
Aboriginal Women's Program: Evaluation findings and recommendations

Evaluation Services
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Table of Content

<i>Executive Summary</i>	1
1 Introduction	4
1.1 Purpose	4
1.2 Methodology	4
1.3 Limitations	5
2 Program profile	6
2.1 Evolution of the program	6
2.2 Funding provided by the program	8
3 Evaluation findings	11
3.1 Continuing relevance of the program	11
3.2 Success: meeting program’s expected outcomes	14
3.3 Influencing public policy and decision making	18
3.4 Cost-effectiveness:	30
4 Conclusions, Recommendations and Management Response	34
4.1 Relevance	34
4.2 Success/Performance	34
4.3 Cost-effectiveness	35
4.4 Recommendations and Management Response	36

Executive Summary

Introduction

The report addresses the three evaluation issues of relevance, success/impact and cost-effectiveness (design and delivery, alternatives). Multiple lines of evidence were used and include:

- review and analysis of administrative data, including a review of 2001-02 project files;
- review and analysis of key documents; and
- input from stakeholders gathered through individual interviews (n= 28) and a Dialogue Circle with Aboriginal women's organizations.

The main limitation of this evaluation comes from the nature of the information available. As Program performance was not monitored in an ongoing and systematic manner, performance information had to be reconstructed, on a somewhat fragile empirical basis.

Findings

Relevance: There is no doubt that Aboriginal women have specific needs rooted in socio-economic conditions within the Aboriginal communities and the broader society and that the Government of Canada needs to hear the voice of Aboriginal women and take account of their perspectives, knowledge and interests in its policy and decision-making processes. Aboriginal women need to be in a position to influence public policy and decision-making. Aboriginal women can also benefit from training and empowering activities to play a meaningful role within their own communities and contribute to their socio-economic and cultural development. In its policy documents, the federal government recognizes that Aboriginal women's organizations are integral to community capacity-building. It is also committed to gender equality, as articulated in the current federal Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE).

The general objectives of the Program were well aligned with the Department's strategic priorities. However, there were no expected outcomes defined for this Program. Therefore it is difficult to establish the extent to which it could contribute to the achievement of the Department's strategic outcomes.

Impact: The Program's operational funding contributed to the maintenance of national Aboriginal women organizations, but the extent to which these national Aboriginal women organizations are effectively representative has been raised as an issue. It was not possible to link operational support provided by AWP to any specific outcome. Key informants do not attribute any NAWO successes to AWP operational funding. Some of them have undergone significant change, from organizations totally dependent on AWP funding support, to large and sophisticated organizations able to access funding from a wide variety of sources. A review of the 2001-02 program files provides evidence supporting the idea that project funding has contributed to enabling individual women to assume a leadership role within their communities and contributed to their cultural and socio-economic well-being. However, this evidence is, at best, indirect, and does not equal an independent measurement of the impact of project funding.

Design and delivery: effectiveness of the AWP could be improved to some extent by reworking the Program's theory and assumptions. Expected outcomes, performance monitoring system and management accountability frameworks have to be developed and implemented. In addition, a portion of the targeted clientele seems to be excluded from benefiting from the Program.

Alternatives: neither *status quo* nor devolution to Aboriginal women's organizations is viable option for alternative delivery of the Program. The program should either be radically improved or relocated totally or partially in other federal institutions.

Recommendations and Management Response

It is recommended that:

I) The two components of the Program, i.e. operational and project funding for national organizations and project funding at the community level, be separate and redeveloped.

Management Response: Recommendation accepted.

The two components of the Aboriginal Women's Program (AWP) are currently being delivered separately. Project funding at the community level is delivered at the regional level and the program funding to national organizations is delivered at the national level. Separate AWP guidelines were developed in 2004 for national program funding and community project funding.

In the context of the program renewal, and as reflected in the Departmental Program Activity Architecture, the AWP has been separated into two components.

Implementation Schedule:

Separation of AWP: components complete

The AWP will be redeveloped in the context of the Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy. This will include examining both components of the Program in terms of their contribution to the overall program framework, as well as specific delivery and operational issues.

Implementation Schedule:

Redevelopment of AWP components: 2005-2006 as part of Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy

II) The Department choose between the following approaches towards Aboriginal Women's Program:

1. Redefinition of the Program's theory, expected outcomes, performance indicators, management frameworks– including consultations with other relevant federal institutions and Aboriginal women and their organizations in order to realistically enable it to reach clearly assigned objectives; or
2. Enter into discussions and/or negotiations with other federal institutions, namely INAC and/or SWC, in order to transfer either one or both components of the Program.

Management Response: Recommendation accepted.

The Department, through its Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy, intends to

renew the existing authorities for the AWP within the context of a renewed Aboriginal Peoples' Program framework. This will include the identification of expected outcomes and performance indicators.

Implementation Schedule:

Redevelopment of AWP components:

2005-2006 as part of Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy

As part of this exercise, the Department will re-examine, in consultation with other federal departments, the appropriate delivery mechanism to fulfill the objectives of the Aboriginal Women's Program.

Implementation Schedule:

Examination of appropriate delivery mechanism: 2005-2006 as part of Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy

III) Proper tools, resources (including appropriate management frameworks) be developed and relevant training be provided to officials responsible for managing and delivering the program. The following should be addressed in priority:

- Training in file processing and management for contributions;
- Training in the basics of results-based management; and
- Development of a realistic performance monitoring strategy.

Management Response: Recommendation accepted.

A Capacity Building Strategy has been developed to improve program delivery. To date, the AAB has revised program guidelines, contribution agreement templates, and proposal development checklist.

Implementation Schedule: Capacity building strategy completed April 2004.

Training (including on file processing, management of contributions, basics of results-based management) continues to be delivered to Aboriginal partners and organizations including Aboriginal women, as well as to PCH staff, to improve management and delivery.

Implementation Schedule: Tools continue to be developed and in 2005-2006

All training and tool development will be anchored to a results-based management framework for the Program.

Implementation Schedule: Training began February 2004 - to continue in 2005-06

1 Introduction

This report presents the findings of evaluation research on the Aboriginal Women's Program and recommendations for the management and delivery of this program.

Evaluation findings are based on two research studies commissioned by Corporate Review Branch, conducted between September 2003 and October 2004¹.

1.1 Purpose

This report provides evidence-based answers to three evaluation questions reflecting the Treasury Board Secretariat Evaluation Policy²:

- **Relevance:** Does the program continue to be consistent with departmental and government-wide priorities and does it realistically address an actual need?
- **Success:** Is the program 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)?

In writing this report, consideration has also been given to the questions to be addressed for the expenditure review:

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 Program.
- **Document Review:** A review of key documents examined including: Treasury Board Submission decisions and memoranda related to AWP since 1987; previous Evaluations and Audits; key documents, including The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and *Gathering Strength — the Federal Aboriginal Action Plan*, and the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey and the 2001 Census; *Strengthening the Relationship, Report on the Canada/Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable*.
- **Key Informant Interviews:** Twenty-eight key informant interviews with the following stakeholders identified by the Evaluation Advisory Group:
 - Representatives of the national Aboriginal women's organizations that received AWP operational support (n=3);

¹ *Aboriginal Women's Program Evaluation*; September 24, 2004, Whiteduck Resources Inc.; *File Review of Projects/Organizations, AWP/AROP*, Beals & Lalonde, June 2004.

² As it will be showed in the Program Profile Section, no Results-based Management Accountability Framework has been produced for this program. Therefore the presentation and analysis of the evaluation findings will follow very closely the model provided by the evaluation Policy.

- Representatives of three provincial/territorial affiliates (n=3);
 - Non-participants, i.e. organizations that had not received AWP project funding in the past five years. (Project funding n=2; operational support n=1).
 - PCH staff, including four interviews with National Head Quarters Aboriginal Program Directorate (APD) officials and eight interviews with regional APD officials (n=12);
 - Some other federal departments and agencies (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Status of Women Canada, Privy Council Office) (n=3) with programs for Aboriginal women and Email consultations with Status of Women Canada (SWC) regional staff (n=2); and,
 - Provincial/territorial officials in programs addressed towards Aboriginal women (North, Atlantic, Prairies) (n=3).
- Aboriginal Women's Organizations Dialogue Circle: A one-day Dialogue Circle with representatives of 14 AWP funding recipients across Canada participated.³
 - File Review: An examination of all funding files in 2001-2002.

1.3 Limitations

The main limitation of this evaluation comes from the nature of the information available. As Program performance was not monitored in an ongoing and systematic manner, performance information had to be reconstructed, on a somewhat fragile empirical basis, through either qualitative interviewing or file review.

It also has to be noted that the majority of individuals proposed as key informants by the program stated they were not sufficiently familiar with this Program to participate in the evaluation.

³ Fifteen projects for the Dialogue Circle were selected. Files for twelve of the projects were received and nine of the twelve files reviewed contained Project Reports.

2 Program profile

Usually, a program's profile is found within a program's strategic documentation. As this was not the case for AWP, 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 identified for this program.

2.1 Evolution of the program

The AWP began in 1972, when a Native Women's project funding stream was established under the Native Citizen's Directorate, Secretary of State, to provide \$150,000 annually in project funding to Aboriginal women's groups and associations off-reserve. In 1976, the Secretary of State established a separate Native Women's Program (NWP), influenced by the World Plan of Action for the 1975-1986 United Nations Decade for Women.

In 1979, the Native Women's Program was renewed for a five-year period and funds were increased to \$1.2 million. Under the terms of the 1979 renewal, the purpose of project funding was to enable Aboriginal women to address issues at the community level. It was based on the premise that Aboriginal women's interests lay more at this level than at the macro (political) level. Project funding was allocated across regions based on population figures⁴ and need. For the first time, the NWP also included an operational support component for national Aboriginal women's organizations.⁵ The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and Indian Rights for Women (IRIW)⁶ were the initial recipients. The purpose of this funding was to enable national Aboriginal women's organizations to remain separate from mainstream Aboriginal representative organizations. Operational funding was limited to national organizations.⁷ According to key informants, it was based on the following premises:

- Aboriginal women were a disadvantaged population that could not compete fairly and equally for other sources of funding;
- Aboriginal women were precluded from participating equally in mainstream Aboriginal representative organizations; and,
- Separate representative organizations would provide a way for Aboriginal women to acquire the skills and practical experience needed to advance their political/civic participation.

In 1984, the NWP was renewed for a three-year period and was renamed the Aboriginal Women's Program (AWP). Program funds were increased to approximately \$2 million. Operational support was extended to the national Inuit Women's Association (Pauktuutit).

⁴ The original source year for the population figures that were used to determine allocations is not known.

⁵ Over the years, this has also been referred to as core or sustaining funding. There is ongoing mixed usage of terms in AWP documentation and communications material. The AWP Guidelines for funding Proposals (May 2003) describes AWP as an "operational support" program. This term is used throughout this report.

⁶ In 1981/82, the Secretary of State discontinued operational funding for IRIW due to management and audit concerns.

⁷ In 1986, the Secretary of State reviewed this aspect and concluded that, due to fiscal restraint, the status quo should be maintained. Department of the Secretary of State. (1987). *Evaluation of the Aboriginal Women's Program*, p. 10.

A 1987 evaluation of the AWP concluded there was a lack of consensus over its rationale and relevance. Findings on the Program's impact and effectiveness were inconclusive due to the lack of indicators of success and substantiating evidence, the evaluation recommended that AWP be maintained. It identified skills development and the creation of opportunities for Aboriginal women's organizations to influence government policies as priority focus areas. Fourteen recommendations for improvement were made, including: the development and application of indicators of achievement; clarification and consistent application of Program funding criteria; the articulation of an explicit rationale for funding distribution; multi-year operational funding; and, changes to the Program's management and delivery, including the establishment of a Management Board with representation from Aboriginal women's organizations.⁸ There is no evidence that these recommendations were addressed.

Following the evaluation, the AWP was renewed on an ongoing basis, with an annual budget of \$2,249,500. At the time of renewal, AWP was providing operational support to two national women's organizations: NWAC and Pauktuutit, and project funding to the Indian and Inuit Nurses' Association,⁹ 22 provincial/territorial associations, and about 40 regional and local groups. In 1991, the AWP became a partner in the federal Family Violence Initiative (FVI).¹⁰ The objective of the AWP/FVI is to enable Aboriginal women's organizations to address family violence issues at the community level, with a focus on the extended family and the development of holistic and appropriate responses. The AWP continues to receive a \$215,000 annual allocation for this Initiative.

Between 1990 and 1991, the AWP provided start-up funding for the Métis National Council of Women (MNCW).¹¹ When MNCW incorporated in 1992, it became the third national Aboriginal women's organization to receive AWP operational support.

In 1993, with the reorganization of federal departments, the Department of Canadian Heritage, through its Native Citizen's Directorate, assumed responsibility for administering the AWP. In 1998, in response to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP),¹² the federal government established "Gathering Strength — the Federal Aboriginal Action Plan."¹³ Under this plan, a Self-Government Initiative (SGI) component was added to AWP. The objective of the AWP/SGI was to enable Aboriginal women's organizations to participate in self-government initiatives. From 1998/99 to 2002/03, the AWP received a \$500,000 annual allocation for this initiative.

The environment in which the AWP operates has evolved significantly since the Program's inception. Once the only funder for projects or organizations dealing with Aboriginal women's issues, this program is now one piece within a complex array of funding sources and programs addressing those issues. This evolution occurred without any attempt of the Program at renewing its policy objectives and rationale.

⁸ Department of the Secretary of State. (1987). *Evaluation of the Aboriginal Women's Program*, pp 195-202.

⁹ Now known as the Aboriginal Nurses Association.

¹⁰ Established in 1988.

¹¹ It is not known if this funding was from operational support or project funding streams.

¹² The Commission recommended that the Government of Canada provide funding to the national organizations representing Aboriginal women to support their capacity to conduct research and participate in all stages of the self-government process.

¹³ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Intergovernmental Relations Directorate, Policy and Strategic Direction. "A Discussion Paper on Issues Affecting National and Provincial/Territorial Aboriginal Organizations Funded through Indian and Northern Affairs Canada." Draft, August 21, 2003.

2.2 Funding provided by the program

The AWP has three funding streams: *operational support*, *Self-Government Initiatives*, and *project funding*¹⁴. An overview of funding since 1998/99 provides a sense of the program's scope.

• Table 1: AWP Budget Overview, 1998/99-2002/03 (\$)

Year	Actual Budget Allocation (\$)
1998/99	2,245,566
1999/2000	2,245,566
2000/01	1,747,160
2001/02	2,126,453
2002/03	2,245,566

In 2000/01, the AWP base budget of \$2,249,500 was reduced by 22 percent (to \$1,747,160). In 2001/02, the AWP funding was increased to \$2,126,453. Program documentation does not provide breakdowns by funding stream.

Between 1994/95 and 1997/98, the AWP budget allocation was reduced by 29.3%, a reduction comparable to those for funding programs delivered during this period, leaving the overall AWP budget at \$1,530,566 (which included the \$215,000 annual allocation for the FVI). Since the addition of SGI funding in 1998/99, the budget has remained constant, at \$2.2 million, (with the exception of the 2000/01 fiscal year). However, \$715,000 of this budget is allocated to the two special initiatives: FVI and SGI.

2.2.1 Operational Support

Following the receipt and acceptance of an annual funding application, operational support is provided and has been limited to the three national autonomous Aboriginal women's organizations including, the Native Women's Association of Canada (since 1974); Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association (since 1984); and the Métis National Council of Women (1992–2002/03)¹⁵. The AWP does not have any clearly articulated criteria for determining *national representativeness* for operational Support funding purposes¹⁶ but describes Aboriginal women's organizations whose "constituents comprise a majority of that segment of the Aboriginal population they represent and whose activities are in keeping with the objectives of the AWP."

The 2003 Program Guidelines name two qualifying organizations — NWAC and Pauktuutit — and make provision for a national Métis women's association.

The eligible operational support expenses have not changed since 1987 and include:

- resources for a physical office space;
- salaries and benefits of key staff;

¹⁴ A separate evaluation of the Family Violence Initiative, administered through the AWP was conducted separately. http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/em-cr/eval/2002/2002_21/tm_e.cfm

¹⁵ The MNCW did not receive funding for the 2003/04 fiscal year.

¹⁶ Source: Document Review, confirmed with national PCH staff. The Memoranda of Agreement between the Minister and the funding recipients includes a standard clause that states that the Minister enters into the agreement on the "assumption that the recipient represents the majority of Aboriginal women in Canada."

- office supplies and administration;
- travel, meeting and conference costs;
- professional fees; and
- internal newsletters.

Funding for capital expenditures is limited to the purchase of replacement office equipment. According to PCH NHQ staff, operational support is not intended to fully cover the organization's operational expenses. For example, operational support may cover only a portion of the salaries and benefits of key staff, or a portion of the communications, meetings and travel costs which an organization may incur.¹⁷

2.2.2 Project Funding

Project funding, in the form of grants or contributions, is available to autonomous Aboriginal women's organizations that are national, regional, provincial/territorial, or community-wide in scope. Project funding is available to non-profit Aboriginal women's groups incorporated under federal or provincial law. Only organizations that are independently operated by and for Aboriginal women are eligible. There is a lack of clarity over whether Aboriginal women's groups on reserve are eligible. In practice, on-reserve and off-reserve groups have been project funding recipients. Aboriginal women's groups on and off reserve are explicitly eligible for SGI funding.

Project activities must relate to and support the objectives of the AWP. There is also provision for groups to undertake projects focused on other issues of concern to them.¹⁸ Projects must be initiated, managed and led by Aboriginal women. AWP will consider funding projects proposed by new or emerging groups and committees established for specific projects, providing they demonstrate community support (e.g. through letters of support).

At the time of review, AWP did not accept proposals asking for 100 percent funding support. To be eligible for AWP project funding, applicants must demonstrate access to resources (e.g. financial assistance, services, equipment, facilities) from other sources, such as other levels of government, the community, private and volunteer sectors.

Since 1998, SGI project funding has also been available to Aboriginal women's organizations to undertake activities in support of the SGI objectives, under the same general terms as project funding.

2.2.3 Self-Government Initiative (SGI) Funding

Since 1998, SGI funding has been available to national organizations that qualify for AWP operational support. Between 1998/99 and 2002/03, each qualifying organization received \$40,000 annually to carry out activities in support of the SGI objectives. In addition, MNCW received an additional \$80,432 under the SCI since 1998-1999. SGI funding is a specific element identified in each organization's Contribution Agreement with the

¹⁷ As noted previously, the distribution of the operational support budget among the three organizations was initially based on population figures, however, the distribution by population formula has not been updated for many years.

¹⁸ The Program Guidelines do not provide further detail on what types of projects might be funded through this provision.

Department of Canadian Heritage. Overall, SGI is expected to enable Aboriginal women's organizations to research, develop and communicate their positions on self-government; develop networks; and participate and partner with other key stakeholders in self-government discussions. The expected impacts of SGI funding to national Aboriginal women's organizations have not been clearly defined in the Program documentation.

Linkages between the AWP objectives, activities, outputs and expected impacts have not been clearly defined in Program documentation. This observation was made in the Corporate Review Branch 2002 audit of the AWP and 2003 Follow Up Audit¹⁹. Terms of reference to develop a Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework were developed in FY 2000/01. However, the work was not completed.

¹⁹ See Department of Canadian Heritage, Corporate Review Branch. (2002). *Report on Due Diligence in Processing of Grants and Contributions in the Aboriginal Women's Program* and Department of Canadian Heritage, Corporate Review Branch. (2003). *Report on the Follow-up Audit of the Aboriginal Women's Program*.

3 Evaluation findings

Evaluation findings are presented in relation with the three main evaluation issues: relevance, success and cost-effectiveness.

3.1 Continuing relevance of the program

In accordance with TBS evaluation policy requirement, the continued relevance of the program is to be assessed against its capacity to address Aboriginal Women's needs and provide an appropriate vehicle for the government and the Department to pursue their objectives and priorities regarding Aboriginal women.

3.1.1 Aboriginal Women needs

The Program has been designed and operated under the following assumptions:

- Aboriginal women were a disadvantaged population that could not compete fairly and equally for other sources of funding;
- Aboriginal women were precluded from participating equally in mainstream Aboriginal representative organizations; and,
- Separate representative organizations would provide a way for Aboriginal women to acquire the skills and practical experience needed to advance their political/civic participation.

3.1.1.1 Socio-economic condition

There is evidence from the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) that Aboriginal women continue to be a disadvantaged population in terms of socio-economic condition. For example, while their educational levels are improving, Aboriginal women lag behind other Canadians and Aboriginal men on key participation indicators such as employment and income earnings.

3.1.1.2 Representation

In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples concluded that:

"Aboriginal women continue to feel the need for separate organizations, circles, networks and other forums in which to pursue issues of particular concern to them and to fulfil their aspirations. Governments and other organizations should recognize, respect and include them in all areas of decision making."²⁰

Evaluation research reports that during the period under review, national Aboriginal representative organizations took some measures to mainstream gender issues. For example, in 1999, the Métis National Council established a Women's Secretariat, which

²⁰ *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. (1996). "The Need for Fairness and Accountability", Volume 4: Perspectives and Realities, Chapter 2: Women's Perspectives, Section 7. http://www.aicn-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sq/sj8_e.html.

consists of one representative from each of the Governing Members. A national spokesperson, elected at an annual meeting of the MWS from among the women's representatives designated by the Governing Members, serves as the Minister for Women's Issues within the Métis Nation Cabinet. The MWS is invited to participate in all MNC Board of Governors meetings in an ex-officio capacity. In 2001, the Assembly of First Nations recognized and included First Nations women and youth in its Charter, and called for the Assembly to establish a Council of Women²¹, and resolution (10/9) called for the establishment of a Gender Equality Secretariat. Pauktuutit participates in Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) Board meetings and working groups, and an alliance between the two organizations is being explored. A quick look at the list of participants who attended the April 19th, 2004 Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable reveals that some women participated as part of the mainstream Aboriginal delegations.

However, individuals interviewed for the evaluation, including program and Aboriginal organization representatives, reiterated the need for separate representative organizations. There continues to be a perception that Aboriginal women are not adequately represented or equitably heard within Aboriginal governance structures. It was not possible to assess the extent to which this perception is shared within the program's targeted population.

It is worth noting that Native Women's Association of Canada was invited to and did participate in the April 19th, 2004 Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable. Moreover, Aboriginal women's associations constituted one of the six break-out groups in the first session. Report from that event makes a case for separate representation:

The group ... discussed priority areas for Aboriginal women such as poverty and its link to capacity building, language and culture, training and family violence. The group discussed how women often feel marginalized from cross-cutting issues that have important implications for women. For instance, in the case of housing, women are the heads of households in a large number of families, in education, opportunities for women are fewer than men and in health, women have unique challenges accessing services particularly in remote areas. Yet, despite their direct effect, Aboriginal women are often left out of the decision-making processes in these policy areas.²²

The Report also suggests that there was, among other things, a need to address capacity resources for NWAC and its regional representatives; develop gender specific results and reporting; and secure mechanisms for leadership development for Aboriginal women.

3.1.2 Government-wide priorities

To assess the relevance of the program in regard to government priorities and policies, evaluators reviewed Speeches from the Throne and policy documents, including *Gathering Strength — Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*²³, which was developed in response to the RCAP report.

In *Gathering Strength*, the federal government states that:

²¹ Resolution 16/2001, May 8-10, 2001. Assembly of First Nations.

²² Strengthening the Relationship, Report on the Canada – Aboriginal Peoples Round Table, April 19th, 2004, Ottawa, pp. 15, <http://www.pm.gc.ca/grfx/MASTER.ENG.pdf>.

²³ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: *Gathering Strength — Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*.

Capacity development means ensuring that Aboriginal women are involved in the consultations and decision-making surrounding self-government initiatives. The federal government recognizes that Aboriginal women have traditionally played a significant role in the history of Aboriginal people and will strengthen their participation in self-government processes. This is particularly relevant for women at the community level. Consistent with the approach recommended by the Royal Commission, the federal government will consider additional funding for this purpose.²⁴

In that document, the federal government acknowledges the necessity to consider perspectives of Aboriginal women in discussions regarding Aboriginal Self-Governance. It is noteworthy that the authors of the document insisted that participation in self-government process and historical role Aboriginal women is particularly relevant at the community level.

Although the 2001 and 2002 Throne Speeches do not specifically identify Aboriginal women, the *2001 Speech from the Throne* mentions that strengthening relationships with Aboriginal peoples is a government priority, and the *2002 Speech from the Throne* made a commitment to work in partnership with Aboriginal peoples and build community capacity for economic and social development. Given its mandate, it could reasonably be believed that the AWP is aligned with the priorities of the government.

The federal government is also committed to gender equality, as articulated in the current federal Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE). *Status of Women Canada* is responsible for implementation of AGE, which builds on the 1995 Federal Plan for Gender Equality and ongoing commitment to gender-based analysis (GBA). In addition, in September 2003, the federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) forum of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women established a Committee on Aboriginal Women with the overall goal of improving the quality of life for Aboriginal women.

3.1.3 Department strategic objectives

During the period of reference, the AWP was linked to PCH Strategic Priorities and was aligned primarily with the following two strategic objectives:

- **Cultural Participation and Engagement:** This strategic objective calls for “Fostering access to and participation in Canada’s cultural life.” AWP is intended to support projects that incorporate cultural expression, participation and engagement in many aspects of AWO work. This is reflected in various ways, through projects that reclaim and raise awareness of cultural teachings and traditions as well as projects that integrate cultural teachings and traditions into conferences and gatherings.
- **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.” AWP is intended to facilitate the participation of Aboriginal women in public affairs and decision making by supporting a national presence and, most specifically through the SGI, which is intended to fund projects that contribute to leadership development and engagement.

Recently, the department reviewed its priorities and defined two strategic outcomes:

²⁴ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: *Gathering Strength — Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan*, “Aboriginal Women and Self-Government,” http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/gs/chg_e.html.

- 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 render the objectives of the Program less relevant.

3.2 Success: meeting program's expected outcomes

Expected outcomes, planned results, performance indicators and performance monitoring strategy were not established for this program. Therefore, the only way to address the success issue is to take each of the program's objectives and search for evidence of program's accomplishments.

Program objectives are:

To provide financial and technical support to enable Aboriginal women's group to:

- Maintain representative national organizational structures
- Influence public policy and decision making related to their concerns and aspirations at all levels of Aboriginal and Canadian government
- Maintain cultural distinctiveness and preserve identity
- Enhance/develop leadership capabilities and skills so they can play a central role in their own nations as well as participate effectively in Canadian society
- Undertake projects to improve socio-economic conditions of communities.

3.2.1 Methodological consideration

Performance monitoring and attribution of outcomes achievement is complicated by the fact that these program objectives are written in a very indirect way: "to enable" outside organizations (i.e. Aboriginal women's groups) to reach a set of ambitious objectives.

The wording of the objectives suggests that Aboriginal women's organizations must demonstrate that the operational or project funding they receive enable them to reach the Program's expected outcomes. However, it would be rather complex and difficult to prove or demonstrate that relatively small projects effectively bear results affecting those wide objectives. It is unrealistic to expect that funding recipients would have the resources and technical expertise to report against such broad objectives.

A more appropriate and realistic approach was to undertake an analytical review of activities that has been achieved through either operational or project funding and determine the likelihood that such activities would have contributed to achievement of program objectives. For example:

- In the case of operational funding, a review of the activities carried out with PCH funding could establish the extent to which the Department has contributed to whatever impact the organization has had regarding the objectives.
- In the case of projects funding the development of training material or organization of a training workshop, evaluators could examine the training material or plans to determine if participants working with such materials would gain the desired awareness/knowledge.

In this context, attribution analysis could be performed assuming that there is a logical link between performed activities and their expected outcomes. It is not unrealistic to expect that national representative organizations would be able to provide sufficient information that we can link funding received to particular activities. In this context, a blunt and unsophisticated indicator of the Department's contribution to the achievement of the results could be found in the percentage of the total operational funding or project budget that was provided by AWP, although it is obvious that a 100% could not be interpreted as a total responsibility for success or failure. Evaluators have to acknowledge also what all AWO key informants and Dialogue Circle Participants have said: that the strong commitment and volunteerism of Aboriginal women who are active at national, provincial/territorial, and community levels is the main driver of success.

This kind of assessment, to the extent that it relies on undisputable evidence, could be deemed to be more accurate than sophisticated outcome analysis based on complex logic models and unreliable information.

This is what the AWP evaluation attempted.

3.2.2 Maintaining representative national organizational structures

From the face of it, it is obvious that Aboriginal women organizations have succeeded in maintaining national organizations. This is demonstrated by the longevity of the national organizations, their capacity to access additional funding from diverse sources and their visibility²⁵. On this latter point, their participation in the April 19th 2004, Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable is proof enough of their success as representative of Aboriginal women.

What remains to be assessed is the credit that can be attributed to the AWP operational and project funding and the extent to which those organisations are representative.

3.2.2.1 Contribution of operational support

AWP operational support over the period under review covered only a portion of the organizations' operational expenses. It has been established in the Program Profile that operational support is not intended to fully cover the organization's operational expenses. According to NAWO key informants, the estimated extent of coverage of organizations' budgets for this period varies from 20 to 80 percent. Other sources of revenue (primarily federal) supplement core operational expenses. The only available information pertains to the proportion of the operational funding over the total revenue (Table 2)

²⁵ Although the Program no longer funds the MNCW.

• Table 2: An Overview of operational support to National Aboriginal Women's

Organization	Operational Support	Total Revenue ²⁶	Operational Support (as % of total income)
NWAC	311,531	3,055,318	10.2
Pauktuutit	226,900	1,647,503	13.8
MNCW	200,000	538,523	37.14

AWP documentation does not logically link the provision of operational support to any anticipated activities or outputs. Attribution, even at this very basic level, is problematic because it was difficult to extract information about each organization's total budget from the files making it difficult to link activity and outcomes to funds being leveraged to achieve results.

Given the lack of sufficient financial information in the files to conduct that analysis, evaluators had to rely on qualitative information. The NAWO key informants reported that operational support enables their organizations to have a physical presence in Ottawa and to offset some basic administrative and operational costs associated with that presence. AWP operational support was said to primarily contribute to the daily administrative operations of the organization (including the preparation of financial statements) and to governance, including Board meetings and Annual General Assemblies that provide key opportunities to discuss and determine the organization's policies and directions. Key informants were of the opinion that a national presence enables them to have a launch point for advocacy and other activity but that the substantive activities and related outputs (such as policy positions, projects, programs) are attributable to *other* sources of funding.

This is not to say that operational support is not seen to be useful. Key informants expressed concern that, if AWP operational support were to disappear, the national, independent "voice" of Aboriginal women would be weakened or even silenced. Key informants found it difficult to imagine that national Aboriginal women's organizations could sustain their actual level of operation without operational support from the AWP, as the current infrastructure is already fragile. However, with AWP providing between 10% and 34 % of revenue which varies greatly between total amounts (see table 2 above), the impact of its disappearance would differ significantly between organizations.

3.2.2.2 Impact of the national project funding

Of the five national projects funded over the last five years, two were related to the said objective.

- The Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada received \$10,000 to write, translate and disseminate a final Annual Conference Report. The expected result reported on the Recommendation for Approval Form (RAF) was to develop and deliver a tool that would aid in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal nurses in Aboriginal communities and urban centres with large Aboriginal populations. However, file analysis revealed that the conference report that was produce was not about teaching recruitment and retention, but instead is titled: "Technology in Aboriginal Communities". It appears that recruitment and retention of nurses was only 1 of 8 discrete objectives for the conference. It is fair to say that this project contributed to

²⁶ This figure includes the \$40,000 SGI funding that each organization received from AWP as well as any other PCH funding.

the overall objective of maintaining national representative Aboriginal women organizations. However, this impact can be deemed to be marginal considering that the AWP contribution amounts not even to a tenth of the overall initial budget for the conference.

- The Metis Women of Saskatchewan, Inc. received \$50,750 for a project titled “Organizational Development Workshops” to hold five regional meetings (BC, AB, SK, MA and ON) involving group discussions, plenary and focus groups. However, lack of documentation and clarity in the reporting prevents any conclusions regarding likelihood of success of the project.

3.2.2.3 Representation

The AWP does not have any clearly articulated criteria for determining *national representativeness* for operational support funding purposes²⁷ but describes Aboriginal women’s organizations whose “constituents comprise a majority of that segment of the Aboriginal population they represent and whose activities are in keeping with the objectives of the AWP.” The Contribution Agreement between the Minister and the funding recipients includes a standard clause that states that the Minister enters into the agreement on the “assumption that the recipient represents the majority of Aboriginal women in Canada.”

Participants to the national Dialogue Circle voiced concerns about the Program’s capacity to ensure national representation without also supporting provincial/territorial and local Aboriginal women’s organizations. They made it clear that there could be *no national voices without local organizations: National organizations need to be accountable to the local level. To ensure that this happens, some infrastructure and stable funding must be in place provincially, territorially and locally.*

AWP does not provide such funding. PCH NHQ, other federal key informants and NAWO key informants all said that national Aboriginal women’s organizations are not connected in meaningful ways to local communities because there is no support for representation at the local level. NAWO key informants were particularly concerned that they do not have the capacity to achieve their mandates and to effectively communicate with, and represent their membership. One organization stated that it is operating with a diminished governance structure, as a result of having to reduce its AGM delegates from 35 to 19, due to budget constraints. NAWO key informants also reported that they had to pursue project funding to survive. Participants in the Dialogue Circle specifically expressed concern over the focus on project funding at the local level while operational support is not granted at the provincial/territorial level²⁸.

The lack of operational support at the local level hampers the capacity of national organizations to effectively represent the Aboriginal women, even at the national level. Although national organizations can use operational funding to establish some policy positions (e.g. resolutions at board meetings), they need to access other sources of funding to actively advance those positions. In that sense, it might be arguable that they do not have full control over their own agenda, and therefore do not represent fully their constituency.

²⁷ Source: Document Review, confirmed with national PCH staff.

²⁸ In 1986, the Secretary of State reviewed this aspect and concluded that, due to fiscal restraint, the status quo should be maintained. Department of the Secretary of State. (1987). *Evaluation of the Aboriginal Women’s Program*, p. 10.

3.3 Influencing public policy and decision making

This objective is pursued through operational support and project funding.

3.3.1.1 Operational support

In line with the methodological consideration expressed above, an empirical impact assessment of operational support for influencing public policy and decision-making rests on two types of information. First, it is necessary to be able to identify what part PCH contributed to the operational support. It is not possible to extract those data from the files. Second, and more important, it is necessary to be able to review or even reconstruct some kind of record of the organizations activities aiming to influence policy and decision-making. This was not possible either. In these circumstances, qualitative information is the only option.

Key informants strongly believed that operational support alone does not provide resources needed for organizations to meaningfully participate in public policy and decision making (e.g. to research and develop policy positions). This participation has to be supported through project funding.

3.3.1.2 Project funding

The file review shows that ten projects were assessed by officials (as per the RAFS) as contributing to the objective of influencing policy and decision-making. The file review suggests that success can only be attributed to the project funding in a very indirect manner. Most of these activities were to be held within women's organizations and very few implied, even in a longer term, any contact with outside decision makers and policy process. Therefore the likelihood that they would influence public policy or decision-making is rather remote.

3.3.2 Maintaining cultural distinctiveness and preserve identity

This objective is pursued both through operational funding for national organizations and project funding at the local level.

3.3.2.1 Operational funding

No performance data was collected regarding the impact of either the program or the associations in maintaining cultural distinctiveness and identity. One can assume that the continued existence of these organizations contribute to the maintenance of cultural distinctiveness. But, as noted above, it has been impossible to evaluate the impact that AWP is having in the maintaining of those organizations.

3.3.2.2 Project funding

Of the eight projects that were funded in 2001-2002 with the objective of contributing to maintaining cultural distinctiveness, five seem to have been successful in achieving their expected immediate outcomes, that is to say that they carried out most of their planned activities. Of these projects, an outstanding case study of intellectual property rights was produced. Work products in the file included an impressive manual in three languages (English, and two native languages) and briefs and reports that would be useful to other groups looking to safeguard cultural/intellectual properties in the future.

3.3.3 Enhance/develop leadership capabilities and skills

Of the 11 projects funded with the objective of contributing to the development of leadership capabilities, seven exhibits the signs to have been successful in reaching their immediate outcomes that is to say that they carried out most of their planned activities.

3.3.4 Improve socio-economic conditions of communities.”

Of the seven projects funded with the objective of improving socio-economic conditions of aboriginal women and their communities, 3 seem to have achieved immediate objectives.

• Table 3 : Summary of 2001-2002 File Review

Organization and project title	Amount approved & (% of project budget)	Objectives	Reported results	Likelihood of project having contributed to the reach of program's objective
Mother of Red Nations (MORN) Women's Council of Manitoba	\$32 000 (33%)	2,3, 4	<p>Met with 215 women from 23 communities around Manitoba to inform them of initiatives MORN is undertaking; to seek their vision of political representation; to establish networks; to identify critical issues impacting their communities; these people were from north and south, rural and urban, on and off reserve, elders and youth</p> <p>Established a head office with equipment and furnishings</p> <p>Submitted a business plan to Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Manitoba) to seek core funding</p> <p>Developed advertising for the four regional meetings</p> <p>Held 4 one-day meetings with total of 48 Aboriginal women present (not including council members or staff)</p> <p>Held 1 mini regional consultation with 11 women present</p> <p>Documented suggested revisions to bylaws and other founding documents</p> <p>Developed comprehensive inventory of how a provincial Aboriginal women's organization can support and assist Aboriginal women in various communities</p> <p>Informed all contacts about upcoming Founding General Assembly</p> <p>Assisted in developing leadership among young women</p> <p>Hired executive director and other staff</p> <p>Developed and implemented a communications strategy</p> <p>Examined relationships with sister organizations</p> <p>Undertook regional membership drives</p> <p>Partnered in developing and conducting workshops on Aboriginal women's leadership and self-government issues</p>	Most likely

Organization and project title	Amount approved & (% of project budget)	Objectives	Reported results	Likelihood of project having contributed to the reach of program's objective
			<p>Compiled provincial membership list of 215 women</p> <p>Held Founding General Assembly</p> <p>Formally established MORN Council and regional representatives</p> <p>Firmly established MORN as the provincial Aboriginal women's organization</p>	
Committee for the Career Advancement of Aboriginal Women: 2002 Aboriginal Women's Gathering	\$20 000 (75%)	2, 4	<p>Planned, delivered and followed up on a 2-day conference for 50+ Aboriginal women of all ages (change from original focus on young women), on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enhancing skills in areas where there is not enough information balancing work, family, community and individual needs community partnership building <p>As a result</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 new members on CCAAW Steering Committee planning methods for activities improved internally with increased experience and new expertise coming on board enhanced involvement of volunteers as new members became involved increased sense of ownership by young women involved in planning and working for the conference networking opportunities between participants and presenters, several of whom were government officials. 	A CAC audit concluded that conference was a success. .
Mawiyab'n Planning Committee, Maliseet Nation at Tobique N.B.	\$3 500 (46%)		<p>Objectives were to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased level of knowledge and participation of Aboriginal women in key issues affecting their communities -Establishment of a support network for Aboriginal women in positions of leadership 	Likely.

Organization and project title	Amount approved & (% of project budget)	Objectives	Reported results	Likelihood of project having contributed to the reach of program's objective
			<p>-Written report summarizing the results of the gathering</p> <p>-Proposed plan of action for the future</p> <p>Final Activity Report states:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Women committed to a support network</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">More and better information on critical issues went back with women to their communities</p>	
Newfoundland Native Women's Association: The Developing Role of Women Provincial Symposium	\$15 349 (74%)	3,	<p>Report received 27 Sep 2002 indicates:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">issues identified for further action, after much discussion</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">guidance and assistance for genealogical research received</p> <p>It appears that the gathering was a good opportunity for women to talk about their issues and learn about productive genealogical research</p>	<p>Likely.</p> <p>Project Officer records concern for if and how the NNWA stays connected with some women's groups in the province</p>
Nova Scotia Native Women's Association Mi'kmaq Women today II.	\$39 066 (73%)	2,5	Workshops were held in a range of communities, participants were educated on topics proposed.	<p>Not likely.</p> <p>Lack of documentation.</p>
Equay-Wuk Women's Group: Nishnawbe Women and Self-Government 2001	\$35 000 (50%)	2,4,5	<p>7 workshops (2 more than planned) held with a total of 104 participants</p> <p>Working Group organized</p> <p>Training manual revised</p> <p>3 women now represent women of NAN regularly at the Chiefs' meetings</p> <p>Greater publicity about the project</p> <p>Increased interest in the Equay-Wuk and this project</p> <p>Increased representation of women on other NAN committees</p> <p>Networking within NAN and with other women's groups in Canada</p> <p>More women participating in First Nations governance at the community level</p> <p>Increased understanding of self-governance</p> <p>Increased networking with women's and other</p>	<p>Most likely</p> <p>Final report, Nov 02, provides extensive information on workshops; participants' responses to/feedback on the workshops; the revised training manual; results of women surveyed because they would be unable to attend the workshops but Equay-Wuk Women's Group really wanted to hear about their concerns and ideas, and recommendations for the future; very impressive and complete final report</p> <p>The objectives have definitely been achieved.</p>

Organization and project title	Amount approved & (% of project budget)	Objectives	Reported results	Likelihood of project having contributed to the reach of program's objective
			organizations Strengthened relationship between Equay-Wuk and Nishnawbe Aski Nation	
Fort William Ojibway Nation Anishnabequek: Oshke Enabowin – A new Look	\$60 000 (98%)	2,3,4	<p>Management and Steering Committees established</p> <p>Culturally appropriate training tools developed and used</p> <p>Four 2-day workshops held – focussing on organizational development and capacity building</p> <p>FWONA executive members mentored one of one from qualified Aboriginal personnel, including treasurer and secretary functions</p> <p>23 participants in the 4 workshops developed clear understanding of organization's roles and responsibilities, created mission and vision statements, identified key priorities, outlined an annual work plan, created personnel policies and procedures, developed financial management processes and policies, learned about books and records keeping, addressed performance measurement</p> <p>Bylaws developed, annual general meetings held for both locals</p> <p>Locals incorporated</p> <p>Resource Guidebook developed</p> <p>Involved 5 Aboriginal community organizations</p> <p>Other Aboriginal organizations will receive the resources as they request them</p>	<p>Most Likely</p> <p>Program officer believes that this project also added to the reach of the Program, in that the Material that was developed is continuing to be used by Aboriginal women's groups throughout Ontario.</p>
Red River Michif Women's Council Inc.: Capacity Building – Metis Women in the 21 st century	\$36 000 (100% / in-kind contribution from Metis National Council of Women: \$10,000)	4	<p>From the final report:</p> <p>-“In addition to networking with Metis women from across Manitoba, our organizational structure was strengthened as the Board gained invaluable experience working together to meet the objectives.”</p> <p>-organizational infrastructure was created (functional office and systems, operating policy/procedures)</p> <p>-database of 75 potential members and partners, and potential funders</p>	<p>Somewhat Likely</p> <p>The objective of the project was to build capacity in order to broaden the membership base, and organization development to solidify the structure of the organization. The evaluation of the project by program officer indicates that project was successful, well-managed and reports were well prepared.</p>

Organization and project title	Amount approved & (% of project budget)	Objectives	Reported results	Likelihood of project having contributed to the reach of program's objective
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -communications capacity established (email voice mail, fax, toll-free phone number - women participated fully in workshop -“A list of priority issues was created along with a plan for the next steps, namely to hold a Leadership Training/Board Development Workshop in the near future.” -Priorities included Health (Diabetes, HIV/Aids, Healthy Children, Cancer, etc.), employment/training and education (leadership development and facilitator workshops), and social issues relating to poverty, seniors services, housing and human rights. -a list of potential partners was created -“The vision statement was reviewed and changes were recommended as well as guidelines towards membership criteria. -24 women attended the workshop – 15 delegates (from all over Manitoba), 6 board members, 2 guests and 1 staff -evaluation forms filled out by workshop participants were positive 	
<p>Canadian Indigenous Women's Resource Institute: Connecting Aboriginal Women with the Community through Traditional Native Teachings</p>	<p>\$15,647 (22%)</p>	<p>2,3,4</p>	<p>From proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide workshops on traditional Aboriginal healing, parenting, and grieving and holistic seminars -Celebrate Native Awareness Week, decade of the Indigenous peoples and National Aboriginal awareness Day -Hold a series of healing and talking circles -Use drumming, singing, chanting and other traditions and ceremonies including the sweat lodge, fasting, identifying and picking medicine <p>From the final report:</p>	<p>Likely</p> <p>From the final report: “Stronger role models for the community and community members Women able to express their knowledge and awareness as traditional woman within governments and organizations”</p>

Organization and project title	Amount approved & (% of project budget)	Objectives	Reported results	Likelihood of project having contributed to the reach of program's objective
			<p>Stronger role models for the community and community members</p> <p>Women able to express their knowledge and awareness as a traditional woman within governments and organizations</p> <p>35 sweat lodges with 614 participants – opportunities to learn about and practice their culture</p> <p>5 full moon ceremonies with 86 participants – increase traditional knowledge about and honour the cycles of the moon</p> <p>8 vision quests, with 48 participants – in aid of prevention suicide, healing destructive behaviours and reducing family violence, and increasing self-confidence</p> <p>12 participants learned how to make drums</p> <p>17 healing circles, with 143 participants – support and teaching to deal effectively with interpersonal and professional development</p> <p>81 community events, with 3,671 participants – community capacity building where Aboriginal women learn, participate in and support professional development of Aboriginal women</p> <p>1 community clean-up – bringing two communities together, creating dialogue, appreciation and respect</p> <p>alternative health – preventing suicide, healing destructive behaviours, quitting jobs, maintaining family</p> <p>restoration of culture in a safe, secure environment, increasing self-respect and pride, and healing</p>	
Pacific Association of First Nations' Women: Aboriginal Women's Family Violence Prevention Training Program	\$24,600 (86%)	4	Training was delivered and participant feedback was positive.	<p>Likely</p> <p>Project addresses Family Violence - an AWP priority</p> <p>-Proposal included concrete information about training program to be delivered (apparently it had already been developed). File included training products.</p> <p>-Limited report in project received in December 2004.</p>

Organization and project title	Amount approved & (% of project budget)	Objectives	Reported results	Likelihood of project having contributed to the reach of program's objective
Wahkotowin Society: A Voice of Hope – Survivors of Cancer retreat	\$23 000 (over two years) (81%)	3,5	June 01 retreat: Education, support and networking among women who attended conference Apparently little done back in communities due to a variety of reasons; some were planning to organize a support group in future Nothing known about Oct 02 retreat	Not likely 20 women attended the June 01 retreat, no info on participants at Oct 02 retreat
Northern Haven Support Society	\$13 410 (over two years) (54%)	5	Missing final report. Event has happen	Somehow likely 1 workshop with 19 participants; evaluation comments from indicate that they have the knowledge now to implement changes in their lives
Northern Mamawapowin Society: Community Consultation and early Intervention Workshop delivery	\$24 900 (77%)	3,4,5	Target participants: young women who demonstrate a need for mentor and peer support – young women having difficulty at school, substance abusers, violent women. Change negative life outlooks, provide peer support and help to develop school and community projects for other young women. -Participants better able to make healthy choices -Improved participant decision-making -Increased motivation to explore leadership skills -long term: lower usage of local women's shelter and family services.	Likely
Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women: Supporting Aboriginal Women in their Home Communities	\$35 000 (43%)	1,2,4	Objectives were to develop a "comprehensive community development/capacity building training package Workshops were held in 5 communities - went through business related to chapter formation, and leadership as it is related to and understood by the women at the meetings. -Elder councils were formed. - New IAAW chapters were formed	Very partial success. Final reports states that "Objectives were partially met" and that "The training manual funding was applied for but was not funded."

Organization and project title	Amount approved & (% of project budget)	Objectives	Reported results	Likelihood of project having contributed to the reach of program's objective
			-Concept of leadership explored.	
Quebec Native Women: Publication of conference highlights Focus of Day III – Skennen'ko :wa (conference dealing with family violence).	\$27 235 (80%)	2	Funding was approved for the following activity: Activities involved in producing (in English and French) and publishing the highlights of the Skinnen'ko :wa (peace) conference organized by <i>Quebec Native Women Inc.</i> (QNW), on November 21, 22 and 23, 2001.	Most likely Although no copy was in the file, the conference report was produced in French and English distributed to members and departments.
Quebec Native Women: QNW: 2001-02 Priorities – Annual General Meetings, general councils of the Nations, boards of directors	\$114 000 (72%)	2	AGM was held in November 2001, attended by more than 60 delegates of 9 nations: -the issues of concern to each community were discussed, achievements were presented, and a list of priority actions to enable the full participation of Aboriginal women was created; -3 meetings of the boards of directors were held; -4 teleconferences with the Nations' directors were held; -the President and Vice-President attended a number of meetings with the various Nations. It would appear that only 4 of the 10 planned meetings took place, as teleconferences rather than meetings. Agreement called for the President to visit communities, but the President and VP carried them out.	Core funding, but classified as project. File discusses that core funding could not be cut off after many years of providing it. Training was delivered in two occasions (2002-2003) to members of AFAQ on project presentation. Subsequently, a three-year strategic plan was developed.
Paruktuutit Inuit Women's Association: The Amauti – Protecting Women's Traditional Knowledge – A Case Study	\$40 000 (100%)	2,3,5	Manual developed in 3 languages, issues identified, long and short-term objectives established, awareness raised.	Most Likely: this project is a success story. Manual was deemed very impressive by file reviewers
Aboriginal nurses Association of Canada: Final Report on the Teaching Conference <i>Nursing Recruitment and Retention in Aboriginal Communities</i>	\$10 000 (100% of the cost for report)	1,3,4	Report on the conference was produced and is on-file. Unlikely that report on file would achieve intended results to: Develop and deliver a tool that will aid in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal nurses in Aboriginal communities and urban centres with large Aboriginal populations	The Teaching Conference, in the National Report, is not about teaching recruitment and retention, but instead is titled "Technology in Aboriginal Communities". It appears that recruitment and retention of nurses was only 1 of 8 discrete objectives for the conference.
Metis National Council of Women: Metis Women:	\$10 000	3,4,5	The project included creating video about why abusers abuse (not covered by this grant) and conduct train-	Likely

Organization and project title	Amount approved & (% of project budget)	Objectives	Reported results	Likelihood of project having contributed to the reach of program's objective
Breaking the Cycle (Phase 1)	(9%)		<p>the-trainer workshops to equip Métis women to lead workshops in communities</p> <p>3 workshops held to train regional trainers to use the training manual when delivering family violence awareness workshops in communities</p>	
Métis Women of Saskatchewan, Inc.: Organizational Development Workshop	\$50 750 (84%)	4	<p>1 final report: NMWS 2001 Report, which incorporates a report to PCH and states that 4 workshops were organized and held (not 5 as intended). The final report describes what happened in the workshops by listing small group report-backs to plenary; it does not provide a summary of what was achieved in the workshops overall nor does it address intended results, except for these statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> issues identified vision created discussions held on Métis governance and how Métis women can become more active within their community and at the regional, provincial and national levels 	<p>Not likely: Description of activities in CA actually explains some of the context for the project</p> <p>Originally the funding application was submitted by the National Métis Women's Secretariat (not incorporated); at some undocumented point, the applicant became Métis Women of Saskatchewan Inc, presumably because MW of SK is incorporated and has a history with PCH</p> <p>It appears that these workshops were intended to get buy-in and support from the provincial Métis women's associations for the NMWS to incorporate and increase Métis women's voice, capability, etc. This was not actually stated anywhere.</p>

3.3.5 SGI funding

Since 1998, SGI Project funding has also been available to Aboriginal women's organizations to undertake activities in support of the SGI objectives, under the same general terms as project funding. The linkages between the AWP objectives, activities, outputs and expected impacts for project funding have not been clearly defined in the Program documentation. Overall, SGI funding was expected to enable Aboriginal women's organizations to research, develop and communicate their positions on self-government, develop networks; and participate and partner with other key stakeholders in self-government discussions. But, GCIMS and reporting requirements do not differentiate between SGI funded activities and others.

Over the past five years, NAWOs have each received annual allocations of \$40,000 and MNCW received an additional \$80,432 from SGI. NAWO key informants reported that they utilized SGI funds primarily for infrastructure development and strategic planning to strengthen their organizations, and to a lesser extent, for communications with their membership. However, throughout the file review, there were few indications of communication activities. NAWO SGI activities have focused on governance issues within organizations, including strategic planning, clarification of mandate and, to some extent, networking and the outputs include strategic plans, strengthened management structures and some communications materials. It is not possible to isolate the specific impacts of SGI at the provincial/territorial or community levels because GCIMS does not identify projects funded by project funding stream nor provide information on results. The expected impacts of SGI project funding to Aboriginal women's organizations have not been clearly defined in the Program documentation.

In general, PCH regional key informants suggest that SGI project funding spawned opportunities for networking, consultation and skills development on self-government issues. This, in turn, helped to build awareness and engage Aboriginal women in self-government discussions.

3.3.6 Unintended impacts

Two unintended impacts were identified related to the operational support and project funding elements of the Program.

- The first relates to what representatives see as an *incorrect expectation about NAWO capacity*: NAWO key informants reported they encounter the perception among some federal departments that AWP operational support fully covers all core operational expenses, although it does not. As a result, some federal departments appear to have the expectation that NAWOs come to the table at full capacity. They expect NAWOs to readily and meaningfully participate in government consultative and policy development processes, yet in reality, NAWO's capacity to do so is limited unless they leverage resources for such activities. As a result, NAWO's capacity to carry out their own organizational priorities — which may not be synonymous with federal priorities — is compromised. NAWO key informants reported that they are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain funding to offset administrative overhead expenses. This is making it more difficult to acquire resources to “shore up” the gap between the operational support that AWP provides, and actual operational costs.
- Another *unintended consequence* is the differential treatment of NAWOs at the Federal Level: AWP states it provides funding to nationally “representative” Aboriginal women's organizations, however, the definition of this term is unclear. As a result,

NAWOs report they experience differential treatment by federal departments. For example, some organizations feel they are not being invited to the relevant policy and decision-making tables relating to issues of concern to them. They also experience differential access to project funding.²⁹

3.4 Cost-effectiveness:

In the technical sense, cost-effectiveness implies an assessment of cost per outcome of a program and a comparison with others similar programs. As information regarding the outcomes of AWP is scarce, it is not possible to calculate the cost per outcome. Still, as indicated in TBS evaluation policy, the cost-effectiveness question can be assessed to some extent by reviewing design, delivery/operational issues and options for alternative delivery.

3.4.1 Design issues

Most part of the difficulty in assessing the program's performance comes from what have been identified by evaluation research as design flaws.

3.4.1.1 Lack of performance framework

An evaluation of the AWP was completed in 1987. Its findings on the Program's success and effectiveness were inconclusive due to the absence of success indicators and substantiating evidence. As of 2003, a Program RMAF had not been produced nor performance indicators identified.

3.4.1.2 Lack of focus

Key informants repeatedly mentioned that, over the time, the Program has come to lack focus. Over the years, Aboriginal women's organizations have played a significant role in addressing rights, family, social and cultural development issues at the community level. More recently, their endeavours have broadened to include a wide spectrum of concerns, such as health, healing, training, economic development, and the broader self-government agenda.

Initially, the Program was focussed on empowering Aboriginal women to address issues at the community level. It was based on the premise that Aboriginal women's interests lay more at this level than at the macro (political) level. In 1979, the Operational Support funding component for national Aboriginal women's organizations was added. At the time, AWP was the only national funding source for Aboriginal women and their organizations. Since then, the interests of Aboriginal women have grown more complex and multi-faceted. Concurrently, other funders, be they federal provincial/territorial, municipal, or private extended their funding to Aboriginal women's organizations. Today, AWP is not the biggest contributor to Aboriginal women's organizations budgets. Therefore, it is inevitable that a program design that was not changed to take account of the evolution of needs and funding sources has come to be perceived as lacking focus.

²⁹ It is reported that one organization has launched a legal action on this matter.

3.4.2 Delivery/operational issues

A number of delivery concerns were raised by key informants and confirmed by the file review conducted for this evaluation. Besides the usual and predictable concerns about amounts and timing of award, two issues are standing out.

3.4.2.1 Access to Program

There seems to be an issue regarding access of the target population to the AWP. It is not clear how the Program reaches Aboriginal women except through the organizations that are funded. There is an assumption that funded national organizations in turn effectively reaches a wide cross-section of the Aboriginal women, however, there is little information to indicate how this reach is achieved and whether the reach is broad. Except for the dialogue circle, this evaluation did not obtain feedback directly from the users of the Program. It is important to note that key informants and the Aboriginal Women's Dialogue Circle participants voiced concern that Aboriginal women's organizations across the country do not have equal access to AWP, which in turn affects the potential for Aboriginal women to benefit equitably from the Program.

But, more importantly, access to the AWP requires Aboriginal women to be formally and independently organized. According to PCH Regional key informants, not all Aboriginal women are formally or independently organized at the community level. In addition, Aboriginal women who choose to be represented by, or integrated within mainstream Aboriginal institutions (such as Friendship Centres) are now explicitly unable to derive benefits from this Program.

Furthermore, in its original design, PCH's AWP staff provided technical support (e.g. helping applicants to complete their funding applications) in order to facilitate their access to funding. This capacity has virtually disappeared. AWP and AWO key informants continue to voice concern that the absence of technical support poses a significant access barrier. This concern has become more critical as project proposal (due diligence) have become more stringent. In March 2003, the Program supported a regional proposal-writing workshop to begin to address this concern.

3.4.2.2 File maintenance

Reviewers found that most of program files (both project and operational support funding files) were poorly maintained and difficult to work with.

For example many files:

- Contained multiple copies (often undated) of the same document.
- Contained unidentified reports and other documents with no covering notes - it sometimes couldn't be established which documents (if any) had been submitted as official Activity Reports.
- Lacked a chronology, so that reconstructing the history of a project was difficult.
- Were missing Contribution Agreements.
- Contained Contribution Agreements lacking consistency. Some missed critical information, including clear statement of objectives, or activities. There was a

significant variation in the degree of detail provided when that information was provided.

- Had no statement of objectives brought forward consistently throughout various documents - from the application, to the Recommendation for Approval (RAF), to the CA.

Even when information could be retrieved from files, there was a general lack of clarity and consistency in the presentation of objectives, activities, and intended results.

This situation is a serious impediment to sound results-based management.

3.4.3 Alternatives

Several options for Program delivery alternatives were raised.

- A first option considered is to keep the program as it is but to bring it up to the actual standards of results-based management. Maintaining the *status quo* is not an option. Since its inception, management has devoted virtually no research or resources to exploring the public policy rationale for the Program. The evaluation has uncovered many opinions about why and what program personnel think about the need for an Aboriginal women's program, but there has been no systematic research on issues or priorities for Aboriginal women so the program effects changes that make a difference. As demonstrated by file review, it is not possible to highlight the achievements or impacts of the program because the management system is not capturing the data to substantiate its impact. Moreover, the program has not introduced any improvements called for by the 1987 evaluation (similar findings are contained in this report). This raises questions as to whether the existing management structure is sufficiently endowed to continue the Program management or whether it is the appropriate structure to address the issues facing Aboriginal women. In any case, this option will require some significant investment in clarifying and re-aligning the policy objectives with the needs of Aboriginal women through a comprehensive study and consultation with the constituent base and other key stakeholders to identify strategic direction.
- A second option was suggested by participants in the Dialogue Circle and some key informants: devolving the program to Aboriginal organizations. Many federal programs have been devolved to Aboriginal organizations over the years. In PCH, for example, the Aboriginal Friendship Centres has been devolved to the National Association of Friendship Centres, which delivers the PCH funding to individual centres. However, evaluations findings provide no evidence that national organizations could actually be ready to deliver the program for the Government of Canada.
- A third option would be to transfer the program, in whole or in part, to INAC. Recently, changes in INAC activities appear to indicate a move towards a more integrated approach, e.g. the inclusion of the Métis and non-status Indians portfolio in the mandate of the Minister of Indian Affairs and recent decision to move the Office of the Federal Interlocutor for the Métis and Non-status Indians from Privy Council Office to INAC. In this context, it could make sense to consider if the Aboriginal women's needs would not better fit INAC's mandate.

- A fourth option would be the relocation of AWP to Status of Women Canada, whose mission is “to promote gender equality and the full participation of all women in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the country³⁰.” Key informants suggesting this alternative recognized that program mandate parameters would need to be considered and possibly changed. However, it should be noted that the needs of Aboriginal women are an SWC policy priority. In 2004, research on Aboriginal women issues is receiving increased attention as indicated by current initiatives that are underway. It was suggested throughout the evaluation that this option could include the development of an independent Aboriginal women’s management board comprised of women Aboriginal leaders (possibly from field of academia, business, politics, and civil society).

Consideration of these options should take into account the findings of the evaluation, and as such, will be discussed in the next section.

³⁰ Status of Women Canada. *Performance Report for the period ending March 31, 2003*. http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/02-03/SWC-CFC/SWC-CFC03D01_e.asp.

4 Conclusions, Recommendations and Management Response

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

4.1 Relevance

Program relevance has been evaluated in relation to Aboriginal women's actual needs and government/department wide priorities and objectives

4.1.1 Aboriginal women's needs

There is no doubt that Aboriginal women have specific needs rooted in specific socio-economic conditions within the Aboriginal communities and the broader society. Aboriginal women need to be in a position to influence public policy and decision-making. Aboriginal women can also benefit from training and empowering activities to play a meaningful role within their own communities and contribute to their socio-economic and cultural development.

4.1.2 Government/Department objectives and priorities

Gathering Strength recognizes that Aboriginal women's organizations are integral to community capacity-building. The federal government is committed to gender equality, as articulated in the current federal Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE).³¹ In addition, in September 2003, the federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) forum of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women established a Committee on Aboriginal women with the overall goal of improving the quality of life of Aboriginal women.

Therefore, the Government of Canada needs to hear the voice of Aboriginal women and take account of their perspectives, knowledge and interests in its policy and decision-making processes.

4.2 Success/Performance

Performance has been assessed in relation with the stated program objectives and program components.

4.2.1 Impact of operational funding

At a first level of analysis, there is little doubt that the Program's operational funding contributed to the maintenance of national Aboriginal women organizations. It is recognized that AWP funding has been instrumental in helping them to maintain a national presence, influence policies and, to some extent, maintain cultural distinctiveness. However, the extent to which these national Aboriginal women organizations are effectively representative has been raised as an issue. It has been credibly argued by key informants that national organizations do not have very deep roots in local communities and that their reach of Aboriginal women is uneven throughout the country. Aboriginal key informants saw the absence of a strong local and provincial/territorial infrastructure linked

³¹ Status of Women Canada is responsible for implementation of AGE, which builds on the 1995 Federal Plan for Gender Equality and ongoing commitment to gender-based analysis (GBA).

to national Aboriginal women's organizations and the absence of operational funding at the local level as impediments to representation at the national level.

Based on the available information, it is not possible to link the operational support provided by AWP to specific organizational activities, structures, or contributions to public policy and decision-making. Key informants from these organizations reported that any success encountered by their organizations could not be attributed to operational funding from AWP. There is no evidence, other than the existence of the national representative organizations themselves, that the Program has contribute to enable Aboriginal women groups to maintain cultural distinctiveness and identity. However, one could argue that this is the object of core-funding: to support the existence of an organization.

In conclusion, although key informants do not attribute NAWO successes to AWP operational funding, there is little doubt that, over time, the Program has contributed to the growth of these organizations. Some of them have undergone significant transformation, having started as organizations totally dependent on AWP funding support, to large and sophisticated organizations able to access funding from a wide variety of sources.

4.2.2 Impact of project funding

There is very little evidence that national project funding had an impact on maintaining national representative contributions.

The review of the 2001-2002 program files provide evidence supporting the idea that project funding has contributed to enabling individual women to assume a leadership role within their communities and contributed to their cultural and socio-economic well-being. However, this evidence is, at best, indirect, and does not equal an independent measurement of the impact of project funding.

4.3 Cost-effectiveness

Cost-effectiveness of the AWP could be improved to some extent by addressing the following design and delivery issues.

- The program theory needs to be reworked. Expected outcomes, performance monitoring system and management accountability frameworks have to be developed and implemented.
- Part of the intended clientele seems to be excluded from benefiting from the Program because of some design flaws.
- Neither *status quo* nor devolution to Aboriginal women's organizations are viable options. The program should either be radically improved or relocated totally or partially in other federal institutions, where it would have to be retuned to clarify its objectives and expected outcomes.

4.4 Recommendations and Management Response

Considering:

- The issues faced and addressed by Aboriginal women at the local, provincial/territorial and national level have grown in number and complexity;
- The questions raised regarding effective representation from national Aboriginal women organizations and their lack of anchoring at the local level;
- The disconnect between the objectives reached at the national level and the needs expressed at the local level; and
- Maintaining national representative structures is a different operation than empowering and developing capacity at the local and individual level.

It is recommended that:

l) The two components of the Program, i.e. operational and project funding for national organizations and project funding at the community level, be separate and redeveloped.

Management Response: Recommendation accepted.

The two components of the Aboriginal Women's Program (AWP) are currently being delivered separately. Project funding at the community level is delivered at the regional level and the program funding to national organizations is delivered at the national level. Separate AWP guidelines were developed in 2004 for national program funding and community project funding.

In the context of the program renewal, and as reflected in the Departmental Program Activity Architecture, the AWP has been separated into two components.

Implementation Schedule:

Separation of AWP: components complete

The AWP will be redeveloped in the context of the Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy. This will include examining both components of the Program in terms of their contribution to the overall program framework, as well as specific delivery and operational issues.

Implementation Schedule:

Redevelopment of AWP components: 2005-2006 as part of Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy

Considering:

- That there is an impetus within the government to reorganize and better coordinate Aboriginal policy
- That the evaluation findings suggest that capacity is not yet present for the devolution of the Program

It is recommended that

II) The Department choose between the following approaches towards Aboriginal Women's Program:

- 1. Redefinition of the program's theory, expected outcomes, performance indicators, management frameworks– including consultations with other relevant federal institutions and Aboriginal women and their organizations in order to realistically enable it to reach clearly assigned objectives; or**
- 2. Enter into discussions and/or negotiations with other federal institutions, namely INAC and/or SWC, in order to transfer either one or both components of the Program from PCH.**

Management Response: Recommendation accepted.

The Department, through its Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy, intends to renew the existing authorities for the AWP within the context of a renewed Aboriginal Peoples' Program framework. This will include the identification of expected outcomes and performance indicators.

Implementation Schedule:

Redevelopment of AWP components:

2005-2006 as part of Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy

As part of this exercise, the Department will re-examine, in consultation with other federal departments, the appropriate delivery mechanism to fulfill the objectives of the Aboriginal Women's Program.

Implementation Schedule:

Examination of appropriate delivery mechanism: 2005-2006 as part of Program Renewal and Implementation Strategy

Considering that

- The Department might decide or have to keep the two program components and continue to provide funding to Aboriginal women's organizations
- Reviewers and evaluators have observed very poor quality of file maintenance and lack of basic information in the files

It is recommended that:

III) Proper tools, resources (including appropriate management frameworks) be developed and relevant training be provided to officials responsible for managing and delivering the program. The following should be addressed in priority:

- **Training in file processing and management for contributions;**
- **Training in the basics of results-based management; and**
- **Development of a realistic performance monitoring strategy.**

Management Response: Recommendation accepted.

A Capacity Building Strategy has been developed to improve program delivery. To date, the AAB has revised program guidelines, contribution agreement templates, and proposal development checklist.

Implementation Schedule: Capacity building strategy completed April 2004.

Training (including on file processing, management of contributions, basics of results-based management) continues to be delivered to Aboriginal partners and organizations including Aboriginal women, as well as to PCH staff, to improve management and delivery.

Implementation Schedule: Tools continue to be developed and in 2005-2006

All training and tool development will be anchored to a results-based management framework for the Program.

Implementation Schedule: Training began February 2004 - to continue in 2005-06