



**VICTIMS OF CRIME INITIATIVE
MID-TERM EVALUATION
Summary, Recommendations and Management Response**

February 2003

**Evaluation Division
Policy Integration and Coordination Section**



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1. INTRODUCTION

The federal Victims of Crime Initiative (VCI) was launched in March 2000 with \$25M in funding spread over five years. In essence, the VCI set up the Policy Centre for Victim Issues, which includes funding to support policy development, consultation, research, coordination, and communication activities. The VCI also established a Victims Fund (approximately \$10 million or \$2 million for each of 5 years) that provides grants and contributions to provincial and territorial governments and non-governmental organizations to develop, promote and enhance services and assistance for victims.

In order to fulfil a central agency requirement to report on progress of the Victims of Crime Initiative, a midterm evaluation was conducted. The focus of the evaluation is on process and management issues with a view to providing information that will assist the PCVI in strengthening the design and delivery of the VCI for the balance of its mandate. This report summarizes the findings from the evaluation and includes the recommendations and management response prepared by the Director of the PCVI.

1.1 Overview of the Victims of Crime Initiative

The overall goal of the Victims of Crime Initiative is to increase the confidence of victims of crime in the criminal justice system by:

- ensuring that victims of crime and their families are aware of their role in the criminal justice system and of services and assistance available to support them;
- enhancing the Department of Justice's capacity to develop policy, legislation and other initiatives which take into consideration the perspectives of victims;
- increasing the awareness of criminal justice system personnel, allied professionals and the public about the needs of victims of crime, legislative provisions designed to protect them and services available to support them;
- developing and disseminating information about effective approaches to respond to the needs of victims of crime both within Canada and internationally; and
- by supporting provinces and territories that work with victims, the Initiative will also enhance the role of victims within the criminal justice system.

One of the primary mechanisms employed to support these objectives is the Victims Fund.

The Fund is comprised of four components, each with its own objectives:

1) Provincial and territorial implementation: This component provides assistance to provinces and territories to implement legislation for victims of crime; in particular the

provisions of the Criminal Code (e.g., victim impact statement, consideration of victim safety at bail, publication bans, restitution) through the development / enhancement of police, court, Crown, or system-based victims assistance programs.

2) *Innovative pilot projects and activities:* This component provides assistance to governmental and non-governmental organizations to promote development of new approaches to meet victims' needs, encourage establishment of service provider networks, respond to emerging issues in victimization, and provide support to victims engaged in restorative justice or alternative measures through innovative projects, public education initiatives, enhanced assistance to victims of crime, increased awareness of and access to services and assistance, establishment of referral networks, training initiatives and other initiatives.

3) *Northern and rural:* This component provides assistance to governmental and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the development of and expansion of victim services and assistance and to increase access to such services in northern and rural communities.

4) *Financial assistance:* This component provides limited emergency financial assistance to individual victims of crime or surviving family members faced with unusual or extreme hardship due to criminal victimization where no other adequate source of financial assistance is available. In addition, it provides financial assistance to surviving family members of homicide victims to attend early parole eligibility hearings (s. 745.6) including travel, accommodation and meal allowances in accordance with prevailing Treasury Board guidelines.

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES

The implementation evaluation examines the design and delivery of the VCI as well as lessons learned to provide management of the PCVI with the information needed to strengthen and adjust the activities supported by the VCI for the balance of its mandate. It assesses the appropriateness of the program design to support the achievement of VCI objectives. It also reviews the structure and management of the PPCI as well as the sufficiency of resources to support the work of the PCVI in activity areas such as:

- research and policy development;
- communications and public legal education information (PLEI);
- support to and from provinces and territories;
- support to victim organizations and the victims they serve; and,
- coordination and integration.

Finally, the evaluation examines the adequacy of the performance measurement strategy and associated data collection practices to support the ongoing oversight and management of the VCI.

A total of 40 evaluation questions were examined by the midterm evaluation. These were grouped into five main categories of issues:

- status of activities implemented to date;
- effectiveness of implementation and the role of the PCVI;
- extent to which coordination and integration of activities occurred;
- effectiveness of the Victims Fund in targeting its audience and likelihood of meeting its objectives; and,
- extent to which the VCI assists provinces/territories to implement Criminal Code amendments.

This evaluation did not look at outcomes, as it is still too early to assess the impacts and effects of the VCI. Impacts and effects will be looked at in the summative evaluation, although early indications of success are evident. The evaluation covers the time period from March 2000 to June 2002 (approximate).

2.1 Methodology

The methodology for the midterm evaluation of the VCI consisted of a file and documentation review, a survey of Victims Fund applicants (both successful and unsuccessful applicants), and 34 key informant interviews.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The principal findings from the mid-term evaluation are summarized below:

3.1 Status of Activities Implemented to Date

Research and policy development

- The PCVI has been involved in various victim-related research projects. Key stakeholders are aware of the PCVI's research activities, and a number of stakeholder groups request information and research materials from the Policy Centre. One of the primary benefits of the PCVI's research efforts that was expressed by key informants is that it allows stakeholders to become informed and aware of policy directions, intentions regarding legislation and services related to victims of crime, and concerns and emerging issues across jurisdictions.

- Key informants believe the Policy Centre's work to be appropriately focused to guide policy and legislation decisions and to present the perspectives of victims.

Communications and public legal education information (PLEI)

- The PCVI is involved in a number of activities related to communications and PLEI including the development of a website, brochures and handbooks, fact sheets, media scans, a newsletter, and PCVI kiosk.
- The most effective methods for information sharing with stakeholders are reported to be the PCVI web site, the FPTWG meetings, consultations, and the dissemination of reports. Overall, there is satisfaction with the format and content of communications materials.
- Some key informants suggested that better use could be made of technology for the distribution of materials to key stakeholders (e.g., e-mail, web sites, fax, etc.). A few key informants also suggested that more conferences and workshops would increase visibility of the PCVI and the VCI. Both of these suggestions reflect a desire for more of what the Policy Centre has already been doing.
- Funding applicants and others involved with victims' issues desire more information about services, assistance and legislation pertaining to victims.

Support to and from provinces and territories

- The PCVI works very closely with its provincial and territorial counterparts. Regular meetings are held by the *Federal Provincial Territorial Victims of Crime Working Group (FPTWG)*, a forum that provides input on proposed law reforms, solicits feedback from the jurisdictions on activities undertaken by the PCVI, guides PCVI priorities and facilitates a coordinated approach to delivery of services for victims of crime across Canada. These meetings are an excellent opportunity for information sharing among jurisdictions and key stakeholders; they provide the PCVI with the opportunity to collect information on victim programs, services and related activities within the provinces and territories. Thus far, the FPTWG has been a very active and productive venue.

Support to victim organizations and the victims they serve

- The Policy Centre has demonstrated support for victim organizations and the victims whom they serve by increasing communications, promoting networking, and funding projects through the Victims Fund.

Coordination and integration

- The PCVI is responsible for overseeing the VCI and undertakes several levels of activities in the area of coordination and integration. Beyond coordination efforts within the DOJ and, to the extent possible, with other federal departments, the PCVI has had a significant consultation role at the provincial/territorial level with various stakeholders, including provincial/territorial governments, criminal justice system professionals, service providers, and advocates. The PCVI has facilitated networking and information sharing among federal, provincial, and territorial governments, NGOs, and others. Overall, key informants are satisfied with the coordination and integration activities of the Policy Centre.

Other Activities: Victim Witness Assistants in the North

- The PCVI has provided valuable support for Victim Witness Assistants (VWAs) in the North. Continued and expanded support is essential as VWAs in the North work under challenging and stressful circumstances that require them to have a variety of capabilities with limited access to training. VWAs in the North are often required to take on a number of responsibilities that exceed those of VWAs in other parts of the country.

3.2 Effectiveness of Implementation and the Role of the PCVI

- With an extremely limited staff complement, the PCVI has been involved in a great number of activities in a short period of time. This has occurred in spite of an organizational structure that restricts efficiency and effectiveness. The Policy Centre's staff is made up of internal employees (located within the PCVI reporting to the Director) and external employees (located in other Divisions but under service agreements with the PCVI). These external employees must deal with conflicting priorities as a result of reporting to different people. The PCVI ultimately suffers as employees are pulled in different directions, causing the PCVI to experience delays in accomplishing its work. In addition, ongoing changes in research personnel disrupt the continuity of the work and require internal staff to continually spend time training, briefing and educating new external research staff.

- Key informants consider the Policy Centre to be a locus of expertise on federal legislation and policy development for victims' issues. Though some remain unclear about the role of the PCVI and others would like more information on the Victims Fund, most key informants credit the Policy Centre with disseminating relevant high quality materials to stakeholders across the country.

3.3 Extent to Which Coordination and Integration of Activities Occurred

- Overall, the PCVI maintains positive and open relationships with key stakeholders, demonstrating a concerted and coordinated effort toward the advancement of victims' issues within the criminal justice system.
- The majority of key informants could not specifically think of any other stakeholders who should be, but are not, involved in the activities of the PCVI. However, a few key informants mentioned that more local-level service providers could become more involved.
- Key informants perceive the FPTWG as one of the most effective coordination efforts of the PCVI. The PCVI has had considerable success supporting the exchange of information among jurisdictions through this forum. These meetings represent an opportunity for information sharing among jurisdictions and key stakeholders; they provide the PCVI with the opportunity to collect information on victim programs, services, and related activities within the provinces and territories. Most key informants acknowledged the value of face-to-face meetings, but because of the time commitment required from provincial and territorial representatives, and the cost to the PCVI of bringing everyone together, some suggested increasing the use of technology and cost-effective communication through, for example, teleconferences and e-mail, as alternatives.

3.4 Effectiveness of the Victims Fund in targeting its audience and meeting its objectives

- Successful applicants to the Victims Fund have tended to be well established and experienced in preparing funding applications, and the same organizations have tended to apply repeatedly for funds. Victims Fund applicants report that they would like to receive more information on the Victims Fund.
- One of the more successful features of the Victims Fund noted by staff and key informants is the flexibility in reallocating resources among the various components of the Fund. In addition, the financial assistance component has been very effective

in being able to respond quickly to urgent needs. Both recipients of financial assistance and applicants to other components of the Fund reported that, in general, they were satisfied with the administration of the Fund. Most also felt that they were informed about the purpose and process for funding.

- Staff noted that they work closely with organizations to improve their proposals or refine the projects. A review of funded projects revealed that they have developed partnerships, initiated joint ventures, and secured other sources of funding. While limited information on detailed funding arrangements is available (16 project files), these projects show that the leveraged funds are sizeable, with almost one dollar of leveraged funding arising for each dollar granted from the Victims Fund. In addition to funding, partners are reported to be involved in planning, delivery, and evaluation of projects. The majority of survey respondents generally agreed that the Victims Fund is an appropriate way to test new approaches to service delivery for victims of crime.
- Once funding is awarded, it can be difficult to obtain reports from projects. This directly affects the Policy Centre's ability to measure performance. While this challenge is not specific to the Victims Fund, key informants reported that it warrants attention.
- Although no formal project evaluations have yet been completed, an evaluation framework has been developed, and project evaluations will be underway in 2003. Once information from projects is received and results from the evaluations are collected, the impacts of the VCI and any lessons learned will be more easily identified.
- Those applicants who have been denied funding through the Victims Fund desire more feedback on the reasons for being denied funding.

3.5 Extent to which the VCI assists provinces/territories to implement *Criminal Code* amendments

- According to key informants, the Victims Fund has assisted in funding projects to enable the jurisdictions to better respond to the increasing demands for victim services; the recent amendments to the *Criminal Code* have resulted in significant increases in victim-related caseloads for the provinces and territories. Funded projects have allowed jurisdictions to participate in and conduct consultations and workshops examining victims' issues in greater detail. In addition, provinces and territories have been able to provide training sessions to employees and criminal

justice professionals, conduct awareness sessions, and develop print materials, thereby increasing outreach. However, jurisdictional needs are ongoing and are not completely met by available resources.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The PCVI has demonstrated a great deal of success to date in implementing the VCI and administering the Victims Fund. The PCVI has encouraged networking, enhanced a variety of partnerships, and facilitated consultations among stakeholders. It is also becoming known as a clearinghouse for information on victims' issues; the PCVI has become a valuable source of information for those involved in policy development or services for victims. As well, its research and publication materials have assisted the jurisdictions in the development of appropriate strategies to address victims' needs and concerns.

The PCVI has increased the recognition and awareness of victims' perspectives and concerns and has generally assisted them in becoming more prominent in the courts. Furthermore, the PCVI has contributed to the acknowledgment of provincial/territorial victim services as a component of the criminal justice system. According to key informants, the leadership within the PCVI and the dedication of the staff have contributed greatly to raising the profile of victims' perspectives and concerns in the criminal justice system.

4.1 Coordination and integration

Overall, the PCVI maintains positive and open relationships with key stakeholders, demonstrating a concerted effort toward the advancement of victims' issues within the criminal justice system. Key informants note, however, that many local-level service providers, and criminal justice professionals such as Crown, police and judges, have limited awareness and understanding of victims' issues, rendering it difficult for them to effectively respond to the needs and concerns of the victims that they serve.

It is recommended that:

The PCVI conduct outreach activities toward local-level service providers and criminal justice professionals so that the PCVI can engage a wider audience in victims issues.

Management Response

We agree with this recommendation and will pursue outreach activities to the extent possible.

Provinces have the primary responsibility for the administration of justice and the provision of services to victims of crime. The Policy Centre for Victim Issues has established positive and collaborative relationships with the provinces and territories based on mutual respect for the jurisdiction of the Provincial/Territorial and federal government. Efforts to make direct contact or outreach to local level service providers requires the support and assistance of Provincial and Territorial colleagues. We will raise this recommendation with Provincial/Territorial Directors of Victim Services for their input on how Policy Centre for Victim Issues can engage non-governmental organizations and local service providers while at the same time, respecting the provinces' jurisdiction (and existing policies re victim services).

Greater efforts will be made, in general, to raise the profile of the Policy Centre for Victim Issues and its mandate and to raise awareness of victim issues. This will be accomplished by the redesign of our Website (Internet), the development of an Intranet site, the development and launching of the Electronic Directory of Victim Services (as part of the Government-on-Line Initiative), the November 2003 Conference "Survivors - Learning From The Experience of Victims Of Crime" (tentative name), which will provide an opportunity for showcasing Federal-Provincial-Territorial programs and legislation for victims, non-governmental organization programs in addition to consultation and feedback (what is working well?). A newsletter will be developed as a Federal-Provincial-Territorial initiative to share information about new initiatives and emerging issues for victims across Canada. The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Survey of Victim Services, funded and sponsored by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues will also create an awareness of the scope and extent of victim services in Canada. The results of the survey (which will be published in 2004) will permit both levels of government to identify areas where services are lacking and will identify models of services and gaps in services (geographic and by type of service).

The establishment of a National Association of Non-Governmental Victim Services has been raised at consultations and the Victims Fund has and will continue to support the exploration of such an Association. An association would provide a point of contact or liaison between the Policy Centre for Victim Issues and local providers.

The initiatives/activities described above should trickle down to the local level and encourage service providers to tap the expertise of the Policy Centre for Victim Issues

(e.g., information on our Website, PLEI products, applications to the Victim Fund, consultation participation).

4.2 Support to and from provinces and territories

Consultations between the PCVI and the jurisdictions have assisted the provinces and territories with their implementation of new *Criminal Code* provisions. These consultations have contributed to relationships among jurisdictions and have resulted in enabling them to learn from each other's experiences. Key informants would like more consultations between the PCVI and the provinces and territories; however, several were concerned about the time involved and the cost of bringing stakeholders together from across the country.

It is recommended that:

The PCVI continue to develop positive relationships with jurisdictions and provinces through the FPTWG and consider alternative methods of interaction such as teleconferencing, e-mail or Internet virtual meetings to increase the contact among stakeholders and manage the cost of face-to-face meetings.

Management Response

We agree with this recommendation and will consider and test other methods to interact with the FPTWG.

Funding for the Policy Centre for Victim Issues includes funds to facilitate the work of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group and Directors of Victim Services. The Policy Centre for Victim Issues has provided the travel and accommodation costs (and meal allowances) to permit one representative from each province/territory to attend the Working Group meetings. Usually, the Group meets twice per year. In addition, the Policy Centre for Victim Issues covers the cost of the meeting facilities. The only costs incurred by the province/territory would be where they chose to send additional participants. (For example, Alberta has designated a Crown and the Victim Services Director and Ontario has designated a representative from the Victim Services Division and Crown Law Office (and in the past, sent a representative from both the Attorney General and Solicitor General Victim Services Division).

The Policy Centre for Victim Issues will continue to fund the travel costs of one participant from each jurisdiction and will continue to provide sufficient notice of the Working Group meetings. In addition, we will continue to make efforts to schedule meetings either before or after related conferences or other events to facilitate provincial

attendance at those events, which provide training and other information exchange opportunities.

Undoubtedly the provinces and territories make a significant “in kind” contribution to the Working Group giving their time and expertise. An effective network has been established among the Provincial/Territorial Directors of Victim Services and their colleagues.

Teleconferences have been held to address/discuss specific issues that can be dealt with in a short period of time. A group e-mail list is a primary vehicle for delivering information and operates in some circumstances as a chat room. The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group will be canvassed at the next meeting to determine other effective ways to foster the network and accomplish the Federal-Provincial-Territorial mandate.

The development of the newsletter will also foster Federal-Provincial-Territorial relationships.

4.3 Organizational Structure of the PCVI

The organizational configuration of the PCVI has facilitated an awareness of victims’ issues among DOJ staff from other branches. However, some of the existing service agreement and staffing arrangements have not been as effective as they could have been, and may detract from the overall effectiveness of the PCVI. One agreement that has worked particularly well is the one with Programs Branch. Other arrangements that may require adjustments are those with Communications and Research.

The PCVI is accountable for ensuring that all activities funded under the initiative work in an integrated fashion to support the achievement of the program’s objectives. However, existing arrangements have at times resulted in some service agreement activities not being carried out in a fully coordinated and integrated way. In part, this has arisen when service-agreement providers have been diverted to work on other government and departmental priorities, as well as the high degree of staff turnover experienced in service-provider organizations.

It is recommended that:

The PCVI discuss existing staffing arrangements with service providers such as Communications and Research with a view to enhancing the co-ordination of those services.

Management Response

We agree with the recommendation.

The PCVI will discuss arrangements with service providers with a view to enhancing the coordination of services.

Alternatives to the Service Agreement model are currently under discussion with the Director of Research.

With respect to Communications, there is no formal Service Agreement. The Communications Advisor (IS 5) was identified as one of the core positions at the time the Policy Centre for Victim Issues was established and positions were classified. The results of research and consultation consistently identify the need for information as the primary need of victims of crime.

The Communications Advisor has launched and implemented a range of communications initiatives and developed a communications strategy. However, unforeseen circumstances and priorities resulted in the identified Communications Advisor being re-deployed to the Communications Sector. As a result, several members from this branch have provided services to the Policy Centre for Victim Issues on an as needed basis.

The communications needs of the Policy Centre for Victim Issues are, at present, effectively met by the Communications Branch and a key contact has been established. Experience has indicated that a wide range of services are needed and that several communication advisors are relied on to meet the needs of the PCVI. Currently, the designated contact from the Communication Branch has the flexibility to secure services from others in the Branch on behalf of PCVI. The current arrangement ensures that PCVI's communications activities are conducted in accordance with the overall strategic direction of the Department and Government.

A formal service agreement has been in place with the Research and Statistics Division under which the Policy Centre for Victim Issues transfers resources for 1.5 research officers (salary and salary related O & M) and additional O & M resources (for contract research). Resources for Research are a significant and essential expenditure in the Policy Centre for Victim Issues budget. (O and M).

The success and continuation of the Policy Centre for Victim Issues depends on our ability to establish our expertise. The PCVI's greatest resource is its staff and their collective knowledge of victims issues. It is a continuing challenge to ensure that the

necessary expertise exists within the Policy Centre for Victim Issues; it takes time for expertise to develop, but it is a necessary long term investment. It is essential that every effort be made to encourage the expertise to develop despite the demands placed on a special initiative to staff positions and produce results in a short time period.

In order to develop this expertise in the area of research, a combination of skills is required; expertise on victim issues combined with expertise on research methodology plus an ability to identify and integrate related research initiatives. Furthermore, moving beyond the development of research reports to the analysis of research will contribute to further policy development and law reform. As a result, different alternatives to fulfilling the PCVI's research mandate will be examined so that links can be made from research to policy and law reform, with staff that have the necessary expertise and skills to make those links.

In summary, alternatives to the current arrangement will be considered in the context both the manner in which research services are provided to the Department by the Research and Statistics Division and the needs of the Policy Centre for Victim Issues. The goal is to build capacity in the Department to sustain an ongoing program of research on victim related issues.

4.4 Communications

The most effective methods for information sharing and communication with stakeholders are reported to be the PCVI web site, the FPTWG meetings, consultations, and the dissemination of reports. Overall, there is satisfaction with the format and content of communications materials. However, funding applicants, in particular and others involved with victims' issues desire more information on the VCI and the Victims Fund.

It is recommended that:

The PCVI continue its positive efforts at sharing information with stakeholders and consider innovative ways of increasing the visibility of the PCVI and VCI, especially with funding applicants, in particular NGOs, community organizations, and the Northern region.

Management Response

We agree with this recommendation.

Sharing information with victims and victim service providers and raising awareness of the Policy Centre for Victim Issues continues to be both a goal and a challenge. Research

is currently underway to determine best practices in providing information to victims of crime.

As part of its ongoing work with the Communications Branch, PCVI will be pursuing several activities aimed at increasing its visibility, including:

- Redesigning the Internet site with assistance from a consultant and a view to launch the new site in 2003-2004. The new site will include all available research reports, information on projects funded (and evaluations, once complete) and will continue to post information about the relevant law, services, programs and publications and will provide an increased number of links.
- Maintaining the VOC - VAC inquiry feature and enhancing the service provided by posting frequently asked questions on-line
- Launching the Electronic Directory of Victim Services (part of Government-on-Line), a project currently under development that will be tested in the spring and summer and launched in fall 2003.

Activities are also underway to increase the variety and availability of communications materials on the Policy Centre for Victim Issues. A kit folder containing new and existing information products, including a CD-ROM complete with Centre's current inventory of research reports, will soon be released and distributed.

The Programs Branch has published a Guide For Applicants that applies to all Grants and Contributions Funds. Information about the Victims Fund is provided both in the Guide, available in hard copy and on the Programs Branch Internet site, and on the Policy Centre for Victim Issues Internet site.

The revised Departmental Internet Site has deleted the Victims icon and link, limiting visibility for the Policy Centre for Victim Issues to a listing under and "Programs and Services". Users may not think that information about legislation, victim "rights" and other assistance would be found under "Programs and Service". The Communications Branch has advised that the Victims icon cannot be restored given current rules to curb the use of icons and maintain a "common look and feel" throughout the Web site.

4.5 Northern Victims Witness Assistants

The PCVI contributes very important support to northern Victim Witness Assistants. The Policy Centre provides them with opportunities to come together as a group and network,

and to express their views in a safe environment. It also assists VWAs by developing products and tools, such as the manual, translation, and development of PLEI. It would be beneficial to explore further how these activities will impact the VCI in achieving its objectives and whether more resources are needed in this area.

It is recommended that:

The PCVI explore further how its activities with respect to Victim Witness Assistants are meeting the objectives of the VCI and whether further research or funding assistance is needed for Victim Witness Assistants in the North.

Management Response

We agree with this recommendation and will pursue additional initiatives to ensure that the work of VWA in the Territories is supported by the PCVI and informed by existing research.

The Policy Centre for Victim Issues has hosted two meetings, to date, to bring together the Victim Witness Assistants in the three Territories, Regional Directors in the Territories and the Office of the Northern Region, with the Policy Centre for Victim Issues and other centres of policy responsibility in the Department. Future meetings are planned for June 2003 and 2004. These gatherings have provided an opportunity to discuss the role of the Victim Witness Assistants, provide and receive information about the scope of victim services, the expectations of the Crown for the Victim Witness Assistants and the expectations of victims. These gatherings, in addition to research recently completed and ongoing consultations with non-governmental organizations, highlight the need to significantly increase the number of Victim Witness Assistants in the Territories. The Policy Centre for Victim Issues will also continue to provide additional funds for the Victim Witness Assistants to attend seminars, training sessions in other provinces, and conferences to provide them with respite and networking and training opportunities. A manual/deskbook is being developed as a resource for the Victim Witness Assistant. A consultant is currently being sought to determine the need for and role of a Northern Victim Witness Assistant co-ordinator.

In order to document the need for more Victim Witness Assistants, a more formal evaluation or sub study will be undertaken to determine the workload of Victim Witness Assistants, the number of victims served and the additional, related demands on the Victim Witness Assistants. A typical formal evaluation is too onerous on respondents in the North and therefore, other alternatives will be considered. If funds are sought in 2005 for the renewal of the Victims Initiative, funds to fully support a co-ordinator for the federal Victim Witness Assistant and for a sufficient number of Victim Witness Assistants will be requested.

A method to evaluate the benefits to victims of the Victim Witness Assistants in the North and the benefits of the funding provided by the victims initiative for three additional Victim Witness Assistant positions in addition to other support will be identified and implemented in 2003-2004. A sub study is one option.

4.6 Project Evaluation

Project evaluation is similar to program evaluation but is conducted on a much smaller scale, at the project level. Project evaluation provides an indication of whether a program is on track and assists in identifying lessons learned. At the moment, no Victims Fund project-level evaluations have yet been conducted

It is recommended that:

The PCVI consider conducting sub-studies (i.e. for example with respect to Victim Witness Assistants) or project-level evaluations to assist in identifying lessons learned and gauging the impact of the VCI. This information could then feed into the summative evaluation of the program.

Management Response

We agree with the recommendation.

Project Evaluations were planned for 2002-2003, however the projects identified for evaluation were not yet ready. An evaluation of a project can only yield results if the project has been operational for at least one year and/or completed. The evaluations should be feasible in 2003-2004.

A sub study focusing on the benefits of funds provided to support Northern Victim Witness Assistants (in addition to the funds provided to establish 3 Victim Witness Assistants) which has included VOTE 5 (Victims Fund) (e.g., to attend conferences, NOVA) and VOTE 1 (O & M) will be pursued.

4.7 Management of the Victims Fund

Both recipients of financial assistance and applicants to other components of the Victims Fund reported that, in general, they were satisfied with the administration of the Fund. Most also felt that they were informed about the purpose and process for funding. At the same time, however, the survey showed that few applicants have a complete

understanding of the Victims Fund and the application process. Applicants who were denied funding also wanted more feedback on the reasons for being denied funding.

It is recommended that:

The PCVI develop tools and products to assist applicants during the application process to the Victim's Fund. The PCVI should also ensure that those applicants to the Victim's Fund who are unsuccessful in obtaining funding are provided with sufficient information on the reason for the denial so as to improve the quality of future proposals.

Management Response

We agree with the recommendation.

The mid-term evaluation highlighted that applicants for funding had a good understanding of the purpose and process for funding. A very few indicated they did not have a complete understanding. The terms and conditions of the Fund are posted on the Internet site. A Fact Sheet is available to provide basic information about the Fund. The Program Manager reviews proposals and seeks additional information from applicants to assist them to refine their proposal. It is a challenge to provide detailed reasons for denying funding without suggesting to applicants that if certain changes are made, funding will be guaranteed. The Program Manager will continue to provide as much information as possible to applicants and will canvass other possible sources of funds within the Department. The Programs Branch has developed a Guide For Applicants, which includes an overview of all Grants and Contributions Programs in the Department. The GCIMS Project will ensure greater sharing of information among Funds.

In addition, a summary of all projects funded has been prepared and will be posted on both the Programs Branch and the Policy Centre for Victim Issues Internet site. The summary will provide potential applicants with information about the type of projects eligible for funding and will provide information about the benefits of such projects.

The mid-mandate Report, prepared by the Policy Centre for Victim Issues will also be posted. This document provides a comprehensive description of our mandate and activities to date. Both reports should be available in both languages by March 2003.