and the Future of the Communities – Initiative ($3.5M);

- Research Institute on Linguistic Minorities ($10.0M);

- Federal-provincial/territorial agreements on minority-language education and investment in education measures ($158.0M);

- Federal-provincial/territorial agreements on promotion of official languages (services in the minority language) ($13.6M);

- Language Acquisition Development Program ($1.8M);

- Summer bursaries for Francophones from outside Quebec ($0.5M);

- Interdepartmental Partnership with Official-Language Communities  ($5.3M)

Therefore, the Department of Canadian Heritage is a key player to the development of minority communities.

## B.    RELEVANCE OF THE PROGRAM

The objectives of the Support for Official-Language Communities Program are to foster the:
- Recognition of language rights;
- Development of community institutions;
- Creation, enhancement and delivery of direct services;
- Strengthening of community identity, belonging and capacity for collective action; and
- Increased capacity to effectively serve the community.

There was agreement among all groups of interviewees (regional and national community representatives, and regional and headquarters department staff) as well as a great majority of organizations responding to the survey (community and external organizations) that the Program remains relevant since the official-language community remained a minority, often a small and fragile one. Whatever their thoughts about the value of specific Program objectives, informants

were convinced that funds from the Department of Canadian Heritage had been vital to sustaining many organizations over the past five years. Without such support, they felt the community would have been deprived of a number of its voices. Exhibit II-1 provides data on that question from community organizations surveyed.

**Exhibit II-1**            **Perception of Continued Relevance of Program**

| Do you feel the objectives of the Program are still relevant? | Objective 1 - **Recognition of language rights** % (number) | Objective 2 - **Development of community institutions** % (number) | Objective 3 - **Creation, enhancement and delivery of direct services** % (number) | Objective 4 - **Strengthening of community identity, belonging and capacity for collective action** % (number) | Objective 5 - **Increased capacity to effectively serve the community** % (number) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Yes** | 97 (165) | 92 (156) | 86 (146) | 94 (159) | 90 (153) |
| **No** | 1 (1) | 2 (4) | 4 (7) | 2 (4) | 6 (10) |
| **Don't know** | 2 (4) | 5 (9) | 10 (16) | 4 (6) | 5 (8) |

Source: Survey of Official-language community organizations.
Note: Number in brackets indicates the number of respondents providing each response. Those not responding to a question are excluded from the percentages.
Numbers are rounded.

Official-language community organizations strongly expressed the view that the Program continues to be relevant. The following are excerpts of their comments:

- "Despite the entrenchment of language rights of minority language communities in legislation, the day-to-day reality is quite different. The implementation in the provision of services is far from consistent, there remains a significant amount of lobbying to be done."

- "Our institutions and community organizations offer services and activities that contribute to the vitality and the viability of the community. In remote regions they permit us to live in our own language."

- "Without the Program, the majority of our organizations would not be able to continue to offer services nor to improve or develop new services. These services would be available only in English. In the long-term minority language communities would disappear."

- "It's through our institutions that we succeed in transferring our language and culture to the next generation. We have our institutions but we must ensure their survival and the Program contributes to this."

- "By maintaining and improving community services, the Program encourages members of minority language communities to remain in their community and contributes to the development of a greater sense of belonging within the community."

- "This Program facilitates the mobilization of the community around common issues. The organization of demonstrations of all types permits us to show our pride and sense of

belonging. The Program increases the capacity of the community and institutions to work collectively in developing the community."

- "Without the financial contribution of the Program, organizations would not be able to ensure their base programs and some would possibly cease to exist since self-financing of organizations from membership fees is impossible to realize with a limited population base. Few government programs provide program funding. Program funding ensure a certain stability in organizations."

However, this consensus was by no means unanimous, and some interviewees offered the following reservations with regard to the current objectives of the Program:

- They do not take into account the specific situation of each community (number, level of development, isolation, etc.).

- They are too broad, open to interpretation by those making funding decisions within the community.

- They are not measurable making it difficult to assess progress made over the years.

- They are not equally important to all communities.

- They are not embraced by all sectors. Some community representatives, particularly in the arts sector are focusing on their own product delivery.

- They may not provide the required backdrop to take advantage of the new attitude of openness and collaboration emerging from the majority community.

The panel of experts agreed that the objectives were broad - perhaps too broad. It was generally agreed that the Department must articulate what it is seeking to accomplish through the Program.

## C. EVOLUTION OF OFFICIAL-LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS

Official-language minority communities exist in every province and territory. The size and geographic dispersion of minority language communities varies from region to region with large, relatively concentrated populations in some regions and small, relatively dispersed populations in others. Exhibit II-2 presents data on official-language minority communities from the 1991, 1996, and 2001 Census. The table summarizes the total population of official-language minority communities in each province and territory as well as the proportion of the minority community within the total population of the province or territory and the net change in percentage from the 1996 to 2001 and from 1991 to 2001. Official language in the exhibit is defined as the first official language spoken.

**Exhibit II-2    Official-Language Minority Community Populations, 1991 – 2001**

| Province/ Territory | 1991 | 1991 % of Total | 1996 | 1996 % of Total | 2001 | 2001 %of Total | Net Change 1996-2001 (%) | Net Change 1991-2001 (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Canada | 1,873,095 | 6.9 | 1,896,475 | 6.6 | 1,906,610 | 6.4 | 0.5 | 0 |
| Alberta | 53,280 | 2.1 | 52,500 | 2.0 | 58,825 | 2.0 | 12.0 | 10.4 |
| British Columbia | 49,545 | 1.5 | 56,308 | 1.5 | 59,375 | 1.5 | 5.4 | 19.8 |
| Manitoba | 47,800 | 4.4 | 46,570 | 4.2 | 43,385 | 3.9 | -6.8 | -9.2 |
| New Brunswick | 242,630 | 33.9 | 241,038 | 33.0 | 238,450 | 33.1 | -1.0 | -1.7 |
| Newfoundland | 2,675 | 0.5 | 2,270 | 0.4 | 2,100 | 0.4 | -7.4 | -21.4 |
| NWT | 1390 | 2.4 | 1,380 | 2.1 | 1,325 | 2.5 | -3.9 | -4.6 |
| Nova Scotia | 35,885 | 4.0 | 34,610 | 3.8 | 33,770 | 3.8 | -2.4 | -5.8 |
| Ontario | 509,650 | 5.1 | 511,800 | 4.8 | 527,710 | 4.7 | 3.1 | 3.5 |
| PEI | 5,280 | 4.1 | 5,335 | 4.0 | 5,275 | 4.0 | -1.1 | -.09 |
| Quebec (Anglophones) | 904,305 | 13.3 | 925,830 | 13.1 | 918,955 | 12.9 | -0.7 | 1.6 |
| Saskatchewan | 19,805 | 2.0 | 17,720 | 1.8 | 16,555 | 1.7 | -6.5 | -16.4 |
| Yukon | 850 | 3.1 | 1,115 | 3.6 | 885 | 3.1 | -20.6 | 4.1 |

Source: Prepared by Canadian Heritage from Statistics Canada Census, 1991, 1996, and 2001.
Note: Official language is defined as the first official language spoken.
Data for Nunavut is not available

As can be noted from the above exhibit, the number of individuals belonging to an official-language minority increased in total between 1991 and 2001 and between 1996 and 2001.  In 7 provinces/territories the actual number of minority language community members decreased between 1991 and 2001.  The most significant decreases are noted in Newfoundland (-21.4%), Saskatchewan (-16.4) and Manitoba (-9.2).  Notably, the most significant increases are noted in British Columbia (19.8) and Alberta (10.4).  These data provide some support for the belief that some official language communities are declining. It must be noted that in assessing the impact of the Program on communities. A number of negative forces are serving to decrease the numbers in official-language minority communities including intermarriage, immigration, declining economies, among others.

There are differences in how the situation has evolved in official language minority communities in the last five years based on the survey of community organizations.  Consequently, the results must be interpreted with caution because of the low number of responses from some regions and because the responses reflect the views of respondents.

Interviews conducted with community representatives and Canadian Heritage staff and the survey of community organizations indicate that, overall there is a sense that the situation of minority language communities across Canada has stabilized in terms of demographics and the

ability of official language communities to live in their own language.

External agencies surveyed agreed that a lot has been accomplished in the previous five years, however they feel that a lot remains to be done in terms of official language community development in relation to the Program objectives.

The Survey on Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Canada's Official Languages found that members of minority language communities are somewhat confident that their community will continue to exist. They are much less confident in the ability of their community to retain young people in the region.

Exhibit II-3 summarizes mean responses to a series of questions asked in the survey of community organizations. Organizations were asked to rate the current situation of their community relative to five years ago on a scale of one-to-five (where 1 is "very positive", 3 is "neutral" and 5 is "very negative") for a number of indicators of community linguistic development. For each province or territory, the first line indicates the average rating for those who answered the question, while the number in brackets indicates the number of respondents who answered the question.

Overall, responding organizations indicated that they believe the most positive progress has been made in terms of access to primary and secondary education in their official language. This was supported by many interviewees indicating that significant progress has been made in education with most Francophone communities implementing a French-language school board; Quebec Anglophones already had an English school board. However, there was a generally negative rating of the extent to which young people were being retained in the communities, again this result was supported by comments of interviewees who noted an exodus from the communities by young people. Unfortunately, the study did not provide information explaining why young people are leaving their communities (eg. employment, education, etc.). Access to services in the official language of choice was also rated as having deteriorated relative to five years ago, in particular programming and services from provincial/territorial governments and healthcare and social services. Access to sports and recreation is also believed to have deteriorated in the past five years.

Similar questions were asked of community members in the 2002 Survey on the Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Canada's Official Languages. Overall, respondents expressed satisfaction with the services offered in their region in their official language. The overall level of access was rated highest in the Atlantic region and lowest in the West and Prairies.

**Exhibit II-3    Progress Made by Official Language Communities, by Region – Average Rating/(number)**

| Region Rating – 1 indicates "very positive" and 5 "very negative" | Ability of community members to live in minority language | Access to primary and secondary education in minority language | Access to post-secondary education and training in minority language | Availability & accessibility of relevant minority language radio, television, internet & other communication | Availability and accessibility of minority language culture (music, cinema, theatre) | Availability and accessibility of minority language sports and recreation | Growth of your minority language-speaking community | Ability to receive services and programming from the federal government in minority language | Ability to receive services and programming from the provincial government in minority language | Retention of young people in your community | Access to healthcare and social services in minority language | Level of economic well-being of community members and businesses relative to the majority | Long-term viability of your linguistic community |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alberta (21) | 2 (21) | 2 (20) | 3 (21) | 3 (21) | 3 (21) | 4 (21) | 3 (21) | 3 (21) | 4 (21) | 3 (18) | 4 (21) | 3 (20) | 2 (20) |
| British Columbia (7) | 3 (7) | 2 (7) | 4 (7) | 3 (7) | 3 (7) | 4 (7) | 3 (7) | 3 (7) | 4 (7) | 5 (6) | 4 (7) | 4 (7) | 3 (7) |
| Manitoba (5) | 3 (5) | 2 (5) | 2 (5) | 2 (5) | 3 (5) | 3 (5) | 3 (5) | 3 (5) | 4 (5) | 3 (5) | 3 (5) | 4 (5) | 3 (5) |
| New Brunswick (21) | 3 (20) | 2 (21) | 2 (21) | 2 (21) | 3 (21) | 3 (21) | 4 (19) | 3 (20) | 3 (21) | 4 (20) | 3 (21) | 4 (19) | 3 (20) |
| Newfoundland and Labrador (1) | 3 (1) | 3 (1) | 4 (1) | 3 (1) | 4 (1) | 4 (1) | 4 (1) | 3 (1) | 5 (1) | 4 (1) | 5 (1) | 4 (1) | 3 (1) |
| Northwest Territories (8) | 3 (8) | 2 (8) | 4 (8) | 2 (8) | 4 (8) | 4 (8) | 3 (7) | 4 (8) | 5 (7) | 4 (7) | 5 (8) | 3 (7) | 2 (8) |
| Nova Scotia (11) | 3 (11) | 2 (11) | 3 (11) | 3 (11) | 4 (11) | 4 (11) | 3 (10) | 3 (11) | 4 (11) | 4 (11) | 4 (10) | 3 (7) | 3 (10) |
| Ontario (53) | 3 (53) | 2 (53) | 3 (53) | 3 (52) | 4 (51) | 4 (50) | 3 (49) | 3 (51) | 4 (52) | 4 (48) | 4 (50) | 3 (48) | 3 (52) |
| Prince Edward Island (5) | 2 (5) | 2 (4) | 3 (5) | 3 (5) | 3 (4) | 4 (5) | 3 (5) | 2 (5) | 3 (5) | 3 (5) | 4 (5) | 3 (5) | 2 (5) |
| Quebec (18) | 3 (20) | 3 (20) | 3 (18) | 2 (19) | 3 (18) | 3 (16) | 3 (18) | 2 (18) | 4 (18) | 4 (17) | 3 (18) | 3 (17) | 3 (18) |
| Saskatchewan (14) | 2 (14) | 2 (13) | 4 (14) | 3 (14) | 3 (14) | 4 (14) | 4 (13) | 3 (14) | 4 (14) | 4 (14) | 4 (14) | 4. (14) | 3 (12) |
| Yukon (2) | 2 (2) | 2 (2) | 2 (2) | 2 (2) | 3 (2) | 3 (2) | 2 (2) | 3 (2) | 2 (2) | 4 (2) | 4 (2) | 3 (2) | 2 (2) |
| National Organizations (4) | 3 (4) | 2 (4) | 4 (4) | 3 (4) | 3 (4) | 4 (4) | 4 (4) | 4 (4) | 4 (4) | 4 (4) | 4 (4) | 3 (4) | 4 (4) |
| Region not identified (1) | | | | 3 (1) | 4 (1) | 5 (1) | 3 (1) | 4 (1) | 5 (1) | 4 (1) | 5 (1) | 3 (1) | |
| Total | 3 (171) | 2 (169) | 3 (170) | 3 (171) | 3 (168) | 4 (166) | 3 (162) | 3 (168) | 4 (169) | 4 (159) | 4 (167) | 3 (157) | 3 (164) |

Source: Survey of Official-language community organizations.

Note: The number of respondents is indicated in brackets next to the name of the province/territory.  For questions where the number of respondents is different, the number of respondents is indicated under the average
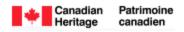
Interviewees representing minority language communities, despite noting that the situation in official language communities has stabilized, also indicated that their communities are wrestling with worrisome and apparently intractable trends. These trends include:

- The exodus from rural to urban communities, particularly in the more rural provinces such as Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island.

- The development of a bilingual culture resulting in fewer "pure Francophones".

- The emigration of youth to other parts of the country for jobs and education.

- Lower than traditional birth rates with the consequent ageing of the community's population.

- The influx of the newcomers (for example Africans in Ontario) fragmenting the community.

- Decisions by parents, especially in mixed marriages, to send their children to the majority system for the child's perceived long-term economic benefit.

It must be noted that some of these trends such as the retention of young people in smaller and rural communities is an issue for all communities, not just minority language communities.

A survey commissioned by Canadian Heritage in 2002 found that the majority (55% of minority Francophones and 52% of minority Anglophones) believes that their ability to live in their language will be about the same in five years as it was at the time of the survey. Notably, 31% of Francophones and 27% of Anglophones anticipate the situation being better. This may be a reflection of the recent attention paid to official languages in the media as a result of the new federal government action plan for official languages and the Treasury Board report on the use of both official languages in the public sector.

The panel of experts largely agreed with the view that communities have progressed in some respects in the past five years. However, the rate of assimilation among Francophones is a cause for concern. Assimilation, according to the panel is a difficult problem, they further noted that one of the key factors (for francophone communities) is the preponderance of Anglophone media. The impact of assimilation on minority language communities was also cited as an important concern by external agencies surveyed.

# III    PROGRAM SUCCESS

## A.    INTRODUCTION

The Support for Official-Language Communities Program provides Program funding to approximately 350 community organizations on a yearly basis. There is little turnover in organizations being funded. The majority of organizations are funded from year to year and receive a similar amount of funding each year to carry on their core activities. Community organizations can also receive projects funding to implement special non-recurring activities. It is possible for community organizations to receive both program and project funding in a given year. Support to most community organizations from the Department of Canadian Heritage is modest. As indicated in Exhibit III-1, using 1999-2000 as a reference year, approximately 60% of community organizations received less than 25,000 dollars to carry on their activities and projects.

Community organizations carry on activities in these principal sectors: advocacy, animation, promotion, awareness, culture, youth, women, education, communications (press and community radio) and delivery of services.

Exhibit III-1 indicates how the Program funds (including the Strategic Development Fund) were distributed in 1999-2000:

**Exhibit III-1 Distribution of Program funding in 1999-2000**

| Amount received - Range | Percentage of funded projects |
|---|---|
| 0 to 10,000 | 38.3 |
| 10,001 to 20,000 | 14.9 |
| 20,001 to 25,000 | 5.1 |
| 25,001 to 50,000 | 20.9 |
| 50,001 to 100,000 | 9.8 |
| 100,001 and more | 10.9 |

## B.    PROGRESS MADE WITH REGARD TO PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Community organizations surveyed as well as community representatives interviewed generally

felt positive about the progress made in the past five years with regard to the Program objectives, despite the challenges that remain.

Organizations were asked to rate and comment on the progress made as a direct result of the Program with regard to the Program objectives in the past five years, where 1 indicates " much improved ", 3 " about the same " and 5 " much worsened ". On average, responding organizations indicated that the situation is slightly better than it was five years ago with regard to all five Program objectives. Exhibit III-2 summarizes the average responses by region.

**Exhibit III-2  Perceived Progress of Program in Meeting Objectives, by Region**

| Region | Objective 1 - **Recognition of language rights** Average rating on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "much improved" and 5 is "much worsened" (number) | Objective 2 - **Development of community institutions** Average rating on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "much improved" and 5 is "much worsened" (number) | Objective 3 - **Creation, enhancement and delivery of direct services** Average rating on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "much improved" and 5 is "much worsened" (number) | Objective 4 - **Strengthening of community identity, belonging and capacity for collective action** Average rating on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "much improved" and 5 is "much worsened" (number) | Objective 5 - **Increased capacity to effectively serve the community** Average rating on a scale of 1-to5 where 1 is "much improved" and 5 is "much worsened" (number) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alberta | 2 (20) | 2 (19) | 2 (18) | 2 (17) | 2 (19) |
| British Columbia | 2 (7) | 2 (7) | 2 (7) | 2 (7) | 3 (6) |
| Manitoba | 2 (3) | 3 (4) | 3 (4) | 2 (3) | 2 (4) |
| New Brunswick | 2 (18) | 2 (19) | 2 (19) | 2 (18) | 3 (18) |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 1 (1) | 1 (1) | 1 (1) | 1 (1) | 1 (1) |
| Nova Scotia | 2 (10) | 3 (8) | 2 (7) | 3 (8) | 3 (9) |
| Northwest Territories | 2 (7) | 2 (7) | 3 (7) | 2 (7) | 3 (7) |
| Ontario | 3 (45) | 3 (44) | 3 (43) | 3 (46) | 3 (44) |
| Prince Edward Island | 2 (5) | 2 (5) | 2 (5) | 2 (5) | 2 (5) |
| Quebec | 2 (19) | 2 (19) | 2 (19) | 2 (20) | 2 (20) |
| Saskatchewan | 3 (13) | 3 (14) | 3 (13) | 2 (14) | 3 (14) |
| Yukon | 3 (2) | 3 (2) | 2 (2) | 3 (2) | 2 (2) |
| National Organizations | 3 (4) | 3 (4) | 3 (4) | 3 (4) | 4 (4) |
| Region not identified | 2 (1) | 2 (2) | 3 (2) | 3 (2) | 3 (2) |
| Total | 2 (155) | 3 (155) | 2 (151) | 2 (154) | 3 (155) |

Source: Survey of Official-language community organizations.
Note: Numbers in brackets indicate the number of respondents. Those not responding to a question have been excluded from the percentages. Therefore the remaining percentage responded "don't know".  Number have been rounded to the nearest digit.

Community organizations were encouraged to cite specific examples where they feel progress has been made as a direct result of the Program. The following are some of the most frequently cited examples:

**Recognition of language rights**: Montfort Hospital case in Ontario; the new language law in New Brunswick; interventions with CRTC (Canadian Radio and Television Commission) to force cable providers to include French stations in their base package in New Brunswick; translation of official provincial/territorial documents into French in the Yukon; provision of bilingual phone service by Human Resources and Development Canada in Quebec; the creation of the "Secrétariat francophone" in Alberta.

**Development of community institutions**: opening of official language minority schools in Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island and Ontario; opening of a community center in the Yukon; opening of a visual arts center in Alberta; opening of community radio stations in the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan and Ontario; new Francophone community college in New Brunswick; strengthening of Anglophone public institutions through membership in the health and social service network in Quebec; consolidation of community and cultural organizations under the same roof in Edmonton.

**Creation, enhancement and delivery of direct services**: single window for employment services in Saskatchewan; opening of a new job center in Ontario; implementation of regional health centers guaranteeing provision of health services in French in New Brunswick, new university and college programs offered in New Brunswick.

**Strengthening of community identity, belonging and capacity for collective action**: increased volunteerism and participation in community activities on the part of community members in Saskatchewan, Ontario and the Yukon; development of organizations or networks linking organizations allowing them to better coordinate their activities in the Northwest Territories.

**Increased capacity to effectively serve the community**: increased stability in membership and human resources in the Northwest Territories and Ontario; improved management of organizations in Ontario.

## 1.     Asserting their Rights

Community representatives from the regions and at the national level were asked to cite instances where the official language minority community they represent has asserted its language rights with Canadian institutions. The most frequently cited instances related to healthcare, particularly for the elderly, education, immigration and economic development. Some noted that they believe the adversarial approach taken in the past has fallen out of favor because many believe that this approach results in animosity towards the minority community on the part of the majority community. These individuals noted that the cooperative approach often has a more positive result on the community's relationship with those outside the community. However, in some situations minority communities feel they have no option but to resort to the more 'hard line' approach to having their language rights recognized. This approach most often involves taking the issue to court.
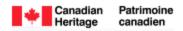
Of special note are two cases, the decisions on which provide guidance that reaches well beyond the specific circumstances judged. The significant R. v. Beaulac decision established a "much needed unified approach to the interpretation of official-language rights generally." It is now being cited frequently in subsequent cases on language rights issues. As well, the ruling in Arsenault-Cameron v. Prince Edward Island is proving to be an important precedent, cited in cases involving minority language education rights at the community level. Appendix E provides a brief description of these two cases as well as the list of other cases examined in the context of this study.

## 2. Implementing and Preserving services and institutions

Many interviewees representing official language minority communities cited the implementation of minority language school boards as a positive development for the communities although this has not been the direct result of this Program (The Department of Canadian Heritage may have contributed via the Official-Language in Education Program). According to community representatives interviewed, the Program is believed to have contributed to the maintenance of existing programs and services within communities but not necessarily to the development or improvement of new programs and services. However, this differs from results of the survey of community organizations. Overall, 62% of responding organizations believe that the Program has directly contributed to the improvement of existing community institutions and 62% indicated that the Program has contributed to the improvement of services in the community. In addition, 73% of responding community organizations believe that the Program has directly resulted in the implementation of new services in the community. Exhibit III-3 summarizes results by region.

**Exhibit III-3**     **Perceived Impact of Program on Programs & Services in Community, by Region**

| Region | Program contributed to the preservation of existing institutions (number) | | Program contributed to the improvement of existing institutions (number) | | Program resulted in the preservation of existing services (number) | | Program resulted in the improvement of existing services (number) | | Program resulted in new services (number) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % "yes" | % "no" | % "yes" | % "no" | % "yes" | % "no" | % "yes" | % "no" | % "yes" | % "no" |
| Alberta | 76 (16) | 4 (1) | 81 (17) | 5 (1) | 72 (13) | 6 (1) | 69 (13) | 11 (2) | 84 (16) | 5 (1) |
| British Columbia | 71 (5) | | 43 (3) | 57 (4) | 100 (7) | | 83 (5) | 17 (1) | 86 (6) | 14 (1) |
| Manitoba | 100 (5) | | 75 (3) | 25 (1) | 40 (2) | 20 (1) | 75 (3) | 25 (1) | 50 (2) | 50 (2) |
| New Brunswick | 76 (16) | | 84 (16) | | 91 (19) | | 80 (16) | | 47 (9) | 37 (7) |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) | |
| Nova Scotia | 54 (6) | 27 (3) | 46 (5) | 27 (3) | 89 (8) | 11 (1) | 70 (7) | | 70 (7) | 10 (1) |
| Northwest Territories | 88 (7) | | 100 (8) | | 100 (8) | | 88 (7) | 13 (1) | 75 (6) | 25 (2) |
| Ontario | 69 (36) | 15 (8) | 51 (27) | 32 (17) | 67 (35) | 17 (8) | 42 (21) | 40 (19) | 70 (35) | 24 (11) |
| Prince Edward Island | 80 (4) | | 60 (3) | | 100 (5) | | 60 (3) | 20 (1) | 100 (5) | |
| Quebec | 58 (11) | 26 (5) | 55 (11) | 25 (5) | 86 (18) | 5 (1) | 76 (16) | 5 (1) | 86 (18) | 10 (2) |
| Saskatchewan | 71 (10) | 21 (3) | 43 (6) | 57 (8) | 92 (12) | | 50 (7) | 50 (7) | 67 (8) | 33 (4) |
| Yukon | 100 (2) | | 100 (2) | | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) | |
| National Organizations | 75 (3) | 25 (1) | 75 (3) | | 50 (2) | 25 (1) | 0 | 67 (2) | 100 (4) | |
| Total | 72 (122) | 12 (21) | 62 (105) | 23 (39) | 80 (131) | 9 (14) | 62 (100) | 22 (36) | 73 (118) | 20 (32) |

Source: Survey of Official-language community organizations.
Note: Numbers in brackets indicate the number of respondents. Those not responding to a question have been excluded from the percentages. Therefore the remaining percentage responded "don't know".

The existing institutions most frequently cited as having been preserved were schools (primary and secondary), daycare centers, community radio stations, cultural and community centers, and newspapers. Many also noted that most community organizations continue to exist as a direct result of Program funding.

Similarly, existing institutions reported to have been improved as a direct result of Program funding included community centers, schools (primary and secondary), and universities.

Services reported to have been preserved as a direct result of the Program included libraries (video and book), meeting spaces for community members and organizations, referral services,
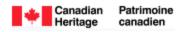
children's activities (after school, summer camps, school activities).

Organizations reported that arts and culture and community consultations were examples of services that were improved as a result of Program funding.

Finally, examples of new activities or services implemented as a result of the Program included internet and communications, and training (staff and volunteers).

When asked whether there were any pressing needs for their community that were currently not being met by the Program, interviewees and community organizations indicated that everything was a pressing need in minority language communities. This is also reflected to a great extent in the lack of focus in the development priorities of communities  - in short, everything is a priority.

# IV    PROGRAM DESIGN, DELIVERY AND COST- EFFECTIVENESS

## A.    THE AGREEMENTS

In each province and territory an organization is designated to represent the community in its dealings with Canadian Heritage (the organization signing the Agreement referred to as the lead organization). This organization receives an annual contribution to organize community consultations, implement the mechanisms of the Agreement and perform an evaluation. Approximately 5 to 10% of the annual envelope of each Agreement is used for that purpose. This represents $1.5 to $3 million annually.

The management of the Agreement is generally done via a committee (Joint or Management Committee).  Representation on this committee varies from region to region but will, in most cases, include a few representatives from the lead organization, representatives from the Department of Canadian Heritage and representatives from the communities.

## 1.    Representation within the Community

In the majority of regions, the Joint or Management Committee was created as a direct result of the Agreement. The majority of members on this committee are elected by organizations within the community.

The great majority of organizations responding to the survey were aware of who their representative organization was and how the Committee members were chosen.

## 2.    Priority-Setting Consultation

Interviewees in all regions agreed that there were consultation processes for the establishment of community development priorities. They offered different perspectives on the effectiveness of the process, primarily because of the diverse objectives of the communities and on the efficiency of the process.

Regional mechanisms typically involve annual meetings organized by the lead organizations. While the lead organizations typically felt the process was successful, others were less sanguine, citing the reluctance of community organizations to share fully with others and to express differing opinions, fearing an eventual cutback in their own funding.  Indeed we heard of, and witnessed inter-organizational conflicts within many of the provinces and territories we visited. Some informants cast doubt that any consensus on objectives could ever be more than a wish list, given the different roles of the various communities and organizations involved. Further, some interviewees expressed concern that only organizations that were members of the lead organization were included in the consultation process.  In these situations non-member

organizations were excluded from the annual consultations but, in general, were included in more extensive consultations held by communities in anticipation of negotiations for the Agreement, usually conducted once every five years.

Some interviewees representing the community indicated that they feel the process is too onerous and costly to be undertaken every year. The process could be undertaken less frequently since the priorities tend not to change significantly from year-to-year. Of organizations responding to the survey, 77% indicated that they had participated in the development of priorities for their community. Exhibit IV-1 summarizes the participation rate of organizations responding to the survey of organizations in their community's consultation process. We note that there are large differences in the participation rates across regions. This can be interpreted as an indication of the openness of the process in place in each region, however we caution against drawing strong conclusions from these data because of the small number of responses from many regions.

**Exhibit IV-1**    **Participation in the Development of Priorities and Overall Satisfaction with the Process, by Region**

| Region | Participated - Yes % (number) | Participated - No % (number) | Participated - Don't know % (number) | Overall Rating of Satisfaction with Process (1 is "very well" and 5 is "very poorly") (number) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alberta | 84 (16) | 16 (3) | | 4 (17) |
| British Columbia | 86 (6) | | 14 (1) | 3 (4) |
| Manitoba | 80 (4) | 20 (1) | | 3 (4) |
| New Brunswick | 80 (16) | 20 (4) | | 3 (13) |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | | | | |
| Nova Scotia | 91 (10) | 9 (1) | | 3 (10) |
| Northwest Territories | 100 (8) | | | 1 (7) |
| Ontario | 68 (34) | 22 (11) | 10 (5) | 3 (37) |
| Prince Edward Island | 80 (4) | 20 (1) | | 3 (3) |
| Quebec | 53 (10) | 42 (8) | 5 (1) | 2 (11) |
| Saskatchewan | 93 (13) | | 7 (1) | 3 (13) |
| Yukon | 100 (1) | | | 2 (1) |
| National Organizations | 75 (3) | | 25 (1) | 4 (4) |
| Region not identified | 100 (1) | | | 1 (1) |
| Total | 77 (126) | 18 (29) | 6 (9) | 3 (125) |

Source: Survey of Official-language community organizations.
Note: Numbers in brackets represent the number of respondents answering
Numbers have been rounded.

Organizations that had participated in the development of priorities for their community rated the process 3 on a scale of 1-to-5 (where 1 is "very well" and 5 is "very poorly"), indicating neither complete satisfaction nor complete dissatisfaction with the consultation process in their respective community. There are significant differences in the average rating given to the consultation process across regions. Notably the process is seen to have worked very well in the Northwest Territories, Quebec and the Yukon. However, the process is seen to have worked not so well in Alberta and with national organizations.

The most frequently cited suggestions for improving the consultation process raised by community organizations were:

- Increasing the financial resources available for the consultation process;

- Simplifying the process or reduce frequency; and

- Making the process more inclusive.

Whatever their view on the effectiveness of the consultation process, interviewees and external agencies tended to agree that associated costs were high and "came off the top" of the provincial/territorial envelope. This is supported by survey results indicating that more funding for the consultations would be helpful. The costs are particularly high in terms of time and money in regions where the minority language community is spread over a large geographic area (Alberta, Quebec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories). We note that many Agreements provide funding for community consultations.

At the national level, some representatives of national organizations reported that they regularly consult with their membership in the regions.  However, consultations are related to the organizations' development priorities or strategic plan and are not linked to the national Agreement, nor do they feed into the sector tables of which each national organization is a member.  According to interviewees, national level organizations have little awareness of what others are doing - including those on the same sector table.  Interviewees noted a lack of common vision with regard to development of minority language communities among the 22 signatories of the National Agreement.

The majority of communities signing Agreements have development plans identifying their priorities. Three communities do not - Quebec, Société nationale de l'Acadie, and the National organizations.  However, Quebec Anglophone community does have development priorities as described in the Canada-Quebec Agreement and is currently in the process of preparing a strategic development plan.


## 3.    Annual Funding Decisions


### a)    Link to Community's Development Priorities

According to community representatives and regional Canadian Heritage staff interviewed, funding decisions and the development priorities contained in each community's global development plan are linked.  Regional staff and community representatives interviewed indicated that community organizations are reminded of the need to link their requests for funding to the community development priorities and the new application form clearly states this requirement.  Funding applications are not considered unless they link to these priorities.

Based on information collected through interviews and a review of funding allocation records from the Joint or Management Committees in the regions, there is reason to believe that all development goals, as described in global development plans of communities, have become 'priorities', providing little guidance for selection judgments. Hence virtually all projects or programs can be deemed eligible for funding since the items in community development plans are such that they include just about everything. There was no evidence, for example, that funds

were allocated proportionately to importance or that the distribution of funds was made according to overarching development targets.

Community organizations surveyed were asked what, to their knowledge, were the development priorities for their community. The majority made no reference to the development priorities of their community.  Many cited what appear to be priorities for their organization or sector of operation. This may be an indication that there is perhaps not as clear an awareness of the development priorities of the communities or the priority sectors as there should be. The lack of awareness of their community's development priorities and the large proportion of community organizations that reported participating in the review or development of their community's development priorities is inconsistent. However, it is possible that individuals responding to the survey on behalf of the organization were not the same individuals who prepared the request for funding for the organization.

Community organizations were asked whether they felt that the funds from the Agreement have been allocated according to the community's development priorities, 46% responded "yes". However, it should be noted, once again, that most responding organizations were unable to cite their community's development priorities.


## b)    Decision Making Process

In most regions, interviewees expressed concerns that it is the community making the allocation decisions with Canadian Heritage regional staff more or less ratifying the recommendations made by the Joint or Management Committee, which is invariably dominated by community members.

The funding allocation process is co-managed. According to some regional staff, there is a need to define what it meant by co-management in terms of roles and responsibilities since the department of Canadian Heritage is completely accountable to Parliament for public funds.

Interviewees representing the Department and community organizations expressed concern over the concentration of power in one organization in some communities. This has, in some cases, resulted in resentment, coercion and cronyism. In most communities the representative organization receives funding for managing the Agreement and has at least one member on the Management or Joint Committee where funding recommendations are made.

Many interviewees, often from community organizations themselves, want a more transparent selection process that is less subject to charges of conflict of interest.  Some interviewees noted that community members of Joint or Management Committees lack expertise in financial analysis and community development.   Some suggested that the Department of Canadian Heritage should take back the responsibility for making decisions on funding but other interviewees are very much opposed to this option an prefer the status quo.  Still others suggested that funding decisions should be given over to a third party mutually agreed upon with the community.  The community would communicate its development priorities to this third party that would then be responsible for recommending funding to the Department.

At the national level, the Agreement is seen to be the root cause of in-fighting among the 22

organizations who tend to view the funding process as a zero-sum game whereby the gains of one are the losses (in terms of funding) of other organizations.

### c) *Rationale for Funding Decisions*

Community representatives and regional staff indicated that in some cases funding decisions or recommendations are made so as to ensure the continued survival of some community organizations, despite the organizations not contributing significantly to community development. This generally happens with smaller organizations with limited budgetary requirements. The reason for why this is done often relates to guilt on the part of the committee making the funding recommendations over being directly responsible for a community organization being forced to shut down. This is also evidenced in the minutes of these committees. It is usually easy to justify these decisions because, as previously mentioned, the community development priorities and the Program objectives are broad enough to allow virtually any organization to "fit". However, ensuring the continued survival of community organizations is not an objective of the Program.

Internal difficulties within communities are often blamed on the Agreements or the Agreements' structure. Few communities are willing to take ownership of the internal difficulties. It is a challenge for organizations, whose management strongly believe in the positive impacts of the organization, to see the broader objectives related to community development and to accept that perhaps their organization is not directly contributing to community development. The survival of community organizations often takes precedence over community development.

Respondents from external agencies echoed this view noting that in some communities the Program may have resulted in a proliferation of organizations. New organizations emerge and receive funding yet rarely is funding to existing organizations whose mandates no longer contribute to the development of the community cut.

It could be agreed that the existence of community organizations is necessary to the development of communities. If this is true then organizations should demonstrate support for their activities within the community through memberships and other measures of community support.

## 4.    Communications about Funding Allocations

Interviews with regional representatives from the communities and the Department indicate that the official announcement of funding allocations is done through a letter from the Minister to each funded community organization. These letters advise the organization of the amount of funding they have been allocated. The letter does not disclose amounts of funding to other community organizations nor the rationale for why the organization did, or did not, receive the amount requested. Rejected applicants are notified by a letter from a departmental official (i.e. Regional Executive Director).

Community organizations surveyed were asked whether they were provided with the annual distribution of funds provided under their Canada-Community Agreement. While 56% indicated that they had been provided with this information, there was a large variation across regions,

with only 25% of organizations in Ontario reporting having been provided with information on the distribution of funds under their Agreement. Of those that had been provided with this information, the most frequent means were documents (newsletters, letters) sent to organizations by the Joint or Management Committee, newspapers, and meetings with community organizations, often at Annual General Assemblies.

There were similar variations in the proportion of organizations indicating that they were provided with feedback on the rationale for funding decisions. This is particularly important for organizations that have not had their funding application accepted since it allows them to learn why and to take this into consideration when making subsequent applications for funding under the Agreement. Overall, 50% of responding organizations had received feedback on the funding rationale.

Less than half (40%) of responding organizations feel that the allocation process is easy to understand and transparent. Many indicated that they don't know the criteria and that there is conflict of interest within the Joint or Management Committee and no appeals process. Exhibit IV-2 summarizes results for survey questions relating to the funding process.

**Exhibit IV-2  Perceptions of the Funding Process, by Region**

| Region | Organization provided with information on annual distribution of funding (number) | | Organizations provided with feedback on rationale for funding decision (number) | | Allocation process is easy to understand (number) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % "yes" | % "no" | % "yes" | % "no" | % "yes" | % "no" |
| Alberta | 61 (11) | 28 (5) | 38 (6) | 56 (9) | 42 (8) | 58 (11) |
| British Columbia | 100 (7) | | 86 (6) | 14 (1) | 33 (2) | 67 (4) |
| Manitoba | 60 (3) | 40 (2) | 80 (4) | 20 (1) | 40 (2) | 60 (3) |
| New Brunswick | 80 (16) | 20 (4) | 65 (13) | 20 (4) | 63 (12) | 37 (7) |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | | | | | | |
| Nova Scotia | 27 (3) | 55 (6) | 78 (7) | 11 (1) | 50 (5) | 50 (5) |
| Northwest Territories | 88 (7) | 13 (1) | 40 (2) | 40 (2) | 50 (4) | 50 (4) |
| Ontario | 25 (12) | 57 (28) | 40 (18) | 47 (21) | 27 (11) | 71 (29) |
| Prince Edward Island | 401 (2) | 40 (2) | 40 (2) | 40 (2) | 60 (3) | 20 (1) |
| Quebec | 70 (14) | 20 (4) | 56 (10) | 33 (6) | 29 (5) | 71 (12) |
| Saskatchewan | 86 (12) | 7 (1) | 43 (6) | 43 (6) | 46 (6) | 54 (7) |
| Yukon | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) | |
| National Organizations | 50 (2) | 50 (2) | 0 | 75 (3) | 25 (1) | 75 (3) |
| Region not identified | | | | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) |
| Total | 56 (90) | 34 (55) | 50 (75) | 38 (57) | 40 (60) | 58 (87) |

Source: Survey of Official-language community organizations.
Number refers to the number of respondents answering "yes" or "no" to the above questions. Those who did not respond to the question are not included in the percentages. Thus the remaining percentages can be attributed to those who responded "don't know".  Numbers have been rounded.

In order to strengthen accountability, many regions have begun to keep the minutes of meetings of the Joint or Management Committee in a more consistent manner than previously.  It is hoped that this will serve to make the funding allocation decisions more transparent, however it is not clear in all regions that the Department is permitted to share the minutes with organizations.

## 5.      Cooperation among Organizations

The Agreement itself usually aims to promote or facilitate multi-organizational projects by including this factor in rating funding applications and advising organizations of the existence of this criterion. Although joint projects sometimes occur, there appear to be substantial obstacles to their more frequent use, including differing organizational and community mandates. The complexities of the Agreements' approval process and the use of provincially-based envelopes and decision processes further impede inter-regional projects in most parts of the country.

The Western and Northern provinces and territories' Agreements require that 1% of the total funding envelope in each of these regions be used for inter-provincial/inter-territorial projects. This amounts to approximately $107,000 for such projects annually, which is then allocated across British Columbia, Alberta, the Yukon, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. However, some interviewees expressed resentment over having to use part of their region's funding envelopes for this purpose.

Outside of the 1% clause in the Agreements of a small number of provinces and territories, there is no clear process in place to promote cooperation among organizations. Many interviewees feel that it should be the responsibility of the lead organization in each region to encourage increased inter-organizational cooperation. At the national level, interviewees feel that there has been no cooperation among organizations except among members of the arts and culture sector table, which would have occurred regardless of the Agreement.

Community organizations were asked to comment on whether they partner with other organizations within their community and with organizations from other provinces or territories. No definition of "partnering" was provided. Of the responding organizations, 98% partner with organizations within their communities and 65% partner with organizations in other provinces and territories. They indicated that partnerships within their community occurred largely with organizations from outside their primary sector of operations while partnerships beyond their provinces or territory most often occurred with organization within the same sector of operations. For example, education organizations most often tended to partner with other education organizations outside their community. Overall, community organizations believe that their programs and services complement those of other community organizations within their community well.

Community organizations were asked whether the Agreement has facilitated an improved partnership between the Department of Canadian Heritage and their community. Of responding organizations 51% believe that this has been the case. A number of respondents noted that their relationships with regional staff was very good. In virtually all regions Program staff is part of the minority language community, often actively involved in the community. This has fostered in most cases a sense of trust and a positive working relationship between Canadian Heritage and the minority language community. Survey results are summarized in Exhibit IV-3.

**Exhibit IV-3  Cooperation Among Organizations, by Region**

| Region | Organization partners with other organizations within your community (number) | | Organization partners with organizations in other provinces or territories (number) | | Agreement has facilitated an improved partnership between Canadian Heritage and your community (number) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % "yes" | % "no" | % "yes" | % "no" | % "yes" | % "no" |
| Alberta | 100 (21) | | 75 (15) | 25 (5) | 78 (14) | 11 (2) |
| British Columbia | 100 (7) | | 57 (4) | 43 (3) | 57 (4) | 14 (1) |
| Manitoba | 100 (5) | | 100 (4) | | 40 (2) | 20 (1) |
| New Brunswick | 91 (19) | 10 (2) | 84 (16) | 16 (3) | 90 (18) | 5 (1) |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | 100 (1) | | 100 (1) | | | |
| Nova Scotia | 100 (11) | | 73 (8) | 27 (3) | 40 (4) | 10 (1) |
| Northwest Territories | 100 (8) | | 88 (7) | 13 (1) | 71 (5) | 14 (1) |
| Ontario | 98 (48) | 2 (1) | 47 (24) | 51 (26) | 26 (12) | 50 (23) |
| Prince Edward Island | 100 (5) | | 100 (4) | | 20 (1) | |
| Quebec | 95 (19) | 5 (1) | 58 (11) | 37 (7) | 88 (15) | 6 (1) |
| Saskatchewan | 100 (14) | | 43 (6) | 57 (8) | 21 (3) | 50 (7) |
| Yukon | 100 (2) | | 100 (2) | | 1000 (1) | |
| National Organizations | 100 (4) | | 1000 (3) | | 0 | 75 (3) |
| Region not identified | | | 100.0 (1) | | | |
| Total | 98 (164) | 2 (4) | 65 (106) | 34 (56) | 51 (79) | 27 (41) |

Source: Survey of Official-language community organizations.

Note: Numbers in brackets indicate the number of respondents answering "yes" or "no". Those responding "don't know" or not answering the question are excluded from the totals.

## 6.    Interdepartmental Cooperation

Interviewees and external agencies surveyed, in general, were not positive about the interdepartmental cooperation component of the Agreements. Many feel it has been a failure or has not gone as far as it should have and they note that there is nothing forcing other departments or agencies to participate. Department staff reports that they actively encourage organizations to seek funding from other federal departments, particularly for projects that are directly linked to the programs and policies of other departments such as Health Canada and Justice Canada. Community organizations in some regions appear to have been more successful at building relationships with federal, provincial and municipal funding sources than others as displayed in Exhibit IV-4.

There was general agreement among interviewees that it would be a positive development if other federal departments or agencies were included in the next round of Agreements. However, many interviewees noted that this would require other federal departments and agencies to come forward with funding or other forms of assistance, something most are not very optimistic about. Some interviewees also noted that not all communities or federal departments are ready for this at this time.

In general, organizations surveyed reported that funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage has not allowed them to develop relationships with other federal departments or agencies. This result was very consistent across regions. Responding organizations often noted that few federal departments are interested in minority language communities and so it is difficult to enlist their participation in the community. Others noted that they have been attempting, unsuccessfully to date, to form relationships with other departments. However, despite the lack of success to date, they feel that it is worthwhile to continue trying.

Community organizations surveyed were asked to provide a breakdown of their sources of financing. Results for this question are unreliable since the information could not be validated. On average, OLC Program funding contributed 56%, other federal departments and agencies 21% and non-federal government sources 35%. This indicates that overall, the Program is the primary source of funding for most responding organizations. Non-federal funding is a more significant percentage than other federal departments for most organizations. Exhibit IV-4 summarizes the survey data for this question.

Exhibit IV-4   Funding Sources and Diversification

| Region | Proportion of Organization's Total Budget from Support for Official Languages Program<br>% average<br>(number) | Proportion of Organization's Total Budget from other than Federal<br>% average<br>(number) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Alberta** | 55<br>(10) | 36<br>(7) |
| **British Columbia** | 57<br>(3) | 37<br>(3) |
| **Manitoba** | 38<br>(2) | 46<br>(2) |
| **New Brunswick** | 60<br>(100) | 30<br>(6) |
| **Newfoundland and Labrador** | | |
| **Northwest Territories** | 64<br>(6) | 51<br>(4) |
| **Nova Scotia** | 73<br>(5) | 31<br>(34) |
| **Ontario** | 40<br>(28) | 44<br>(22) |
| **Prince Edward Island** | 96<br>(3) | 11<br>(1) |
| **Quebec** | 63<br>(14) | 29<br>(11) |
| **Saskatchewan** | 71<br>(12) | 23<br>(9) |
| **Yukon** | 34<br>(2) | 24<br>(2) |
| **National Organizations** | | |
| **Region not identified** | | |
| **Total** | 56<br>(95) | 35<br>(70) |

Source: Survey of Official-language community organizations.
Note: The numbers in brackets indicate the number of responses on which the average is based.

The majority of organizations indicated that their funding has been relatively stable. A few indicated that their funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage has been decreasing gradually, although this is not necessarily the result of increased funding from other sources.

## 7.   Relevance of the Agreements Approach

Despite the criticisms of the approach noted elsewhere in this report, individuals interviewed from the Department and community representatives appeared to believe that the Agreements approach should be preserved since it produced the following positive impacts:

- Stability of funding: groups and communities know the funding envelope is available to them

over the period of the Agreement.

- Communities have taken charge of their development.

- Community organizations have been forced to work together.

On the negative side, interviewees noted that:

- The Agreements have resulted in internal fighting within communities because organizations are competing within a fixed envelope of money so the gains of one organization means that other organizations will receive less. This may have also resulted in smaller or newer organizations that have never received funding through the Agreement from being considered for funding, particularly Program funding.

- The Agreements have resulted in a dependency or sense of entitlement to Program funding on the part of some community organizations.

- The management process is heavy.

## 8.     Alternative Modes for Program Delivery

A number of key informants, both from the community and from the Department, proposed alternative modes of delivering the Program that they thought would improve efficiency. Some proposed issuing a single cheque to the lead organization for each region. This lead organization would then be responsible for all aspects of delivery of the Program, including funding allocations and reporting.

A second alternative approach to delivery proposed by interviewees was to give responsibility for managing the funding process and reporting on results over to a third party, outside of the community network, such as a *Caisse populaire*.  This third party would have to be agreed to by both the community and the Department. The rationale behind this option is that the funding process would be faster and community organizations would receive their funding sooner.

## B.     STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

Our researchers were provided with Program data on this Fund for fiscal years 1999-2000 to 2002-03. According to Program staff, data prior to 2001-02 are unreliable due to coding problems.  As a result, all analysis of Program data is based on fiscal years 2001-02 and 2002-03.

## 1.     Overview

The Strategic Development Fund provides funding to organizations or projects at the national and regional level that may not be eligible for funding under a Canada-Community Agreement or

to respond to needs outside the Agreements. The types of projects most often funded through the Strategic Development Fund relate to special events (sporting, cultural), community infrastructure, and strategic planning. A total of 44 projects received funding amounting to $5.8 million, from the Strategic Development Fund in 2001-02. Funding amounts ranged from $9,892 for activities related to a web-site development to $1,124,500 for the Rendez-vous de la Francophonie. Approximately 17 projects were related to arts and culture, 7 to strategic planning and 6 were related to community radio. Projects were funded in the Atlantic region, Ontario, Quebec and the Yukon, as well as national projects.

For 2002-03, a total of 27 projects had received funding as of the end of September 2002. Funding amounts received range from $1,114 for a feasibility study for the installation of a radio transmitter to $595,000 for the Jeux de la Francophonie. Projects funded were in the Atlantic region, Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, as well as national projects.

## 2.    Awareness of the Fund

In general there is little awareness of the Strategic Development Fund. The majority of individuals interviewed in the regions and representatives of national organizations had little knowledge of specific projects financed through this Fund. This is in part because the name of the Fund was unfamiliar to many of them although even when asked about a "departmental discretionary fund" interviewees were seldom able to cite projects. Regional staff is often not fully aware of the Fund, how to access it and how much money is available.

Some headquarters staff believe this is intentional to avoid creating too much demand for funding from the Fund because its resources are limited. However, information on the Strategic Development Fund is available from the Department. Interviewees (Canadian Heritage and communities) believe that larger organizations are much more aware of the Fund than small organizations. This is because larger organizations tend to be more "plugged in" and because they have more staff and resources available to research and identify potential sources of funding.

Survey results support views of interviewees, there is little awareness among organizations of the Strategic Development Fund. Of responding organizations, 22% were aware of the Fund. There are significant differences in awareness across regions as indicated in Exhibit IV-5 that summarizes results relating to the awareness of the Strategic Development Fund by region.
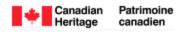
**Exhibit IV-5**  **Awareness of Strategic Development Fund, by Region**

| Region | Yes % (number) | No % (number) | Don't know % (number) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alberta | 15 (3) | 75 (15) | 10 (2) |
| British Columbia | 14 (1) | 57 (4) | 29 (2) |
| Manitoba | | 80 (4) | 20 (1) |
| New Brunswick | 5 (1) | 90 (18) | 5 (1) |
| Newfoundland | - | - | - |
| Nova Scotia | | 82 (9) | 18 (2) |
| Northwest Territories | 13 (1) | 88 (7) | |
| Ontario | 18 (9) | 73 (37) | 10 (5) |
| Prince Edward Island | | 80 4 | 20 1 |
| Quebec | 57 (12) | 24 (5) | 19 (4) |
| Saskatchewan | 64 (9) | 29 (4) | 7 (1) |
| Yukon | | 100 (1) | |
| National Organizations | 25 (1) | 75 (3) | |
| Total | 22 (37) | 67 (111) | 11 (19) |

Source: Survey of Official-Language community organizations
Numbers have been rounded
Numbers in brackets indicate the number of respondents

## 3.    Links with Communities' Development Priorities

Many projects funded through the Strategic Development Fund are national in scope and since there are no development priorities at the national level, there is thus no link. The few interviewees who were familiar with the Fund believe that projects receiving funding have a positive impact on the community and fit within the development priorities of the community, for those that have development priorities, particularly since the development priorities are numerous and broad.   This study was unsuccessful at determining the impact of the projects on minority communities partly because many participants to this study had little awareness of the Fund.

There is general belief that projects funded through this Fund cannot be financed through the Canada-Community Agreements mainly because some projects require significant resources that would use up a large portion of the annual envelope of some Agreements.  After conducting a file review of selected projects funded through this Fund in the past five years, we could not

clearly established why some of the projects could not have been funded through the Agreements.

## 4. Decision Making Process

Interviewees at the Department of Canadian Heritage NHQ indicate that there is no systematic method for evaluating requests for funding for the Strategic Development Fund, there is no structured funding allocation mechanism. According to Canadian Heritage staff, the funding criteria are flexible. Projects must meet the Program objectives and be deemed to have a positive impact on the community. There is a general view among interviewees, both within the Department and in the communities, that the funding allocation process is not transparent.

Further, there is a perception that the funding allocation process is politically motivated and that organizations that have political leverage are most likely to receive funding.

## C. OTHERS

## 1. Processing of Funding Applications by Canadian Heritage

### a) *Support to Community Organizations*

Interviewees and community organizations surveyed noted that the Program had changed the "rules" in recent years. This is linked to the Department implemented the framework for management in the Government of Canada promoting due diligence and a focus on results. The communities were left struggling to understand what was expected of them. This was compounded by the fact that many community organizations lack administrative sophistication. However, it should also be noted that the Department did provide assistance to community organizations through workshops and regional staff also provided extensive help to community organizations.

This was confirmed in the survey of organizations since the majority (73%) of organizations reported that this type of support was made available. However, only 50% of national organizations reported that there was support available, possibly because of the lack of a lead organization at the national level to administer the national Agreement.

### b) *Estimated Processing Time for a Funding Application*

Data from the Grants and Contributions Information Management System (GCIMS) will not support an analysis of the time required to process a funding application as there are no standard data entry requirements. As a result it is impossible to assess with certainty the length of time required to process and application for funding relating to this Program as well as the impact of increased due diligence. The analysis is thus based only on anecdotal evidence and the impressions of interviewees and community organizations responding to the survey.

Interviewees, almost unanimously, decried the lengthy delays required for processing an application for funding. Indeed, the Department itself had recognized the potential negative impacts on organizations by establishing a process in fiscal year 2002-03 whereby eligible organizations that had received Program funding in the previous year automatically received 25% of that amount at the beginning of the fiscal year. Although organizations welcomed this move, some interviewees pointed out that this approach was of no help for project funding and that, furthermore, it went against the spirit of due diligence. Some interviewees (regional Canadian Heritage staff and community representatives) believe that the 25% advance slowed down the process and delayed organizations' getting full funding because the Department was busy producing these payments.

Interviews with departmental staff indicate that national headquarters fully recognizes the difficulties and frustrations these delays cause to organizations. However, they are obliged to implement and follow processes put in place to ensure due diligence - which almost by definition results in a longer approval process.

The Department of Canadian Heritage has implemented a few steps for the evaluation of each request for funding in response to the need for due diligence. In 2000-01 and 2001-02, there were three committees at national headquarters responsible to analyze requests for funding: the Operational Practices Unit, Finance and the National Review Committee.

Regional staff expressed the view that much of the review conducted at headquarters by these committees is first done by the regions so the review by national headquarters duplicates work done in the regions.

Community organizations were asked to estimate the amount of time that passed between the time the organization made their request for funding and the time they received notification that their application had been accepted and the time the organization received their first cheque. Exhibit IV-6 summarizes the average amount of time estimated by responding organizations for Program funding and for project funding. We note that few organizations responding to the survey were able to provide these estimates and the estimates themselves cannot be confirmed with CGIMS data.

**Exhibit IV-6   Estimated Average Time for Receipt of Funding, Programs and Projects**

| | Average estimated time elapsed months (number of respondents) |
|---|---|
| **Application to notification of acceptance – Program funding** | 6 months (35) |
| **Application to notification of acceptance – Project funding** | 5.5 months (41) |
| **Notification to receipt of first cheque – Program funding** | 3.5 months (23) |
| **Notification to receipt of first cheque – Project funding** | 2.5 months (41) |

Source: Survey of Official-language community organizations.

Impacts of the length of time between making the application to the receipt of their first cheque

cited by community organizations include:

- Drains bank reserves (financial reserves).

- Reliance on credit margins that add to the operating cost of the organization.

- Stress and uncertainty for employees who are often not paid for a period of time.

- Delays in implementing projects.

- Temporary closure of organizations.

- Decrease in services offered.

- Laying-off of employees.

Interviewees expressed the view that the situation is more difficult for small organizations because they tend to have fewer financial reserves and sources of funding (less diversified funding).

## 2.    Program Resources

Interviewees generally felt that funding levels were barely adequate to allow minority language communities to survive but were not sufficient to allow communities to develop. Most also indicated that the funding available in the communities was further constrained by administrative requirements - the need to administer the Agreement.

In most regions, interviewees representing the Department and communities believe that demand for funding exceeds supply. Often enough, community organizations and projects are under-funded. Some interviewees also noted that community organizations sometimes don't bother preparing requests for smaller projects since they know that chances are slim that they will receive funding and the effort required to prepare a request for funding is significant.

In virtually all regions interviewees noted that funding envelopes do not take into consideration the situation or realities of each region such as population its growth, geographic dispersion of the minority language community, remoteness, cost of living and level of development of the community as reflected in the services and programs available in the community.

Appendix F presents a comparison of funds requested and funds recommended against the multi-year envelope set in each Canada-Community Agreement for fiscal years 2001-2002 and 2002-2003, for projects and programming. We note that the difference between the funds requested and the funds recommended may be skewed by some organizations requesting more than they require or more than they expect to receive in funding. This is a practice that is generally discouraged by lead organizations, yet it is clear to Joint or Management Committees analyzing the requests for funding that it sometimes occurs.

Interviewees were generally unaware of the details of how the funding levels for their

provincial/territorial allocations were established. There was a widespread belief among community members, and supported by interviewees from the Department, that the allocations were based on historic funding going to each region. In this sense funding envelopes were imposed rather than negotiated based on an agreed upon set of variables.

Interviewees representing communities were asked to explain why, given the fixed resources of the Program, their community should receive a bigger share of Program funding. Every community was able to provide reasons such as dispersed population, remote area, population growth, lack of development and the need to catch up to other regions, and the high cost of living in the community's province or territory were the most frequent reasons provided. Few interviewees linked the need for funds with the community's development plan and its associated costs.

## D.    MISCELLANEOUS

### 1.    Program Improvements Resulting from Previous Evaluations

Previous evaluations of the Support for Official-Language Minority Communities Program were conducted in 1997 by Canadian Heritage and by the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada (FCFA) in 1998.

Interviewees representing Canadian Heritage and the communities were asked whether they had any recollection of the recommendations made in these evaluations and whether any of the recommendations had been implemented. The majority of interviewees could not recall either the details of the evaluations or their occurrence, often because the informant had not been in their current position at the time. Some interviewees did recall the previous evaluations, albeit vaguely, and they believe that some conclusions of these previous evaluations would also be conclusions of the current evaluation i.e: more decentralization and delegation and a more relaxed administrative burden.   To some extent, this is the case.

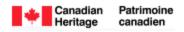### 2.    Suggestions to Increase Effectiveness

The following suggestions were also made by participants to this study:

- Multi-year funding;

- Audits of organizations;

- Management of the Agreements and decentralization of the decision-making process to regions to make the administrative burden less complicated and demanding;

- Better implementation of management by results and due diligence;

- Speeding up the approval process: hire more staff to deal with the extra work, reduce the

number of installments paid to organizations; reduced scrutiny for projects below a set threshold;

- Decrease the complexity of the application forms and procedure;

- Provide more information on the Program and potential sources of funding to community organizations;

- Implement a single cheque approach to lead organizations;

- More concrete and measurable results for the Program to monitor progress.

# V    RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendation 1:

The Department should ensure that only community organizations that address the stated priorities and needs of their communities and can demonstrate broad community support for their programs or services receive Program funding.

<u>Management response</u>:  The Program agrees with the recommendation. Community support and linkage to community priorities are two important considerations when assessing the merit of a program funding request. It is also important to mention that the analysis of the applications conducted by the Canadian Heritage officers will be based not just on quantitative information but also on an evaluation of the community dynamic so as to also take into account the linkage to departmental priorities and the group's ability to achieve the desired results effectively and efficiently.

The purpose of the agreements mechanism was to involve the community in the evaluation of the merit and representativity of the groups receiving program funding. The establishment and review of comprehensive development plans was designed to provide a framework with which to better situate, identify and validate the relevance of the various groups' activities.

The analytical grid developed by Canadian Heritage over the course of the past two years is designed to respond to the objectives of this recommendation and it will continue to be refined in order to ensure the merit of the groups receiving program funding and their respect for democratic principles, transparency and accountability.

*Implementation schedule:* Ongoing once the cooperation agreements are renewed.

## Recommendation 2:

The Department should consider multi-year funding (programming only) for the period covered by the Canada-Community Agreement to organizations that can strongly contribute to Program results.

<u>Management response</u>: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation. Since 2002-2003, multiyear funding has been formally offered as a program funding option to organizations that demonstrate a recognized capacity to attain the desired results and that have the accountability and accounting mechanisms required by the Program. Measures must be taken however to provide the flexibility to add or remove beneficiaries on the basis of performance or emerging needs.

*Implementation schedule:* Underway

## Recommendation 3:

The Department should clearly articulate what it expects to accomplish through this Program and how it will measure progress. Collaboration with minority communities will be required to develop results measures and performance indicators that are in line with Program results. Each community is unique. Although some indicators are expected to be common to all communities, other indicators could be unique to reflect differing geographic and demographic realities. Data collection processes should be put in place to ensure required data are systematically collected. A clear delineation of responsibility for collecting data is also necessary. These steps will strengthen the Agreements.

Management response: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation's objective. Created to support the *Official Languages Act*, the Program is an intervention tool designed to enhance the development of minority official language communities. Its terms and conditions established general objectives consistent with social development activities. The Program made an initial change of direction in 2001-2002 by integrating into its application and funding recommendation processes a planning and reporting requirement based on measurable results. In addition, the new management and accountability framework should make it possible to more fully articulate the program objectives and identify more measurable results.

In order to be better able to attribute any social, economic or demographic changes to the Program's investments, the OLSPB intends in the next 24 months to develop, in cooperation with the academic and community sectors, a range of significant community development indicators that should make it possible to more accurately establish states of affairs and measure the impact of program investments on community realities.

*Implementation schedule:* Underway, and ongoing after that.

## Recommendation 4:

It is strongly recommended that the Department of Canadian Heritage improve the design and delivery of this Program. Specifically:

4.1     Department staff should play a more meaningful/challenging role on the Committees responsible for funding recommendations to ensure funding is allocated more strategically. The Department, not community organizations, is fully accountable to Parliament for the use of Program funds.

Management response: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation. This question was already raised during the most recent program audit in 2002. Both in regional and headquarters offices, program officers work closely with prospective applicants to review and refine their funding applications. Working files do not fully reflect all the preparatory work prior to the official submission of an application and which is intended to maximize the impact of the proposed project by ensuring detailed and strategic planning by the applicants.

During the renewal of the agreements, this accountability and self-evaluation requirement will be

one of the cornerstones of any new cooperation agreement. Individual roles and responsibilities will be more precisely defined within the agreements.

*Implementation schedule:* Will be integrated into new cooperation agreements.

> 4.2 The Department should assess the value for money provided by lead organizations in managing the Canada-Community Agreements. It should ensure that these organizations meet all their obligations under the Agreements and perhaps, add new responsibilities. New responsibilities could relate to the collection and reporting on Program results. Lead organizations, or other entities charged with this responsibility, should also be responsible for sharing this information with Canadian Heritage, community organizations, and official language minority community members at large. Alternatively, the Department should reduce the responsibilities of lead organizations (e.g. annual consultations) and use freed-up resources for a more strategic allocation to community organizations.

<u>Management response</u>: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation's objective. As part of the discussions for the renewal of the agreements, the Program will raise the findings of the evaluation with the advocacy organizations and determine whether there is reason to require them to compile the information and report on the results. The Program recognizes that the funded advocacy organizations have a limited responsibility and capacity to gather and evaluate the results of the Program's funding. Moreover, the absence of reliable community development indicators at the local level forces us to focus, for the moment, on gathering outputs at the regional level and a more comprehensive analysis of the results at the national level under the Program's responsibility rather than the responsibility of the recipient groups.

*Implementation schedule:* Will be integrated into the new cooperation agreements.

> 4.3 The Department should address the dissatisfaction about the length of time required to process funding applications by exploring options for speeding the process.

<u>Management response</u>: The Program agrees completely with the recommendation. The application processing delays are attributable to the community recommendation process, the program officers' analysis measures and the processing and approval mechanisms and process at headquarters. In 2001, the Program set up a working group involving representatives of departmental services, the Program and the community in order to identify potential solutions. The multiyear funding of the programs      of effective groups and the various transitory administrative measures have already responded in large part to the criticisms. As part of the renewal of the agreements, the review of the recommendation mechanisms and schedule should also help speed up processing and reduce delays. The more strategic presentation of the information in the application forms that appears to be generalized will also help to reduce the preparation burden for the groups on the one hand, as well as the timeframe for analysis and recommendation by the joint committees and the Department on the other. Finally, the Department has set up a grants and contributions centre of expertise whose objective is to

optimize the administrative processes while respecting the accountability and accounting requirements.

*Implementation schedule*: Underway, and ongoing after that.

> 4.4 The Department should make the funding application process more transparent for both Program components.  Clear funding criteria should be established for the Strategic Development Fund. The criteria should be consistently applied. Funding should not be used for projects that can be funded through the Agreements.  The Fund should be a "strategic" fund.

<u>Management response</u>: The Program recognizes the need for greater transparency in the management and communication on the use of the Strategic Development Fund resources. The Fund's objectives have been presented on the Program's Web site for several years now, but they were not disseminated proactively. Measures will be taken during this fiscal year to respond to various aspects of the recommendation, such as the establishment and dissemination of specific objectives, clear funding criteria and a report on the use of the funds.

*Implementation schedule*: Ongoing once the cooperation agreements are renewed.