



Canadian Heritage Patrimoine  
canadien

---

# **Evaluation of the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program**

---

Evaluation Services  
Corporate Review Branch

May 18, 2005

## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 PURPOSE .....	1
1.2 METHODOLOGY.....	1
1.3 LIMITATIONS.....	2
<b>2 PROGRAM PROFILE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, MANDATE AND OBJECTIVES .....	3
2.2 EVOLUTION OF THE PROGRAM.....	4
2.2.1 <i>Program Funding Profile</i> .....	6
2.2.2 <i>Self-Government Initiative (SGI) Funding</i> .....	7
2.3 PROGRAM REVIEWS, AUDITS AND EVALUATIONS .....	8
<b>3 EVALUATION FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1 CONTINUING RELEVANCE .....	10
3.1.1 <i>Aboriginal representation needs</i> .....	10
3.1.2 <i>Government-wide priorities</i> .....	10
3.1.3 <i>Departmental strategic objectives</i> .....	11
3.2 SUCCESS: MEETING PROGRAM'S EXPECTED OUTCOMES .....	11
3.2.1 <i>Program funding profile</i> .....	12
3.2.2 <i>Organizations' outputs and activities</i> .....	15
3.2.3 <i>Organizations' Outcomes</i> .....	15
3.2.4 <i>Contribution analysis</i> .....	18
3.3 COST-EFFECTIVENESS .....	18
3.3.1 <i>Delivery/operational issues</i> .....	19
3.3.2 <i>Design issues</i> .....	19
3.3.3 <i>Options for alternative delivery</i> .....	20
<b>4 CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1 RELEVANCE .....	21
4.2 SUCCESS/PERFORMANCE .....	21
4.3 COST-EFFECTIVENESS .....	22
<b>5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of evaluation research undertaken in 2003-2004 for the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program and recommendations for the management and delivery of this program.

Evaluation findings come from two research reports commissioned by the Corporate Review Branch, conducted between September 2003 and October 2004. The interviews and document review for this evaluation were conducted by *Whiteduck Resources Inc.* and the review of Program files was undertaken by *Beals, Lalonde & Associates*, on behalf of the Corporate Review Branch.

## INTRODUCTION

### Evaluation Approach

The objective of the evaluation is to provide evidence-based answers to three evaluation questions reflecting the Treasury Board Secretariat Evaluation Policy:

- **Relevance:** Does the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program (AROP) continue to be consistent with departmental and government-wide priorities and does it realistically address an actual need?
- **Success:** Is AROP effective in meeting its objectives, within budget and without unwanted outcomes?
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Are the most appropriate and efficient means being used to achieve objectives, relative to alternative design and delivery approaches (Cost-effectiveness)?

The data collection relied on multiple lines of inquiry, including the review and analysis of administrative data and key documents and an examination of all funding files in 2001-2002. The main limitation of these findings resides in the weakness of the information available. Performance was not monitored consistently for this program. Therefore, any performance information had to be collected either through qualitative interviewing or the file review.

### Background

The AROP foundation mandate is to: “enable the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada to develop stable and effective organizational structures capable of interacting with all levels of government and society, and to participate in and effect positive changes to their political, social, cultural, educational, and economic lives.” Its specific objectives are to:

- facilitate Aboriginal organizations’ relationships with governmental and societal institutions

- enable Aboriginal Peoples (through representative institutions) to participate in the political and socio-economic institutions that control their collective destiny
- encourage and assist the appropriate participation of Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian society through Aboriginal representative organizations at national and other levels
- assist in the development of strong and skilled Aboriginal leadership
- assist Aboriginal Peoples to effectively influence and interface with all levels of government.

The mandate has not changed substantively since the program was conceived in 1971, although a new formulation was issued with the 2003 guidelines. The Self-Government Initiative (SGI) component was added in 1998, with the following overall objective: “To support Aboriginal representative organizations off reserve to strengthen the capacity of existing and new locals of provincial/territorial or regional Aboriginal representative organizations to assure their full participation in Aboriginal self-government development and implementation and to make the provincial/territorial or regional organizations more representative”. The SGI component further emphasized that projects that foster greater presence of Aboriginal representative organizations at the community level would be a priority.

The 2003 Program Guidelines indicate that national and provincial/territorial organizations representative of Inuit, Métis, status and Non-Status Indian Peoples are eligible to apply for AROP funding for operational support, and (through Self-Government Initiative funding) for capacity-building at community, provincial and national levels (such as establishing a membership base and infrastructure, facilitating community input and leadership development, establishing information networks). Resources for the program are about \$6 million per year.

The AROP does not have any clearly articulated definition or criteria for determining representativeness for funding purposes, nor is the funding formula clear. The eligible operational support expenses have not changed since 1987 and include resources for an office space, salaries and benefits of key staff, office supplies and administration, travel, meeting and conference costs, professional fees, and newsletters.

## **EVALUATION FINDINGS**

### **Relevance**

Objectives of the Program were found to be consistent with the federal government’s need to hear the voice of Aboriginal People and consult with them on many policy issues. These objectives were also found to be aligned with the mandate and priorities of the Department.

However, over time, Aboriginal representative organizations have grown to become multi-faceted sophisticated organizations. It was noted that these organizations are increasingly solicited as partners in the direct delivery of services to their constituents, a role that is extraneous to the strict definition of what constitutes a representative organization. It was also noted, that the core funding now provided by the Program represents only a small portion of the total budget of these organizations.

This might suggest that the organizations targeted by AROP have outgrown the Program's original intent, i.e. to help create a consultative network of organizations.

### **Success/Performance**

Given that no performance indicators and no performance monitoring system were defined or put in place for the management of this program, it is not possible to provide an assessment of its performance based on solid and reliable data.

Key informants reported that AROP funding has been used to support organizations' ongoing operations to allow for the establishment of central or provincial/territorial and regional offices which undertake work on behalf of their constituents. Although anecdotal evidence of many Program successes was acquired through qualitative interviews, the more solid piece of evidence that this Program has met its objectives perhaps resides in the fact that the funded organizations have developed to become sophisticated and multi-faceted to the point that they have outgrown the Program's original intent. The extent to which they were able to access other sources of funding speaks to that success.

However, the nature and limited amount of funding provided by PCH to these organizations raises the question as to whether any of the actual successes they achieved can be attributed to PCH funding. This difficulty linking PCH funds to specific impact was also raised by key informants from recipient organizations.

### **Cost-effectiveness**

Key informants identified issues in Program delivery pertaining to delays and workload involved in the annual application process.

There is also a widely shared perception amongst Program stakeholders that better definition of its basic concepts is required. For example, issues related to the lack of clarity regarding how to define the organizations' representativeness are seen to affect the delivery of the Program. However, these are broad policy issues, which also affect other funding Departments. Thus, it is unlikely that PCH alone can undertake the policy process necessary to address the issues.

PCH should generally reconsider its involvement in providing operational (or core) funding in a situation where it is only a small funding source. Providing such funding might be cost-effective in the early stages of a program's life cycle. However, when funding recipients reach a certain level of development such funding is reduced in significance and is of limited relevance unless attached to specific outcomes.

## Recommendations and Management Response

Considering that:

- the recently expanded mandate and responsibilities of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada with respect to national representative organizations for Inuit, Métis and Non-Status Indians and that funding responsibility for the First Nations representative organization (Assembly of First Nations) was earlier transferred to INAC, in keeping with its mandate at the time

**1) It is recommended that the Department of Canadian Heritage undertake discussions with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to explore whether or not the Program would better fit in that Department.**

**Management Response:** Recommendation accepted.

Discussions with INAC are currently underway to ensure a cooperative policy development process between the Government of Canada and Aboriginal organizations in response to commitments made by the Prime Minister at the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable. These discussions include an examination to explore in which department the Program is best situated.

*Implementation Schedule:* In progress

Considering that:

- the assumptions on which the Program was based since 1987 have not been systematically examined or reviewed
- there is a widely recognized lack of clarity of the concept of representation as applied to the national organizations and
- the role of national Aboriginal representative organizations has evolved since the inception of the Program

**2) It is recommended that, if the Program is retained at the Department of Canadian Heritage, AROP objectives and basic concepts be revisited and defined to address current needs of recipient organizations and priorities of the federal government.**

**Management Response:** Recommendation accepted.

The Aboriginal Affairs Branch will conduct policy work that will address Aboriginal organizations' core funding requirements and relevance to departmental and federal government priorities. Moreover, the Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) for the APP will clearly define the objectives and expected outcomes of the Aboriginal Organizations pillar.

*Implementation Schedule:* Policy work completed: 06/07RMAF will be scheduled at TBS: September 2005

Considering that:

- it was not possible to assess Program impact or to retrieve even basic information regarding recipient organizations' activities, outputs and outcomes and
- central agency requirements and expectations regarding results-based management practices

**3) It is recommended that the Aboriginal Affairs Branch design and implement a performance-monitoring framework that meets the accountability requirements for results-based management, and that tools and templates be developed to guide recipient reporting, and training on the performance measurement framework be provided for all staff involved with Program delivery.**

**Management Response:** Recommendation accepted.

The APP RMAF is being designed to meet accountability requirements for results-based management. In order to support the implementation of the RMAF, tools and templates for application and reporting are being developed, and training for all staff involved with program delivery is being updated.

*Implementation Schedule:* In progress. New tools, templates, and updated training materials to be launched in November 05, ready for the 06/07 call for proposals.

# 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of evaluation research undertaken in 2003-2004 for the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program and recommendations for the management and delivery of this program.

Evaluation findings come from two research reports commissioned by Corporate Review Branch, conducted between September 2003 and October 2004.

## 1.1 Purpose

The objective of this report is to provide evidence-based answers to three evaluation questions reflecting the Treasury Board Secretariat Evaluation Policy:<sup>1</sup>

- **Relevance:** Does the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program (AROP) continue to be consistent with departmental and government-wide priorities, and does it realistically address an actual need?
- **Success:** Is AROP effective in meeting its objectives, within budget and without unwanted outcomes?
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Are the most appropriate and efficient means being used to achieve objectives, relative to alternative design and delivery approaches?

## 1.2 Methodology

The methodology included multiple lines of evidence:

- **Review and Analysis of Administrative Data:** Grants and Contribution Information Management System operational and project funding data (1998/99 – 2002/03) provided by the Program.
- **Document Review:** A review of key documents, including: AROP Treasury Board Submission decisions since 1984; a 1987 review of federal government support for Aboriginal political organizations<sup>2</sup>; a 1991 component profile of the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program<sup>3</sup>; National Aboriginal Representative Organization web sites and reports; a 2001 AROP audit<sup>4</sup>; relevant federal government Web sites; key documents, including The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and *Gathering Strength — the Federal Aboriginal Action Plan*, as well as recent Speeches from the Throne; and results from the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the 2001 Census.

---

<sup>1</sup> As is shown in the Program Profile Section, a Results-based Management Accountability Framework has not been produced for this Program. The presentation and analysis of evaluation findings, therefore, closely follow the model provided by the Evaluation Policy.

<sup>2</sup> Loughheed and Associates (September 1987), *Federal Government Support for Aboriginal Political Organizations: A Review*.

<sup>3</sup> Trican Consulting Group (April 1991), *Component Profile of the Aboriginal Representative Organization Program*.

<sup>4</sup> Gallagher and Associates (September 2001), *Report on Due Diligence in Processing Grants and Contributions by the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program*.



- File Review: A review of all 2001 – 2002 funding files.

### 1.3 Limitations

The main limitation of these findings resides in the weakness of the information available. Performance was not monitored by the Program, therefore performance information used for the evaluation had to be reconstructed on a somewhat fragile empirical basis, either through qualitative interviewing or file review.

Although this has affected the breadth of evaluation findings, it has not limited our ability to develop an analytical understanding of the Program's contributions.

## 2 Program profile

Usually, a program's profile is found within its strategic documentation. As this was not the case for AROP, evaluators developed a description of the Program that includes: a discussion of the background, need, target population, delivery approach, resources, governance structure and funding profile. No planned results had been enunciated for the Program.

### 2.1 Program Description, Mandate and Objectives

The AROP foundation mandate is to: “enable the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada to develop stable and effective organizational structures capable of interacting with all levels of government and society, and to participate in and effect positive changes to their political, social, cultural, educational, and economic lives”.

Its specific objectives are to:

- “facilitate Aboriginal organization relationships with governmental and societal institutions;
- enable Aboriginal Peoples (through representative institutions) to participate in the political and socio-economic institutions that control their collective destiny;
- encourage and assist the appropriate participation of Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian society through Aboriginal Representative Organizations at national and other levels;
- assist in the development of strong and skilled Aboriginal leadership;
- assist Aboriginal Peoples to effectively influence and interface with all levels of government.”

The mandate has not changed substantively since the Program was conceived in 1971.

The Self-Government Initiative (SGI) component was added in 1998, with the following overall objective: “to support Aboriginal representative organizations off-reserve to strengthen the capacity of existing and new locals of provincial/territorial or regional Aboriginal representative organizations to assure their full participation in Aboriginal self-government development and implementation and to make the provincial/territorial or regional organizations be more representative”. The SGI component further emphasized that projects that foster greater presence of Aboriginal representative organizations at the community level would be a priority.

In 2003, AROP issued Program Guidelines to assist eligible Aboriginal organizations with the development of their funding proposals. The guidelines emphasize that AROP funding facilitates organizational “participation in policy and program development concerning a variety of issues related to Aboriginal governance and socio-economic, health, legal and cultural issues with all levels of government”. The Program's objectives, as stated in the guidelines, are to:

- “assist eligible Aboriginal organizations to effectively influence and participate in federal/provincial policy and program development and decision-making with all levels of government;
- provide basic operational support to Aboriginal representative organizations;
- assist in the development of strong and skilled Aboriginal leadership;
- encourage and assist participation in and contribution to Canadian society through Aboriginal representative organizations at the national and provincial/territorial levels;
- build capacity at the community level facilitating the participation of local chapters in the development of policies and strategies at the provincial and national level;
- facilitate linkages and partnerships between Aboriginal organizations and governmental and societal institutions;
- enable Aboriginal Peoples, through their representative organizations, to participate in the social and political and economic and cultural life of the country”<sup>5</sup>.

## 2.2 Evolution of the Program<sup>6</sup>

Federal core funding for national Aboriginal organizations<sup>7</sup> originated in 1964 and was administered by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. In 1970, the core funding program was transferred to the Department of the Secretary of State.

In 1971 AROP was established with the purpose of providing core funding and technical assistance to politically representative organizations, with the overall goal of creating a consultative framework in which these organizations would act as political representatives, advocates and negotiators for their constituents, and would participate in the development of federal policy for Aboriginal Peoples. In 1975, the Program’s objectives were broadened to include citizenship and social development objectives of improving opportunities, participation and quality of life of Aboriginal Peoples. The Department of the Secretary of State administered the Program, with an initial five-year annual budget of \$6 million, which was subsequently increased to \$8.4 million annually.

In 1978, the Program was renamed the “Native Representative Program” and was renewed for an additional five-year period at \$9.6 million (including a \$325,000 budget for newspapers). Periodic increases were made to the Program’s budget and by 1982, the Program was extended for one year at \$13 million annually pending a review of the issue of representation and the specific needs of Status Indians, Non-Status Indians, Métis and Inuit.

---

<sup>5</sup> Department of Canadian Heritage. Aboriginal Representative Program: Criteria/Guidelines for 2003/04 proposals. (n.d.)

<sup>6</sup> The history of AROP to 1991 is based on information in Trican Consulting Group (1991), *Component Profile of the Aboriginal Representative Organization Program*, prepared for the Department of Secretary of State. The evolution since 1991 relies primarily on documentation provided by PCH.

<sup>7</sup> This included funding to the National Indian Council (which separated and became the National Indian Brotherhood in 1968) and the Native Council of Canada.

In 1983, the Program was renamed the “Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program” and was allocated a budget of \$13.8 million. A condition of funding was that a task force be struck to study the issue of representativeness, the proliferation of organizations, and program changes. In 1986 AROP obtained a mandate to “enable the political voice of Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples to be heard in order that they may achieve significant improvements in their socio-economic circumstances”<sup>8</sup>.

This mandate was to be guided by the following principles:

- the political voice of Aboriginal Peoples is articulated through representative and accountable organizational structures;
- Aboriginal representative organizations have a necessary and legitimate role to play in the decision-making processes of public policy;
- Aboriginal representative organizations will develop skilled leadership to deal with problems and issues that are unique to Aboriginal Peoples and can only be resolved by Aboriginal Peoples; and
- Aboriginal representative organizations are the best vehicle to promote the participation of Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian society.

In 1986, the Program was renewed for one year at \$14.7 million. It was subsequently renewed for three years on the understanding that there would be consultation with Aboriginal representative organizations to improve program delivery, specifically in relation to eligibility criteria, the funding formula, decentralization of program administration, and policy coordination. Between 1986 and 1990, there were several cuts to the Program’s budget and to the organizations funded.

By 1991 AROP operated with a budget of \$8.2 million. It was renewed in 1991 with funding for on-reserve Status Indians<sup>9</sup> transferred to the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and funding for non-status, Métis and Inuit retained at the Secretary of State. Department. The terms and conditions were amended to reflect this change. Funding for the AROP administered by the Secretary of State was renewed provisionally at \$9.1 million annually.

In 1993, with the consolidation of federal departments, AROP was transferred to the Department of Canadian Heritage, with an annual funding base of \$5.5 million.

In the mid-1990s, as a result of government restraint and the Program Review exercise, the AROP budget was reduced to \$5,193,000. Minimum funding levels of \$80,000 for provincial/territorial or regional organizations, and \$250,000 for national-level organizations were introduced at this time.

---

<sup>8</sup> As cited in Trican Consulting Group (1991), *Component Profile of the Aboriginal Representative Organization Program*, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> The INAC component currently administers “Grants to Representative Status Indian Organizations for their Administration”, which support the Assembly of First Nations at the national level and 21 provincial/territorial organizations.

In 1998, subsequent to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and as a part of the federal plan, *Gathering Strength*, a Self-Government Initiative component comprised of \$2 million in annual funding, was introduced restoring the Program's funding to its 1985 level.

The AROP budget has been between \$5.9 million and \$6.5million from fiscal years 1998 to 2003 (the period of study for this evaluation).

### 2.2.1 Program Funding Profile

The 2003 Program Guidelines state that national and provincial/territorial organizations representative of Inuit, Métis, status and Non-Status Indian Peoples are eligible to apply to AROP for funding to cover costs of operational support and (through Self-Government Initiative funding) for capacity-building at community, provincial and national levels (such as establishing a membership base and infrastructure, facilitating community input and leadership development, establishing information networks). Resources for the Program over the last five years are provided in Table 1.

• Table 1: AROP Budget Overview, 1998/99-2002/03

Year	Actual Budget Allocation
1998/99	\$6,367,569
1999/2000	\$6,492,560
2000/01	\$6,368,415
2001/02	\$6,492,934
2002/03	\$5,922,603

AROP does not have a clear definition of or criteria for determining representativeness for funding purposes, nor is the funding formula clear. To obtain funding, an organization must provide:<sup>10</sup>

- evidence that it is a non-profit organization, and that it has a constitution that provides for its registration as a non-profit organization under the appropriate federal, provincial or territorial societies/companies act;
- a description of the organization's mandate and objectives;
- evidence that the organization is representative of and democratically controlled by the Peoples for whom the organization has been established to serve, along with a description of the off-reserve Aboriginal group(s) that are its constituency;
- a list of members of Board of Directors and executives;
- evidence of by-laws that cover appointment of auditors, banking practices, borrowing powers, signing authority on behalf of the organization, purchases and contracts;

<sup>10</sup> Source: Document Review and Project File Review, confirmed with national PCH staff. The Memoranda of Agreement between the Minister and the funding recipients is standard, and includes a clause that states that the Minister enters into the agreement on the "assumption that that the recipient represents the majority of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada."

- evidence of regulations or systems governing travel, conflict of interest and record keeping;
- information on membership and community support (and related activities).

Eligible operational support expenses have not changed since 1987 and include: resources for a physical office space; salaries and benefits of key staff; office supplies and administration; travel, meeting and conference costs; professional fees; and newsletters.

According to PCH management, AROP funding is not intended to fully cover an organization's operational expenses. Rather, it provides an ongoing base of support and stability that then allows it to access other funding to cover these expenses. For example, organizations may supplement AROP funding through the administration portion of other project funding that they are able to access. PCH management also noted that AROP funding is not intended as "leverage" for other funding.<sup>11</sup>

#### 2.2.2 Self-Government Initiative (SGI) Funding

Since 1998, SGI funding has been available to organizations as part of AROP funding. The funding was to be used to provide grants and contributions to Métis, Non-Status Indian and Inuit representative organizations in accordance with the terms and conditions approved for the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program, and was expected to result in the:

- reactivation or creation of new local chapters of provincial/territorial representative organizations with active Boards;
- development and training of Board members, community leaders and volunteers;
- development of strategies for increasing membership;
- development of approaches for informing members and communities;
- participation and input of local chapters in the development of policies and strategies of Aboriginal representative organizations;
- participation and input of local chapters in the negotiations and implementation of Aboriginal self-government; and
- establishment of supportive networks and partnering strategies at the community level with Aboriginal governments and organizations, as well as with governments, municipalities and service agencies and other interested organizations.

According to PCH staff, SGI funding allocations were made on a pro-rata basis, in relation to the organization's "base" AROP funding. SGI funding is identified as a specific element within each organization's Memorandum of Agreement with the Department. However, the

---

<sup>11</sup> Email correspondence with Teresa Dore, PCH, April 19, 2004.

linkages between the AROP/SGI objectives, activities, outputs and expected impacts have not been clearly defined in the Program documentation.<sup>12</sup>

More recently, changes in responsibilities of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) expand the role of that Department with respect to urban Aboriginal peoples and the organizations which represent them.

An example of this is the 2004 transfer, from PCO, to INAC, of the Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians which provides funding to Métis, Non-Status Indian and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations to build capacity and electoral and financial accountability, so that they are better able to represent their constituents, become more accountable, develop partnerships and develop and train their staff.

Another example is the April 2004 announcement by the Prime Minister of the creation of an Inuit Secretariat at INAC. The stated purpose was to expand the profile of Inuit organizations and their communities within the Department. The impact of these responsibilities are clearly stated by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada on a departmental web site concerning the Federal Interlocutor Office: “The role of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians is /.../ to provide a point of contact between the Government of Canada and national Aboriginal organizations who represent Métis and Non-Status Indians to discuss their priority issues. I am the advocate within the federal government for Métis, Non-Status Indians and urban Aboriginal people<sup>13</sup>”. The Minister goes on to say that his role also includes bilateral relations with representative national organizations, finding practical ways to improve life chances of Métis, Non-Status Indians and urban Aboriginal People, and highlights his role as the lead federal Minister responsible for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

### 2.3 Program reviews, audits and evaluations

Between 1983 and 1987, AROP underwent several reviews. The reviews attempted to address persistent issues with respect to the Program’s design and delivery, in particular the lack of program clarity with respect to *eligibility criteria*, *representativeness*, *funding formula* and issues related to program fiscal management. In 1983, an Interdepartmental Task Force recommended changes in the Program’s delivery, however fundamental policy issues (such as representativeness) remained unresolved. Program assessments conducted in 1983 and 1984 found that the central objective of advancing political advocacy and negotiation continued to be relevant, and recommended that the Program be redesigned. In 1985, the Coolican Report recommended a policy committee be charged with policy and allocation decisions, however it too was unable to address the issue of representation. In 1987, the Lougheed Review, which addressed issues of program design, the effect of Bill C-31, representation and fiscal management, recommended that AROP be maintained centrally, that its funding formula be simplified (based on the 1986 census population), and, that funding criteria be developed in consultation with Aboriginal representative organizations prior to implementation.

---

<sup>12</sup> This observation was also made in the Corporate Review Branch 2002 audit of the AROP. [http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/em-cr/verif/2002/2002\\_02/tcm\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/em-cr/verif/2002/2002_02/tcm_e.cfm) As previously noted, there has been limited effort to map this program’s objectives, activities, outputs and expected impacts.

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/interloc/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/interloc/index_e.html)

There is no evidence to suggest that recommendations in these reviews were fully implemented, beyond the transferring of the Status Indian component of the Program to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1991.

In 1991, the Secretary of State Department drafted a component profile of the Program for evaluation purposes, however there is no evidence that an evaluation was conducted.

The Corporate Review Branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage conducted a Program audit in 2001/02. Audit recommendations focused on program improvements, including recommendations for performance measurement<sup>14</sup>.

In 2001/02 the Corporate Review Branch began work with the Program on a Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF), however, this work was not completed. Planning for a Program evaluation began in 2003 and the evaluation began late that year (the subject of this report) .

---

<sup>14</sup> Gallagher and Associates (September, 2001). *Report on Due Diligence in Process of Grants and Contributions by Aboriginal Representative Organization Program*.



## 3 Evaluation findings

The evaluation findings are presented in relation to three evaluation issues: relevance, success, and cost-effectiveness, as defined by the 2001 Treasury Board Evaluation Policy.

### 3.1 Continuing relevance

In compliance with evaluation policy requirements, the continued relevance of the Program is to be assessed against its capacity to address Aboriginal representation needs and provide an appropriate vehicle for the Government and the Department to pursue their objectives and priorities regarding Aboriginal Peoples.

#### 3.1.1 Aboriginal representation needs

In 1972, AROP was created to establish a mechanism through which governments could consult with Aboriginal Peoples. To this day, AROP is still the only federal program specifically designed to provide operational support for off-reserve Non-Status Aboriginal representative organizations – support that is intended to provide capacity for these organizations to participate in decision-making at all levels.

The importance of Aboriginal representative organizations in advancing the Aboriginal agenda was widely acknowledged in the 1996 report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP).

Key informants including federal and provincial officials and Aboriginal organization representatives underscored the importance of Aboriginal representation in all matters that affect them. Furthermore, they note that there is increasing demand for Aboriginal representative organizations to develop self-governing institutional capacity, and service delivery mechanisms, and the related infrastructure. All key informants indicate that Aboriginal representative organizations currently play an increasingly critical role in the lives of Aboriginal Peoples well beyond their role as political advocacy organizations.

#### 3.1.2 Government-wide priorities

Since 1998, AROP has also been aligned with *Gathering Strength — Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*<sup>15</sup>, which was developed in response to the report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. In *Gathering Strength*, the federal government specifically acknowledged the need to build capacity within Aboriginal representative organizations, particularly in relation to self-government initiatives. AROP is most directly aligned with the following key elements of *Gathering Strength*:

- renewing the partnerships (“bringing about meaningful and lasting change in our relationships with Aboriginal people”);

<sup>15</sup> Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: *Gathering Strength — Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*.

- strengthening Aboriginal Governance (“supporting Aboriginal Peoples in their efforts to create effective and accountable government, affirming treaty relationships and negotiating fair solutions to Aboriginal land claims”);
- new fiscal relationships (“arriving at financial arrangements with Aboriginal governments *and organizations* (*italics added for emphasis*) which are stable, predictable, and accountable and will help foster self-reliance”); and
- supporting strong communities, Peoples and economies (“improving health and public safety, investing in Peoples, and strengthening Aboriginal economic development”).

The 2001 and the 2002 Speeches from the Throne further emphasized the Government’s relationships with Aboriginal Peoples as a priority by reaffirming the government’s commitment to work in partnership with Aboriginal Peoples and to build community capacity to address economic and social development needs. The April 19, 2004 Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable also recognized the importance of Aboriginal representative organizations for the achievement of common goals.

### 3.1.3 Departmental strategic objectives

During the period covered by this evaluation, AROP was linked to PCH Strategic Priorities and was aligned primarily to the following two strategic objectives:

- **Cultural Participation and Engagement:** This strategic objective calls for “Fostering access to and participation in Canada’s cultural life.”
- **Active Citizenship and Civic Participation:** This strategic objective calls for “Promoting understanding of the rights and responsibilities of shared citizenship and fostering opportunities to participate in Canada’s civic life.”

More recently, the Department reviewed its priorities and defined two strategic outcomes:

- Canadians express and share their diverse cultural experiences with each other and the world, and
- Canadians live in an inclusive society built on inter-cultural understanding and citizen participation.

This new iteration of the Department’s priorities does not make the objectives of the Program less relevant to those priorities. However, to fully assess the extent to which a Program contributes to the Department’s strategic objectives, one has to consider its effectiveness.

## 3.2 Success: meeting program’s expected outcomes

There is a pervasive “evaluability” issue regarding the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program. Performance indicators and a performance monitoring strategy have not been established for the Program and therefore, there has been no systematic collection of performance

information, and there are no agreed upon criteria against which one would assess the Program's success. In addition, the Program provides core-funding and no specific objectives are defined in relation to that funding, as it would be the case with project-based funding.

To address these challenges, evaluators reviewed all contribution funding files in search of specific objectives relating to the funding provided. Intended results for each recipient organization were generally extracted from the Program's Request for Approval Form (RAF) which usually contain such information. However, in the case of each Contribution Agreement, objectives tended to be very broad and lacked specifics, for example:

- “The development of programs/policies/attitudes which will have been influenced by the organization and which will as a result be sensitive to the organization's members”; and
- “Funding will be used to further enhance the organization's ability to participate within political, social and economic institutions that have an impact on the lives of its members”.

As Program officers often wrote in the RAFs, “reporting on the impact of this funding under the AROP Program is difficult in that funding is on-going and directed toward the attainment of very broad objectives, as opposed to project funding”.

In these circumstances, evaluators attempted to establish and document the link between funding awarded by the Program and any information regarding specific activities and/or outcomes that could be gathered through the file review and interviews. First, they proceeded to document the link between the Program's funding and organizations' activities, assuming that those activities were conducive to achievement of Program objectives. The quality (or lack thereof) of documentation on file presented a significant impediment and it was not possible to pursue the results chain any further.

The only remaining evaluation strategy was to gather information regarding the outputs and outcomes of the organization on a qualitative basis, i.e., through interviews with stakeholders.

### 3.2.1 Program funding profile

AROP has provided funding to three national Aboriginal representative organizations: the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (since 1971)<sup>16</sup>, the Métis National Council (since 1984)<sup>17</sup>, and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (since 1971). Provincial/territorial or regional affiliates of these organizations have also received funding.<sup>18</sup> From 1998/99 to 2000/01 a total of 23 provincial/territorial or regional affiliates received support each year. In 2001/02 AROP provided funding to 22 organizations (during the previous year, the Métis Nation of the Northwest Territories had ceased operations). In 2002/03, it provided funding to 22 organizations (the Kivalliq

---

<sup>16</sup> Formerly the Native Council of Canada.

<sup>17</sup> In February, 1983, three organizations representing the Metis population of the prairies split from the Native Council of Canada, leading to the creation of the Métis National Council. In March, 1983 the MNC won the right to sit as the legitimate Métis representative at the First Ministers Conference on Constitutional Affairs.

<sup>18</sup> There has been some fluctuation in the number of organizations funded, however from 1998/99-2002/03 this has been relatively stable.

Inuit Association did not submit a proposal that year). In addition, between 1998/99 and 2002/03, AROP provided annual funding to the Innu Nation.

Details of AROP funding over the past five years by organization is provided in Appendix 3. The following table provides an overview of Program funding, including SGI funding, to these organizations and their affiliates in the last five years.

• Table 2: Total AROP Funding 1998-2003

Organization/Affiliates	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	Total
Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP)	2,413,063	2,413,063	2,413,063	2,413,063	2,360,554	12,012,806
Inuit Tapirit Kanatami (ITK)	1,552,810	1,552,810	1,552,810	1,562,810	1,358,264	7,579,504
Métis National Council (MNC)	2,286,298	2,411,298	2,287,153	2,401,672	2,088,396	11,474,817
Innu Nation	115,389	115,389	115,389	115,389	115,389	576,945
Total	6,367,560	6,492,560	6,368,415	6,492,934	5,922,603	31,644,072

According to the Department's GCIMS information, clarified by Program staff<sup>19</sup>, from 1998/99 to 2002/03, AROP provided a total of \$4,511,740 in core / operational support and \$2,078,165 in SGI funding to the three national representative organizations:

- CAP received \$1,567,970 in operational support, and \$734,115 in SGI funding;
- ITK received \$1,618,560 in operational support, and \$339,775 in SGI funding;
- MNC received \$1,325,210 in operational support, and \$1,004,275 in SGI funding.

During the same period, AROP provided the following levels of funding to the provincial/territorial and regional affiliates of national Aboriginal representative organizations and other organizations:

- CAP affiliates received \$6,751,955 in operational support, and \$2,958,766 in SGI funding;
- ITK affiliates received \$3,990,245 in operational support, and \$1,630,925 in SGI funding;
- MNC affiliates received \$6,555,154 in operational support, and \$2,590,178 in SGI funding;
- The Innu Nation received \$400,000 in operational support, and \$176,957 in SGI funding.

The following tables provide a snapshot of the organizations' funding in 2002/03.

<sup>19</sup> A number of questions were raised regarding GCIMS information, which were subsequently clarified by Program staff. The discrepancy between GCIMS data and information provided by PCH was \$1,048,497. The above figures are based on the clarifications provided by Program staff.

• Table 3: Total AROP Funding by Organizations-2002-03

Organization	National Organizations	Affiliates	Total
Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) and Affiliates	460,417	1,900,137	2,360,554
Inuit Tapirit Kanatami (ITK) and Affiliates	389,667	968,597	1,358,264
Métis National Council (OS) and Affiliates	426,710	1,661,686	2,088,396
Innu Nation			115,385
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,276,794</b>	<b>4,530,420</b>	<b>5,922,599</b>

• Table 4: Approved Funding – OS – SGI – 2002-2003

<b>National organisations</b>	<b>OS</b>	<b>SGI</b>	<b>Total</b>
Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) (OS)	313,594	146,823	460,417
Inuit Tapirit Kanatami (ITK) (OS)	321,712	67,955	389,667
Métis National Council (OS)	225,855	200,855	426,710
<b>Total</b>	<b>861,161</b>	<b>415,633</b>	<b>1,276,794</b>
<b>CAP Affiliates</b>			
Alliance Autochtone du Québec inc.	194,235	85,910	280,145
Federation of Newfoundland Indians	80,000	35,389	115,389
Indian Council of First Nations of Manitoba	80,000	35,389	115,389
Congress of Aboriginal Peoples of Saskatchewan	80,000	35,389	115,389
Labrador Métis Nation	80,000	35,389	115,389
Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association	235,319	104,081	339,400
New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council	106,934	47,302	154,236
Native Council of Canada Alberta	62,880	0	62,880
Native Council of Nova Scotia	101,269	44,796	146,065
Native Council of Prince Edward Island	80,000	35,389	115,389
United Native Nations Society	236,058	104,408	340,466
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,336,695</b>	<b>563,442</b>	<b>1,900,137</b>
<b>ITK Affiliates</b>			
Inuvialuit Regional Corporation	118,256	67,955	186,211
Kitikmeot Inuit Association	194,546	0	194,546
Qikiqtani Inuit Association	136,213	67,955	204,168
Kivalliq Inuit Association	0	0	0
Labrador Inuit Association	114,071	67,956	182,027
Makivik Corporation	133,690	67,955	201,645
<b>Total</b>	<b>696,776</b>	<b>271,821</b>	<b>968,597</b>
<b>MNC Affiliates</b>			
Manitoba Metis Federation Inc.	321,066	119,659	440,725
Metis Nation - Saskatchewan Secretariat Inc.	388,199	129,028	517,227
Metis Nation of Alberta Association	230,956	100,040	330,996
Metis Nation of Ontario Secretariat	80,000	66,369	146,369
Metis Provincial Council of British Columbia	80,000	66,369	146,369
Labrador Metis Nation	80,000	0	80,000
Metis Nation Northwest Territories	0	0	0

<b>Total</b>	1,180,221	481,465	1,661,686
<b>Innu Nations</b>			115,385

### 3.2.2 Organizations' outputs and activities

Key informants reported that AROP funds have been used to support organizations' ongoing operations so central or provincial/territorial and regional offices can physically exist to undertake work on behalf of the constituents they represent.

At an operational level, AROP funding is used to offset costs of office space; to pay or offset the cost of salaries and benefits of key staff, such as the president; for office and administration; for travel and meetings, and for conference participation costs; professional fees; and internal newsletters. The Program thus supports the organizations' activities in that it supports key elements of the organizational infrastructure necessary to bring community priorities and needs, in terms of policy and service delivery, to the attention of governments at all levels.

AROP plays an important role in providing the capacity for the organizations to exist, and enables representative organizations to establish organizational governance, membership and elections, and undertake: special events, annual meetings, and establish linkages to the range of agencies and interests that facilitate Aboriginal organizational relationships with governmental and societal institutions. Evidence of this activity is contained in funded organizations' annual reports.

### 3.2.3 Organizations' Outcomes

Key informants were of the opinion that, over the long term, AROP has been successful in contributing to the development of a stable, representative infrastructure for Aboriginal Peoples.

A national, provincial/territorial and regional infrastructure has facilitated government contact and communication with Aboriginal Peoples, helped to clarify and focus issues and concerns, and enabled organizations to act as advocates on behalf of their constituents.

The project file review found that it is not possible to measure the specific impacts of operational support (particularly within a five-year time frame) beyond the very broad objective of maintaining an infrastructure.

AROP was one of the first programs to provide funding to Aboriginal organizations. It thus assisted organizations in gaining experience in administrative/financial management and allowed for the exploration of self-government issues. However, it is not seen to have kept pace in this area and has strayed from the original intent to enable organizations to build capacity and evolve. When AROP was transferred to the Department of Canadian Heritage in 1993, its budget allocation was \$5.5 million. As a result of the Program Review expenditure reduction exercise, the budget was reduced by 22 percent in 1996, to \$4.3 million. With the injection of SGI funding, the budget has been constant, at \$6.2 million annually (comprised of \$4.2 million from its A-base and \$2 million for the Self-Government Initiative).

AROP funding was originally determined on a population base<sup>20</sup>. There is little evidence or documentation on the current funding formula used by the Program – and it is not clear if funding awarded is proportional to the population represented. Thus the role of these organizations in representing the Aboriginal constituent base they purport to represent is not clear. The confusion that exists as a result, and the lack of logical links between activity and performance outcomes makes it impossible to assess the impacts.

While attribution to specific funding are difficult to make, the funded organizations provided several examples of the type of work that AROP has enabled them to undertake as representative bodies. For instance, the Métis Nation of Ontario indicates that during their early years, a portion of AROP funding enabled them to work on their registration systems which later became a key piece of evidence that contributed to the outcome of the Pawley decision because they were able to prove a rigorous registration process with several criteria for acceptance, including self-identification; community acceptance; ties to a traditional Métis community; and existing contact and participation in the modern-day community where it has continued to exist. Another example of a successful outcome is cited by OMAA which tracks activity related to current policy issues. When new hunting regulations were proposed in Ontario, the organization indicated that they consulted over 260 communities and more than 1,300 individuals while traveling 1,300 kilometers to hear people's views on a new moose hunting regime. A new policy is emerging and they see themselves as having contributed to its development. Executive members have said that they would not have been able to undertake these initiatives if AROP had not funded them annually in their early start-up years.

Many of the twenty-three organizational interviews also yielded similar anecdotal evidence to indicate that such impacts are somewhat related to the AROP. However, these processes have not been captured in recipients' reporting. Other organizations such as the ITK report that AROP funding has had minimal, if any, impact on their organizations, as they are somewhat different, due to the fact that their operations are supported through more complex funding mechanisms as per their land claim agreements.

Key informants were able to attribute other outcomes to the Program in the broader context of the past 10-15 years. The Program is seen to have enabled Aboriginal representative organizations to access government decision-makers and government officials, and to have influence on government policies and programs. As a result, there is a sense that Aboriginal representative organizations have contributed to an increased awareness and understanding of Aboriginal issues and priorities from a policy and program development perspective. This success has been built incrementally over the years, as organizations have developed credibility with governments, the private sector, and the general public. This rise in credibility of Aboriginal institutions and organizations is seen to have resulted in increased government support for the social and economic agenda of Aboriginal peoples. This is one of the biggest success factors attributed to the Program.

A positive, unintended consequence of AROP identified by key informants is the development of pride among Aboriginal people who are developing a sense of belonging, membership and

---

<sup>20</sup> PCH staff report that the program is currently based on 1986 population data, however there have been many cuts to the AROP budget since then, and there is scant documentation on how funding is provided.

recognition as they participate, receive support from and work within their own institutions, which they see as being important structures within Canadian society.

Another impact of AROP noted by key informants is that Aboriginal representative organizations have evolved and many are now multi-faceted institutions. As such, many of the organizations function as government apparatus of the three constitutionally-recognized Aboriginal Peoples: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

There are a number of unintended consequences that are related to the lack of program clarity and definition:

- Organizations report that they frequently encounter the perception among federal departments outside of PCH and INAC that they come to the table prepared and funded to interact on policy issues. There is a perception that national organizations obtain a much higher allocation of funding to represent their constituents. This perception becomes an obstacle in accessing sufficient project funds to offset costs of administration, a means most typically used to supplement gaps to core funding.
- Another perception that is seen to impact negatively on funded organizations is the erroneous belief that resources are available for Aboriginal representative organizations, and that therefore capacity exists. All funded organizations are approached by virtually every single government entity that may have something to do with Aboriginal programming. The original intent was not to build capacity for service delivery but, according to key informants, it has been an unintended outcome of the Program.

Expectations are created that the organizations are equipped to address virtually all issues related to the needs of Aboriginal Peoples, but are limited by the amount of funds that are available. These expectations create confusion because people are under the impression that these organizations are there to assist them, and do not understand the limitations of what can realistically be accomplished.

Self-Government Initiative funding represents one-third of the AROP budget. PCH key informants indicated that this funding is treated as supplemental to core funding. In effect, this funding addresses the erosion in program resources that occurred in the 1990s due to Program Review and fiscal restraint measures.

Key informants indicated that the SGI funding has contributed to organizational infrastructure improvement, such as strengthened governance, board training, and strategic planning. It has also contributed to increased information sharing, education and awareness. The administrative and file review indicated that SGI funding is integrated into each organization's contribution agreement. The review found a general lack of clarity and consistency in how SGI objectives, activities, and intended results are presented, as well as limitations in reporting. Given the approach to administering SGI funding and to the limited information contained in funding files, it is not possible to measure SGI's specific "impacts".



### 3.2.4 Contribution analysis

To establish the extent to which the Program is, in fact, having some impact on the situation it was designed to address, evaluators need to establish the extent to which outcomes achieved can be attributed to the Program's activities.

An analysis of the PCH contribution to AROP-funded organization budgets indicates that for most organizations, the AROP contribution to funded organizations represents only a very small portion of their total revenue, and covers only a small portion of their ongoing operational costs. As can be seen from the Table below, the percentage of *total organization revenue* supplied by AROP is less than 10% for the majority of funded organizations<sup>21</sup>. Note that the numbers below do not include all AROP funded organizations as information for some was not contained in Program files.

• Table 5: AROP Contribution as a % of Total Budget

% of org. budget	# of organizations
10% or less	13
11% - 20%	4
21% - 30%	4
31% - 74%	0
75% or more	1

AROP key informants (n=19) estimate that funding over the past five years has covered only a portion of the organizations' operational expenses, as demonstrated in the following table:

• Table 6: AROP Funding as a % of Organizational Operating Expenses

	0-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81-90%	Total
Number of Organizations	13	3	2	0	1	19
Percentage of Organizations	68.4	15.8	10.5	0	5.3	100

Other sources of revenue (including funding from other federal sources and other levels of government) supplement core operational expenses.

The fact that the majority of organizations are less dependent on AROP funding provides evidence that they have successfully established organizational structures that are able to undertake work for their constituents with a view to furthering participation in Canadian society at national and other levels, and interfacing with all levels of government, thus realizing AROP objectives.

### 3.3 Cost-effectiveness

Technically, cost-effectiveness implies an assessment of cost per outcome of a program and a comparison with other similar programs. As information regarding the outcomes of the Pro-

---

<sup>21</sup> AWP/AROP Project/Organization File Review 2001/02 (June 2003). Note that the numbers below do not include all the AROP organizations, since for some of these organizations information was not available.

gram is not specific, it is not possible to calculate the cost per outcome. Still, as indicated in TBS's Evaluation Policy, cost-effectiveness can be assessed to some extent by reviewing delivery/operational issues, design issues, and options for alternative delivery.

### 3.3.1 Delivery/operational issues

Funding recipients report that recipients' Contribution Agreements for national organizations are typically renewed, more or less, on an automatic basis while regional organizations often wait for periods of three to four months before their new funding is approved and Agreements are signed, as was the case during this period. The length of time it takes to renew funding is seen to be the biggest challenge and inefficiency identified with the Program and is said to impact negatively on the achievement of objectives because of the inability of the organizations to operate fully during this time, particularly for those who do not have interim funding.

Funding recipients also report that core funding needs and costs do not change much from year to year yet the application process requires that organizations prepare the same submission each year. The Program may wish to consider a move to multi-year core funding which may better serve both PCH and AROP funding recipients. A number of funding recipients report that their organizations have proven track records and have mature business practices that are significantly more complex and sophisticated than fifteen or twenty years ago. Requiring them to re-apply for core funding each year is seen to be unnecessary.

### 3.3.2 Design issues

Two issues pertaining to the design of the Program were identified by the evaluation.

- A lack of clarity regarding what the meaning of "representative". AROP funding levels were originally determined on a population basis. There is little evidence or documentation on the current funding formula – and it is not clear if the funding is proportional to the population represented. PCH staff reported that the Program is currently based on 1986 population data, however there have been cuts to the AROP budget since then, and there is little documentation on how funding levels are decided.

Moreover, there is a perception among some key informants that there is an overlap in the representation of constituents, especially with regard to Status off-reserve and Non-Status populations. It is increasingly difficult to say who is representing whom in this area. Some organizations have made extensive investments in identifying their membership and criteria for defining who their constituents are. The fact that different organizations say they represent the same people is a major policy issue affecting the Program.

- Many funding recipients report their viability has grown significantly over the years and they are now complex service delivery vehicles as well as political representative bodies, with access to a wide range of funding sources and mechanisms. They suggest there is a need to better define core AROP program elements. AROP relevance is tied to the representative structure and accountability of these organizations. However, a majority of funding recipients report that confusion exists regarding representation

and accountability, and say there is a disconnect between their responsibilities for service delivery and representation. There are no clearly defined parameters around these concepts and the Program needs to take account of these concerns and the changed situation for these organizations.

### 3.3.3 Options for alternative delivery

Two possible options for delivery of the Program were raised during the course of the evaluation:

The first option is to continue the status quo where the AROP remains within the Aboriginal Affairs Branch. This option would require some significant investment in clarifying and re-aligning AROP policy objectives with overarching federal priorities with respect to Aboriginal Peoples, and with the priorities and needs of Aboriginal Peoples. This would also involve an examination and definition of what constitutes core operational expenses in the current operational context. Following clarification of policy objectives, a performance measurement framework should be developed defining the Program's expected outcomes and performance indicators. Once the Program's parameters are clarified, training should be provided for all staff involved with Program delivery and guidance to stakeholders and beneficiaries on reporting requirements.

A second option raised during the course of the evaluation was a transfer of the AROP to INAC, considering its recently expanded mandate (see section 2.2 of this report). Some informants suggesting this might be a more cost-effective alternative since INAC, which already administers programs supporting other Aboriginal representative organizations, e.g. Assembly of First Nations. It was suggested that this alternative might help address the question of representation, as well.

## 4 Conclusions

This section concludes by providing answers, to the extent that available information allows, to the evaluation questions.

### 4.1 Relevance

AROP objectives are to:

- facilitate Aboriginal organization relationships with governmental and societal institutions;
- enable Aboriginal Peoples (through representative institutions) to participate in the political and socio-economic institutions that control their collective destiny;
- encourage and assist the appropriate participation of Aboriginal Peoples in Canadian society through Aboriginal Representative Organizations at national and other levels;
- assist in the development of strong and skilled Aboriginal leadership;
- assist Aboriginal Peoples in effectively influencing and interfacing with all levels of government.

These objectives were found to be consistent with current needs and priorities of the federal government to hear the voice of Aboriginal Peoples and consult them on current policy issues.

However, over time, Aboriginal representative organizations have grown to become multi-faceted sophisticated organizations. They are increasingly called upon to play a role as partners in the service delivery to their constituents, a role that is extraneous to the strict definition of what constitutes a representative organization. AROP core funding, once the stable of their continued operational presence, now represents a small portion of recipients' total budgets.

This suggests that AROP funding recipients may have outgrown the Program's original purpose.

### 4.2 Success/Performance

In the absence of performance indicators and performance data, it is impossible to provide an assessment of AROP's performance based on solid and reliable data.

Anecdotal evidence of Program successes was provided through qualitative interviews. However, the most solid evidence that AROP has met its objectives perhaps resides in the fact that funded organizations have become sophisticated and multi-faceted. The extent to which they are able to access other sources of funding speaks to that success.

However, the nature and amount of funding provided by PCH to these organizations raises the question as to whether any part of the actual successes encountered by these organizations can be attributed to PCH. This question was often raised by key informants during the evaluation process.

#### 4.3 Cost-effectiveness

Key informants identified two key delivery issues. The first is delays in the funding approval process; the second is the unnecessary requirement for organizations to apply for funding each year for essentially the same purpose.

Most importantly, there is a widely shared perception amongst the stakeholders of the Program that the basic concepts on which the Program is founded need better definition. Issues related to the representativeness of funded organizations and to the populations they represent affect Program delivery and its cost-effectiveness.

However, these are broad policy issues that also affect other programs supporting Aboriginal representative organizations. Given the wide-reaching implications of these issues, it is doubtful that the Department of Canadian Heritage alone could address these issues or that it is best placed to do so.

Finally, as a more general conclusion, the Department should review its involvement in providing operational (or core) funding in situations where it is only a small funder. Providing such funding might be cost-effective in the early stages of a program's life cycle to jumpstart the operations of funding recipients, however operational funding becomes a very blunt tool, when funded organizations reach a certain level of development and financing.

## 5 Recommendations and Management Response

Considering that:

- the recently expanded mandate and responsibilities of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada with respect to national representative organizations for Inuit, Métis and Non-Status Indians and that funding responsibility for the First Nations representative organization (Assembly of First Nations) was earlier transferred to INAC, in keeping with its mandate at the time

**1) It is recommended that the Department of Canadian Heritage undertake discussions with the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada to explore whether or not the Program would better fit in that Department.**

**Management Response:** Recommendation accepted.

Discussions with INAC are currently underway to ensure a cooperative policy development process between the Government of Canada and Aboriginal organizations in response to commitments made by the Prime Minister at the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable. These discussions include an examination to explore in which department the Program is best situated.

*Implementation Schedule:* In progress

Considering that:

- the assumptions on which the Program was based since 1987 have not been systematically examined or reviewed
- there is a widely recognized lack of clarity of the concept of representation as applied to the national organizations and
- the role of national Aboriginal representative organizations has evolved since the inception of the Program

**2) It is recommended that, if the Program is retained at the Department of Canadian Heritage, AROP objectives and basic concepts be revisited and defined to address current needs of recipient organizations and priorities of the federal government.**

**Management Response:** Recommendation accepted.

The Aboriginal Affairs Branch will conduct policy work that will address Aboriginal organizations' core funding requirements and relevance to departmental and federal government priorities. Moreover, the Results-based Management and Accountability Framework (RMAF) for the APP will clearly define the objectives and expected outcomes of the Aboriginal Organizations pillar.

*Implementation Schedule:* Policy work completed: 06/07RMAF will be scheduled at TBS: September 2005

Considering that:

- it was not possible to assess Program impact or to retrieve even basic information regarding recipient organizations' activities, outputs and outcomes and
- central agency requirements and expectations regarding results-based management practices

**3) It is recommended that the Program design and implement a performance-monitoring framework that meets the accountability requirements for results-based management, and that tools and templates be developed to guide recipient reporting, and training on the performance measurement framework be provided for all staff involved with Program delivery.**

**Management Response:** Recommendation accepted.

The APP RMAF is being designed to meet accountability requirements for results-based management. In order to support the implementation of the RMAF, tools and templates for application and reporting are being developed, and training for all staff involved with program delivery is being updated.

*Implementation Schedule:* In progress. New tools, templates, and updated training materials to be launched in November 05, ready for the 06/07 call for proposals.