Evaluation of the strategic plan for settlement and language training under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA)

Evaluation Division

December 2011
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Contribution Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAMS</td>
<td>Contribution Agreement Monitoring System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFP</td>
<td>Calls for Proposal</td>
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<td>CIC</td>
<td>Citizenship and Immigration Canada</td>
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<td>CLARS</td>
<td>Common Language Assessment and Referral System</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLIC</td>
<td>Cours de langue pour les immigrants au Canada</td>
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<td>COIA</td>
<td>Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>Enhanced Language Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMC</td>
<td>Francophone Minority Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSL</td>
<td>French as a Second Language</td>
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<td>HARTS</td>
<td>History of Assessments, Referrals and Training System</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIPPY</td>
<td>Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iCAMS</td>
<td>Immigration Contribution Accountability Measurement System</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRIS</td>
<td>Immigrant Reception and Information Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISAP</td>
<td>Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program</td>
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<td>ITP</td>
<td>Internationally-trained Professionals</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSW</td>
<td>Job Search Workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>LINC</td>
<td>Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIP</td>
<td>Local Immigration Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSP</td>
<td>Library Settlement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCI</td>
<td>(Ontario) Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIIO</td>
<td>Municipal Immigration Information Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIC</td>
<td>Newcomers Information Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOW</td>
<td>Newcomer Orientation Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBTP</td>
<td>Ontario Bridge Training Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCASI</td>
<td>Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTIS</td>
<td>Online Tracking Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RNEN</td>
<td>Regional Newcomer Employment Networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPO</td>
<td>Service Provider Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSIL</td>
<td>Settlement Services in LINC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWIS</td>
<td>Settlement Workers in School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBS</td>
<td>Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCI</td>
<td>Welcoming Community Initiative</td>
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<td>WIN</td>
<td>Welcome and Information for Newcomers</td>
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Executive summary

Background

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Strategic Plan for Settlement and Language Training under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA). Data collection for this evaluation was undertaken between July 2010 and February 2011.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide an objective assessment of the relevance of the Strategic Plan in terms of:

- need for the Strategic Plan;
- consistency with government roles and responsibilities defined in COIA;
- alignment with priorities and objectives;

and the performance of the Strategic Plan in terms of:

- progress in implementing the actions proposed in the Strategic Plan; and
- the effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including its design and delivery, and the capacity of the delivery partners to lead, manage, and monitor activities.

The COIA, signed in November 2005 for a five-year period, defined roles and responsibilities of the two governments in the area of immigration and outlined several objectives related to recruitment, selection and settlement of newcomers in Ontario.

In 2006, CIC and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration of Ontario (MCI) began to work together to identify specific needs and gaps in the settlement and language sectors in Ontario. This exercise, which involved a review of existing research and consultations with newcomers and organizations providing settlement services, identified a set of specific needs and groups that were under-served: women, youth, seniors, and Francophone immigrants. This research informed the design of the Strategic Plan for Settlement and Language Training, introduced in December 2006.

The main purpose of the Strategic Plan was to “support the achievement of the following long-term outcomes:

- Newcomers are welcomed and fully integrated into Canadian and Ontario communities;
- Newcomers are engaged and participate in all sectors of Ontario/Canadian society — economic, social, political and cultural; and
- Ontario/Canadian society and communities benefit from the contribution of newcomers”.

To support the achievement of these outcomes, the Strategic Plan outlined four strategies and related actions, in alignment with immediate outcomes (see Table 1). These strategies and actions were to guide the programming in Ontario from 2006/07 to 2009/10. It is important to note that no new programs were created in light of the Strategic Plan; rather, existing CIC programs (Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP), Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)) the Host Program and Enhanced Language Training (ELT)) were expanded or enhanced to enable achievement of the Strategic Plan. Two MCI-led programs also received

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1 Source: Strategic Plan for Settlement and Language Training.
funding in support of the Strategic Plan (the language component of the Ontario Bridge Training Program (OBTP) and the Municipal Immigration Information Online (MIIO)).

Table 1: Linkages between immediate outcomes and plan strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate outcomes</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• address gaps in availability and accessibility</td>
<td><strong>Strategy 1:</strong> Develop a flexible, coordinated system of settlement services with strong linkages and clear pathways to service newcomers’ needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• improve client pathway management</td>
<td><strong>Strategy 2:</strong> Build on existing services to develop and implement a comprehensive language assessment, referral and training system that assists newcomers to become competent in English or French as quickly as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• improve the capacity of the settlement sector to manage and deliver the COIA settlement and language training activities</td>
<td><strong>Strategy 3:</strong> Work with municipalities and federal and provincial government departments to enable partnerships that will integrate newcomers in the economic and social life of Ontario communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• engage partners, municipalities and employers</td>
<td><strong>Strategy 4:</strong> Design, fund and administer settlement and language training programs based on how well they support desired outcomes (evidence-based).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• align mechanisms and partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• improve the availability of information</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• improve program accountability</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• ensure program management is needs- and outcomes-focused</td>
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Resources

Under the Agreement, the federal government committed to provide a total of $920M in new funding to support settlement and language training services in Ontario over the period 2005/06 to 2009/10 in addition to $540M in base funding previously allocated to the province. Out of the new funds, approximately $849M was allocated to support settlement programming in Ontario and the remainder, around $70M, was allocated to the management of other COIA activities and to national projects. National projects, funded through commitments from all provincial allocations, fall outside the scope of the Strategic Plan as they are guided by a set of different priorities.

As all ISAP, LINC, Host and ELT projects delivered in Ontario between 2006/07 and 2009/10 were guided by the Strategic Plan, to facilitate the analysis of the value added of the new funds, an assumption was made that the base funding was spent first and the new funds were spent once base funding was depleted. Table 2 shows that of the $849M in new funding that was committed for the Strategic Plan, $671M was actually spent for a variance of $178M. In addition, of the $70M allocated to other COIA activities, $30M was not spent for a total variance between allocated COIA resources and expenditures equal to $207M.

Even though COIA was signed in the year 2005, delivery of programs in the year 2005/06 was largely unaffected by the Strategic Plan or by additional COIA funds. Therefore, while the report presents information on the total budget and expenditures, by comparing the level of investment and number of activities in 2005/06 (supported largely by the base finding only) and the level of investment and activities in subsequent years, the evaluation focuses on an assessment of the value added of the new resources.
Table 2: Number of Projects and Expenditures for Employment-Specific Programming Resources – ($ Millions)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vote 1-New</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$21</td>
<td>$ 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vote 5-New</td>
<td>$ 3</td>
<td>$ 3</td>
<td>$ 63</td>
<td>$ 180</td>
<td>$ 117</td>
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<td>$ 191</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total New</td>
<td>$ 3</td>
<td>$ 3</td>
<td>$ 66</td>
<td>$188</td>
<td>$122</td>
<td>$292</td>
<td>$198</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vote 5-Base</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$540</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$111</td>
<td>$111</td>
<td>$174</td>
<td>$293</td>
<td>$231</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$411</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vote 1</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ 11</td>
<td>$ 10</td>
<td>$ 9</td>
<td>$ 13</td>
<td>$ 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote 5</td>
<td>$ 1</td>
<td>$ 1</td>
<td>$ 1</td>
<td>$ 2</td>
<td>$ 8</td>
<td>$ 4</td>
<td>$ 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Other COIA</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$ -</td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>$ 21</td>
<td>$ 11</td>
<td>$ 27</td>
<td>$ 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Funds</td>
<td>$111</td>
<td>$111</td>
<td>$185</td>
<td>$304</td>
<td>$241</td>
<td>$421</td>
<td>$317</td>
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</table>

Source: CIC financial systems

Note: Vote 1 refers to operating resources while Vote 5 refers to grants and contributions resources. Vote 5 Strategic Plan resources, in addition to Ontario Region funds, includes also ELT funds distributed to Ontario Region by NHQ in 2006/07 and the MIO funds provided to MCI.

Evaluation approach, methodology and limitations

The evaluation looked at the relevance, performance, and design and delivery of the Strategic Plan. It covered the period since its inception in fiscal year 2006/07 to 2009/10. Where appropriate, information from 2005/06 was used as a baseline to assess progress under the Strategic Plan.

Lines of evidence used in the conduct of this evaluation include interviews, a document review, an analysis of administrative data, ten case studies and a survey of service-provider organizations (SPOs).

The evaluation was subject to certain data limitations, in particular the lack of a central, complete and comprehensive database that would provide detailed project information. This lack of information resulted in the potential under- or over-representation of project activities. To mitigate this situation, data from various CIC databases and administrative documents was combined and projects were subsequently coded by strategy based on a predetermined coding scheme. As a result, data limitations did not significantly affect the findings, conclusions or recommendations of the evaluation.

Key Findings

Relevance

Consistency with Government Roles and Responsibilities

In the Canadian context, the federal and provincial governments share responsibility for immigration, including immigrant integration. The Strategic Plan enabled both levels of government to collaborate in a joint and strategic approach to direct federal investments in settlement services in Ontario.

That said, the views of both levels of government differ regarding who should be leading the delivery of settlement services in the province. While both levels of government agree that
municipalities play a key role in local planning and identifying local needs, representatives from
each level of government felt that their respective level of government was best positioned to
provide settlement services, with the other level of government providing input and helping to
set broad directions.

Alignment with Priorities and Objectives

During the period under review, priorities of both levels of government were aligned as they
shared a desire to ensure successful economic and social integration of newcomers and a vision
for collaborative and coordinated efforts to achieve those outcomes. Given the variety of options
available to put those priorities into action, having a joint plan that established specific strategies
and supported a coordinated approach was appropriate. The Strategic Plan, however, only
provided direction regarding federal settlement programming, thereby limiting its reach and
scope.

Need for the Strategic Plan

Through the Strategic Plan, which provided a more focused approach to settlement and language
training while allowing for flexibility and innovation, funders and service providers were in a
better position to address a variety of needs and react to the changing environment in which they
operated.

Performance

Strategy 1 - Settlement services

The purpose of Strategy 1 was to develop a flexible, coordinated system of settlement services
with strong linkages and clear pathways to services newcomers need. Strategy 1 sought to address
gaps in availability and accessibility, improve client pathway management and increase the
capacity of the settlement sector to manage and deliver settlement activities².

Addressing gaps in availability and accessibility

Under the direction of the Strategic Plan, activities were undertaken in Ontario to address service
gaps. As a result, more information became available to newcomers through self-help and
assisted activities, referrals were improved and the provision of services through non-settlement
organizations was expanded.

At the time of the inception of the Strategic Plan, many immigrants reported a lack of
information on the Canadian job market and difficulties in having their credentials recognized.
Efforts were made under the Strategic Plan to assist newcomers to find employment and work
with employers to increase their ability to hire newcomers. Although the challenges in this area
go far beyond service delivery, particularly with respect to credential recognition, there remains a
need to provide employment-related services to newcomers and to educate employers.

Among the four target groups identified under the Strategic Plan, significant progress was made
over the past five years in the number and variety of programs targeting youth. While projects
focusing on the needs of women, seniors and Francophone immigrants were delivered, progress
was not as significant.

² Issues related to the capacity of the settlement services sector are addressed under “design and delivery”.
The resources provided through the Strategic Plan have addressed several barriers to accessing settlement programs and services by, for example, expanding service hours, addressing the need for qualified interpreters, and expanding childminding services. SPOs have also expanded the way they deliver their programs to bring services closer to home through online, remote or itinerant services.

**Improving client pathway management**

While most (75%) SPOs surveyed as part of this evaluation felt progress had been made in the development of information and referral systems that link newcomers to the resources they need through all stages of their settlement and integration process, fewer (66%) felt that a coordinated network of services had been achieved by the two levels of government. SPOs and government representatives agreed that some duplication still exists, particularly in cases where parallel programs and services are offered by each level of government. This duplication, however, is seen to be only partial, as eligibility requirements differ between the programs. In other cases, efforts were seen to be complimentary, with each level of government funding separate components of a particular program.

**Strategy 2 - Language training services**

The purpose of Strategy 2 was to build on existing services to develop and implement a comprehensive language assessment, referral and training system that assists newcomers to become competent in English or French as quickly as possible. Strategy 2 also sought to address gaps in availability and accessibility, improve client pathway management and increase the capacity of the settlement sector to manage and deliver activities.

**Addressing gaps in availability and accessibility**

Over the last five years, there has been an increase in the number and range of language assessment and training programs and services to fill the gaps identified under the Strategic Plan. An increase in employment- and occupation-specific language training and the expansion of LINC training to include more advanced levels of proficiency took place. In addition to expanding language training services, the linkages between language training and settlement services have also improved.

Some progress has been made in addressing barriers to accessing language training, especially with respect to LINC/CLIC childminding support that enables parents to participate in language training. Access has also increased through the expansion of LINC services, especially in large centres, and the introduction of innovative approaches (e.g., home study) in smaller or more remote centres.

**Improving client pathway management**

There are two systems of language assessment and training services in Ontario: federally funded programs known as LINC/CLIC and provincially funded programs known as ESL/FSL. Each system includes three basic components: the assessment of language skills, referrals and the provision of training.

Through efforts under the Strategic Plan, particularly the development of the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS), the assessment components under CIC’s

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3 Issues related to the capacity of the settlement services sector are addressed under “design and delivery”.
LINC/CLIC Program and MCI’s ESL/FSL are becoming coordinated. Some progress is also being made in the development of a coordinated referrals system. The delivery of language training has not been formally coordinated although it has been to some extent harmonized by using common tools in both language programs.

**Strategy 3 - Partnerships**

The purpose of Strategy 3 was to work with municipalities and federal-provincial government departments to enable partnerships that will integrate newcomers in the economic and social life of Ontario communities. Strategy 3 was designed in order to engage partners, municipalities and employers, and align existing mechanisms and partnerships.

**Engaging partners, municipalities and employers**

While the Strategy sought to engage other federal-provincial government departments, the resulting actions identified in the Plan focused largely on engagement at the local level. At this level, the implementation of the Strategic Plan provided an opportunity to bring together various partners and led to the involvement of a broader range of local stakeholders, including municipalities, in providing services to newcomers. The most widely-cited examples of initiatives are the MCI’s Municipal Immigration Information Online (MIIO) program which resulted in the engagement of municipalities, settlement organizations and other local organizations in the development of local web portals, and the CIC’s Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) which brought together a wide range of stakeholders to develop local strategic priorities and action plans for service delivery.

**Aligning mechanisms/partnerships**

At the local level, under the Strategic Plan, the number of partnerships between traditional SPOs and other institutions such as libraries, police services, educational institutions, employers and professional associations increased. These new partnerships were seen to have resulted in the establishment of services that better address the needs of newcomers, the provision of a wider range of services, and an increased capacity to plan and coordinate settlement services locally. At the same time, these partnerships were seen to have resulted in a greater understanding among non-settlement organizations of newcomer needs.

**Strategy 4 - Evidence base**

The purpose of Strategy 4 was to build the evidence base to support the design, funding and administration of settlement and language training programs. This strategy was designed to increase the availability of information, improve program accountability, and ensure program management was needs- and outcomes-focused.

**Increasing the availability of information**

The Strategic Plan design was the product of extensive consultations in Ontario, including reaching out to settlement organizations and newcomers. Through the years, efforts were made to increase the availability of information on emerging needs of newcomers through various research studies, pilot projects and evaluations. This included needs assessments, pilot project reviews, and research on the needs of specific target groups or communities.

The Settlement and Language Training Working Groups used this research to develop recommendations for consideration by the Steering Committee on Settlement and Language
Training, which ultimately led in some cases to new calls for proposals to help address specific needs and desired outcomes or amendments to existing contribution agreements.

**Improving program accountability**

Program accountability, in particular the measurement of project outcomes, has not been done extensively by CIC due to a lack of information. In addition, in the absence of an approved Performance Measurement Strategy for the Strategic Plan, the on-going collection of performance information was not implemented.

**Ensuring program management is needs- and outcomes-based**

At the SPO level, data collected through ongoing client satisfaction surveys, focus groups or more informal communications with newcomers has generally been integrated into the planning and management of services to ensure a focus on needs. The collection of data that can speak to project and program outcomes remains a challenge.

**Design and delivery**

Design and delivery questions focused on the capacity of service providers and the federal government to manage and/or deliver the settlement and language training activities. It also looked at the efficiency of the overall governance structure put in place for the Plan.

**Improving Capacity**

While it took some time to build the capacity of service provider organizations, the increase in financial resources that accompanied COIA and the capacity-building activities it supported enabled SPOs to expand and improve the quality of their services, experiment with innovative approaches to service delivery, and generally improve their management capacity.

Given the rather sudden increase in funding, interviewees across all stakeholder groups (i.e. federal and provincial governments and SPOs) felt the human resources required within CIC to launch and implement the COIA Strategic Plan were underestimated. This was perceived to have delayed the implementation of new projects resulting, in some cases, in funding lapses. While the capacity of the federal government to support the delivery of an increased number of projects in Ontario is perceived to have increased over the last two years of the Strategic Plan, further improvement is still required, mostly in terms of the timely processing of calls for proposals by CIC.

**Governance**

While the Settlement and Language Training Working Groups at the core of the governance structure provided important guidance throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan, overall, the governance structure was deemed by interviewees to be cumbersome. Some felt that the structure could benefit from streamlining, particularly given that many of the same individuals participated on the committees created for the Strategic Plan and those created for the broader COIA. Others indicated that while progress was made by the Working Groups, the fact that many of their recommendations were never implemented limited their effectiveness. While the evidence could not be corroborated through the document review, suggestions were made that many of the Working Group recommendations were outside of the scope of CIC’s mandates and priorities or were not feasible given existing resources and as such, could not be implemented.
Conclusions and recommendations

The recommendations arising from this evaluation are as follows:

1. In the event that a new partnership arrangement is put in place in the future, it is recommended that the two orders of government assess current needs and determine priorities to develop a new joint plan to guide services to newcomers.

In a highly dynamic environment of shifting immigration trends, difficult economic conditions, and a significant increase in federal investment in settlement and language training programs since 2005/06, the Strategic Plan was largely successful in providing a strategic direction and overall parameters to guide the range of stakeholders providing support to newcomers in Ontario. Informed by extensive consultations with key stakeholders, the Strategic Plan also allowed for flexibility in the development and implementation of approaches to address newcomer needs. Five years after its introduction, while progress has been made, in cases where projects are just now entering their implementation phase, such as the LIPs, it is not entirely certain that progress is sustainable without a similar mechanism to guide and support future efforts. There is a strong rationale for developing a new joint plan founded on current needs, gaps and barriers that would provide timely and relevant direction and guidance in the event of a future partnership arrangement between the two levels of government.

2. During the development of any future joint plan, it is recommended that a more comprehensive and a whole of government approach is adopted by including both federal and provincial programming and by taking into account other relevant emerging broader policy frameworks.

Careful consideration should be given to the appropriate scope of a new Strategic Plan. The scope of the first Plan included only the federal programming. While the province of Ontario has taken into account the objectives of the Strategic Plan, its programming was not systematically integrated with the Plan. This has posed some challenges in understanding the full scope of the investment, programming and results in Ontario that flow from both federal and provincial initiatives. The scope of the Plan was also restricted due to limited direct involvement of relevant federal and provincial ministries (other than immigration) in program design and delivery. At the same time, any emerging relevant policy frameworks such as the Modernized Approach, which will drive settlement services, and the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement, which will drive employment services, will need to be considered in determining the scope and content of any future Strategic Plan.

3. It is recommended that the governance structure of any future joint plan be streamlined and redesigned, reducing the number of committees, and establishing clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

The governance structure to guide the implementation of the Strategic Plan was established within the broader COIA structure. This was not as effective as originally hoped as it was considered to be too cumbersome by many provincial and federal government interviewees. While the Settlement and Language Training Working Groups that formed the core of the structure to deliver the Plan undertook a significant amount of work, many of the recommendations they made to the Steering Committee for Settlement and Language Training were not implemented.

4. It is recommended that any future joint plan, in addition to settlement and language training, include a separate strategic priority to address employment in a
comprehensive and structured way, taking into account the roles played by various stakeholders in this area.

The Strategic Plan has contributed to addressing a number of gaps and barriers to the development of new and innovative services, and to increasing access to services. While employment needs were addressed through a variety of activities for newcomers and employers, labour market integration issues were understated in the design and directions provided by the Plan. Given the critical role of economic integration in ensuring successful settlement outcomes, and the wide range of stakeholders involved in ensuring successful economic integration, it is important to build on the partnerships currently in place, including those with other federal and provincial departments, Service Provider Organizations, potential employers, professional associations, and credentialing bodies, to facilitate the economic integration of newcomers.

5 As the two orders of government pursue the full implementation of the coordinated language assessment and referral system (CLARS), it is recommended that they investigate the feasibility of creating a harmonized language training system.

It is widely recognized that language skills are the foundation for the successful social and economic integration of newcomers. Progress has been made in implementing a coordinated language assessment and referral system (CLARS). While there is a strong rationale for having a standard assessment approach, the development of an increasingly harmonized approach to programming should be investigated to determine whether synergies, efficiencies and enhancements to the quality of instruction could be gained and client pathways improved. While there are differing eligibility requirements for newcomers under the two programs, an integrated system would ensure that the client will have a clear and seamless path to language training, irrespective of eligibility criteria.

6 It is recommended that any future joint plan include the development and implementation of a performance measurement strategy to guide on-going joint performance data collection activities and to ensure information is available to support future evaluation activities. As part of this strategy, a review of existing federal and provincial databases and systems should be undertaken, with a view to ensuring the availability of performance information to assess outcomes, while not over-burdening SPOs and others who will be tasked with providing data. The systems should also be supported by tools, guidance and training to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected.

The collection of performance measurement data is the responsibility of program management and should be undertaken on an on-going basis. Generally speaking, the measurement of progress under the Strategic Plan was limited. While some data was collected on activities and outputs by program management, it was housed in different databases, making it extremely difficult to assess progress. For the purposes of this evaluation, information from a variety of existing databases was assembled by the evaluators to create a comprehensive picture of activities and clients, which allowed for the assessment of some outputs (projects, activities and partially, clients) and immediate outcomes.
### Evaluation of the strategic plan for settlement and language training under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) - Management response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Action/Deliverables</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Completion date</th>
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</table>
| 1. In the event that a new partnership arrangement is put in place in the future, it is recommended that the two orders of government assess current needs and determine priorities to develop a new joint plan to guide services to newcomers. | The Department agrees that, if a new arrangement is put in place, an outcomes-focused, needs-based joint plan is a useful tool to guide joint priority setting and settlement program design and delivery in Ontario. Given shared interest in successful settlement and integration outcomes for newcomers in Ontario, CIC recommends a meeting with MCI to take stock of current needs and determine priorities. CIC anticipates that the development process for a joint plan would differ from that for the COIA Strategic Plan. CIC recommends that a plan should provide an adequate timeframe for consultations and planning processes, as well as the development and implementation of planned joint activities. Other stakeholders (Service Provider Organizations, academics, other government departments (OGDs), municipalities, etc.) would be consulted as deemed necessary by the joint parties. | • Between January-April 2012, CIC will invite MCI to DG-level meetings to take stock of current needs and determine priorities and will produce a statement of joint stock-taking results and identification of priorities.  
• If a formal COIA successor arrangement with Ontario is put in place, CIC would work with Ontario's Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) to develop a joint plan. Co-approval of Plan by Directors General Ontario Region, Integration Branch and IPMB and the MCI equivalent, subject to MCI agreement. | DG, Ontario Region is overall lead, in collaboration with NHQ.                                                                                                                                      | Q-1 FY 2012-13 |
<p>|                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Co-approval of Plan by Directors General Ontario Region, Integration Branch and IPMB and the MCI equivalent, subject to MCI agreement. | TBD               |</p>
<table>
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<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Completion date</th>
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</table>
| 2. During the development of any future joint plan, it is recommended that a more comprehensive and a whole of government approach is adopted by including both federal and provincial programming and by taking into account other relevant emerging broader policy frameworks. | CIC agrees that a whole of government approach and relevant federal frameworks should be taken into account with the involvement of other partners as required.  
The Department recommends strengthening the outcomes of any joint plan through the inclusion of, and a strengthened alignment with, provincial programming and municipal partnerships.  
Information sharing for this purpose should be timely and as transparent as possible on the part of both governments.  
CIC would engage municipalities and a representative sample of service providers, including umbrella organizations such as OCASI, during the development of the plan. | If a future formal COIA successor arrangement with Ontario is put in place, CIC will provide briefings, materials and involve OGDs relevant to the plan. From the federal perspective, the plan could be informed by, for example: ongoing joint work underway since COIA; immigrant-focused policies and programming by OGDs; the outcomes embedded in the Modernized Approach; results of the modernized approach CFP in 2010; gaps identified through CFP development; LIPS action plans; and, national needs assessment and settlement planning work currently underway. Based on those activities, CIC will produce:  
- Record of bilateral consultations with OGDS.  
- Minutes of meetings with MCI, including participation of OGDs and other stakeholders and supporting documents used at meetings.  
- Links and reference to other federal frameworks and programs will be identified in the final plan. | DG Ontario Region, in collaboration with DG Integration and the MCI equivalent, subject to MCI agreement. | Subject to signing an agreement, within 6 months of signature. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<th>Accountability</th>
<th>Completion date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. It is recommended that the governance structure of any future joint plan be streamlined and redesigned, reducing the number of committees, and establishing clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.</td>
<td>The Department agrees that the governance of the strategic plan should be efficient with clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities established at the outset. The Department notes that while governance of the strategic plan under COIA may have been viewed as cumbersome, the working group activities did lead to significant changes in programming and the participation of municipalities in program design through the working groups did increase the municipal understanding of settlement issues. The working groups created a significant number of viable recommendations which were implemented or are being implemented by CIC. The Department will discuss with MCI how to accord governance of the plan with the outcomes of the plan, using existing governance mechanisms and/or new ones (e.g. LIPs, permanent and ad hoc structures such as working groups, advisory committees and/or planning tables). International and Inter-Governmental Relations Branch will lead on the broader governance issues for any COIA successor arrangement.</td>
<td>Subject to a future formal successor arrangement, CIC, in collaboration with MCI will develop an efficient, flexible governance and committee structure for the plan, including clear roles and responsibilities. Deliverables will include: • governance structure • terms of reference of committees • action plans for each structure.</td>
<td>DG Ontario Region, in collaboration with DGs Integration and IIR, and subject to MCI agreement.</td>
<td>Subject to signing an agreement, within 6 months of signature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. It is recommended that any future joint plan, in addition to settlement and language training, include a separate strategic priority to address employment in a comprehensive and structured way, taking into account the roles played by various stakeholders in this area.

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4. It is recommended that any future joint plan, in addition to settlement and language training, include a separate strategic priority to address employment in a comprehensive and structured way, taking into account the roles played by various stakeholders in this area. | The Department agrees with this recommendation. CIC supports the objective of a vibrant Ontario economy and is partnering with OGDs and Ontario to achieve optimum economic outcomes of immigrants. The Department also recognizes that provincial activities funded through federal funding via the Labour Market Agreement form an important part of comprehensive, structured programming. To that end CIC and MCI are currently co-leading a Labour Market Working Group established under the COIA to support the development of outcome-focused, coordinated services and delivery models that match immigrants’ labour market needs and Ontario’s labour market conditions, and to define and clarify approaches to labour market integration programs and services for newcomers. CIC is also working closely with the Province of Ontario through a $22M contribution to the MCI Bridge training program which supports bridging programs for newcomers to Ontario, to help them develop their knowledge of the Canadian labour market and official languages. | CIC will participate in the Labour Market Working Group, in line with federal priorities. CIC will monitor results of the bridging contribution agreement to ensure that desired outcomes meet federal priorities and respond to the evolving needs of newcomers in Ontario. CIC will continue contributing to the ON Bridging Program until its expiration on March 31, 2013, as appropriate and subject to federal funding priorities. CIC will produce the following deliverables:  
- Calls for proposals include employer outreach.  
- Labour Market Working Group terms of reference, records of meetings and activities.  
- Bridging agreement performance reports and assessments | DG Ontario Region in collaboration with DGs Integration and IPMB. | December 2011  
December 2011; ongoing reporting on environmental scans, reviews and related projects.  
Documented outcomes and outputs at the end of each year of the multi-year bridging CA. |
5. As the two orders of government pursue the full implementation of the coordinated language assessment and referral system (CLARS), it is recommended that they investigate the feasibility of creating a harmonized language training system.

The Department agrees with the recommendation to invest in the implementation of the CLARS program, including the establishment of shared goals and objectives. CIC notes that significant progress has been made with the federal and provincial harmonization of language assessment processes, through the development and piloting of the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) and views this approach as a model of cooperation between the two orders of government. Full implementation of the CLARS pilot, contingent on the results of its evaluation, would, in itself, contribute significantly to the harmonization of language programming in Ontario. CIC favours an approach that will achieve efficiencies, avoid duplication and strive to reduce programming gaps. With complementarity, gaps would be examined to see the partner best placed to deliver specific language programming. CIC would work closely with MCI to ensure that complementarity between the federal and provincial language programming leads to positive results for newcomers in Ontario.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td>5. As the two orders of government pursue the full implementation of the coordinated language assessment and referral system (CLARS), it is recommended that they investigate the feasibility of creating a harmonized language training system.</td>
<td>The Department agrees with the recommendation to investigate if there is a need to further harmonize language training and has a strong interest in the establishment of shared goals and objectives leading to increased complementarity of language training programming in Ontario. CIC notes that significant progress has been made with the federal and provincial harmonization of language assessment processes, through the development and piloting of the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) and views this approach as a model of cooperation between the two orders of government. Full implementation of the CLARS pilot, contingent on the results of its evaluation, would, in itself, contribute significantly to the harmonization of language programming in Ontario. CIC favours an approach that will achieve efficiencies, avoid duplication and strive to reduce programming gaps. With complementarity, gaps would be examined to see the partner best placed to deliver specific language programming. CIC would work closely with MCI to ensure that complementarity between the federal and provincial language programming leads to positive results for newcomers in Ontario.</td>
<td>CIC will work with MCI to implement CLARS, subject to evaluation of the pilot with the following deliverables: • Evaluation of CLARS pilot (including an interim cost-sharing arrangement and a programme implementation model). • CLARS guidelines available province-wide for implementation MCI clients in HARTS; cost-sharing agreement with MCI. • Implementation of plan with ongoing cost-sharing agreement. CIC will work with MCI to achieve and document sufficient complementarity of language programming in Ontario, including: • Development of definitions for “complementarity” and “harmonised programming”. • Development of shared goals and objectives for complementary programming. • Determination of implications for programming and learner pathways.</td>
<td>DG Ontario Region leads on CLARS, in collaboration with DGs Integration and IPMB, and subject to MCI agreement.</td>
<td>December 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DG Integration leads on feasibility of harmonisation of language system, in collaboration with DG, Ontario and subject to MCI agreement.</td>
<td>December 2012</td>
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<td>FY2013-14, Subject to MCI Agreement</td>
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<td>Dec 2012</td>
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<td>Recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. It is recommended that any future joint plan include the development and implementation of a performance measurement strategy to guide on-going joint performance data collection activities and to ensure information is available to support future evaluation activities. As part of this strategy, a review of existing federal and provincial databases and systems should be undertaken, with a view to ensuring the availability of performance information to assess outcomes, while not overburdening SPOs and others who will be tasked with providing data. The systems should also be supported by tools, guidance and training to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected.</td>
<td>The Department strongly supports performance measurement and is implementing a performance measurement system for its Settlement Program. CIC is also increasing its report generation capabilities through its iCAMS data collection system. CIC does not agree that a separate performance measurement strategy for an Ontario plan is necessary. From the federal perspective, it is intended that the outcomes of CIC’s Settlement Program would be incorporated into the plan, reflecting program terms and conditions. Outputs and outcomes from federal programming resulting from the plan could be measured using the performance measurement system and outcomes measurement activities. The Department agrees that joint data collection activities for co-funded and co-managed activities, where feasible, could assist in reporting and measurement of outcomes of joint activities. Data sharing arrangements with MCI would help ensure that output data would be reported in iCAMS. CIC works closely with various stakeholders and SPOs to improve data gathering and reporting of outputs while reducing the administrative burden on them. Any joint reporting on data would need to be assessed for its impact on this reporting burden. CIC also notes that MCI is participating in the work to develop and maintain a national settlement framework which will permit CIC, MCI and other Provinces/Territories to know more about outcomes of newcomers and improve their interventions to ensure that newcomers fully integrate into Canadian society.</td>
<td>Where feasible, joint data collection to assist reporting on outcomes of joint activities. Alignment of the outcomes of the plan with the outcomes of CIC’s Settlement Program and its terms and conditions. Implementation of a suite of measures to better measure immediate and intermediate Settlement program outcomes. Deliverables will include:  - Formal information sharing agreements with MCI such as Memorandums of Understanding  - Annual report on usage of applicable settlement services by eligible clients in Ontario  - Ontario report from Pan-Canadian client survey for settlement.</td>
<td>DG Integration</td>
<td>Subject to signing of a formal partnership arrangement. End of each FY. Subject to timing of report - expected March 2013</td>
</tr>
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Introduction

Purpose of the evaluation

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Strategic Plan for Settlement and Language Training under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA).

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide an objective assessment of the relevance of the Strategic Plan in terms of:

- need for the Strategic Plan;
- consistency with government roles and responsibilities defined in COIA;
- alignment with priorities and objectives;

and the performance of the Strategic Plan in terms of:

- progress in implementing the actions proposed in the Strategic Plan; and
- the effectiveness of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, including its design and delivery, and the capacity of the delivery partners to lead, manage, and monitor activities.

Contents of the document

The report is organized into four main sections: Section 1 describes the context of the Strategic Plan in terms of its background, objectives, stakeholders and resources; Section 2 describes the evaluation methodology; Section 3 presents the overall findings; and Section 4 presents conclusions and recommendations. The report is supplemented by an appendix which provides a detailed description of the methodologies used in this evaluation including the data collection instruments and a profile of the projects funded under the Plan.
1. Context of the strategic plan

1.1. The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement

In November 2005, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario signed the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA) (referred to in this document as the Agreement) which established a five-year framework for cooperation between the two levels of government in the area of immigration.

The COIA defined roles and responsibilities of the two governments and outlined several objectives related to recruitment, selection and settlement of newcomers in Ontario. To support the settlement-related objectives, in addition to existing base funding of $108M per year, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) planned to invest $920M in new funding for settlement and language training programs and services in Ontario over a five-year period from 2005/06 to 2009/10. This funding was to bring the federal per capita investment in Ontario to the $3,000 per newcomer, as recommended by the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration in its 2003 report. The COIA was extended for 2010/11 and additional funding in the amount of $428M was committed for that year.

1.2. The strategic plan for settlement and language training

To support the investment, the Agreement stipulated that one of the key priorities was to undertake the joint development of a four-year strategy for settlement service delivery in Ontario.

In 2006, CIC and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration of Ontario (MCI) began to work together to identify specific needs and gaps in the settlement and language sectors in Ontario. This exercise, which involved a review of existing research and consultations with newcomers and organizations providing settlement services, identified a set of specific needs (see Exhibit 1) and groups that were under-served: women, youth, seniors, and Francophone immigrants. This needs assessment exercise informed the design of the Strategic Plan for Settlement and Language Training (referred to in this document as the Plan).

The main purpose of the Plan was to support the achievement of the following long-term outcomes:

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibit 1: Identified Needs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment needs:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Better information prior to arrival;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Guidance on how and where to find work in Canada;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Timely professional and skills accreditation;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Employers who value diversity in the workplace and recognize skills that newcomers bring.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Official language (English/French) proficiency needs:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Effective language assessment both pre- and post-arrival;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accessible client-centred official language referral and training;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Work-related language training.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information and guidance, and initial orientation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accurate, relevant, practical and accessible information, pre- and post arrival;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Orientation to life in Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other needs:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to interact socially with Canadian residents and other newcomers;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emotional and social support;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sources for financial assistance and related tools;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Affordable housing;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to appropriate health care, including mental health services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Strategic Plan, 2006

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5 The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement, November 2005.
• Newcomers are welcomed and fully integrated into Canadian and Ontario communities;
• Newcomers are engaged and participate in all sectors of Ontario/Canadian society — economic, social, political and cultural; and
• Ontario/Canadian society and communities benefit from the contribution of newcomers.\(^6\)

In support of the achievement of these long-term outcomes, the following intermediate outcomes were identified in the Plan:

- Newcomers can access the full range of community resources and services;
- Newcomers participate in the economic, cultural, social and civic life of their communities;
- Newcomers have sufficient English or French skills to support social and economic integration;
- Newcomers have paid work consistent with their education, skills and experience;
- Communities welcome, retain and support newcomers, including minority official language communities; and
- Local communities benefit from the contributions of newcomers.

To enable the achievement of these intermediate outcomes, the Strategic Plan outlined four strategies and related actions that were to guide the programming in Ontario for the next four years, linked to a number of immediate outcomes. Table 1-1 identifies the linkages between the immediate outcomes and the four strategies.

**Table 1-1: Linkages between immediate outcomes and plan strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate outcomes</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>address gaps in availability and accessibility</td>
<td><strong>Strategy 1:</strong> Develop a flexible, coordinated system of settlement services with strong linkages and clear pathways to service newcomers’ needs. Examples of activities under this strategy included expanding the availability of pre-arrival services, building an effective information and referral system, developing responsive and innovative services and delivery models, and improving access to services in French. Other activities were to be identified during the implementation of the Plan. In addition, activities targeting the capacity of the settlement sector were also identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve the capacity of the settlement sector to manage and deliver the COIA settlement and language training activities</td>
<td><strong>Strategy 2:</strong> Build on existing services to develop and implement a comprehensive language assessment, referral and training system that assists newcomers to become competent in English or French as quickly as possible. Some activities under this strategy included expanding language training levels, developing and implementing occupation-specific language training, common standards for assessment and language learning evaluation, and creating linkages with settlement services. This strategy also focused on capacity development within the language training sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve client pathway management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engage partners, municipalities and employers</td>
<td><strong>Strategy 3:</strong> Work with municipalities and federal and provincial government departments to enable partnerships that will integrate newcomers in the economic and social life of Ontario communities. Examples of activities included funding innovative programs at the local level, funding the development of online and other municipal resources, and providing opportunities for municipalities to share information and participate in the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>align mechanisms and partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Immediate outcomes planning of integration services for their communities.

- improve the availability of information
- improve program accountability
- ensure program management is needs- and outcomes-focused

**Strategy 4:** Design, fund and administer settlement and language training programs based on how well they support desired outcomes (evidence-based). Examples of activities included but were not limited to: monitoring of service delivery and program results, conducting evaluation studies, literature reviews, research studies, and improving management information systems.

The logic model developed for the Strategic Plan can be found in the Methodology Appendix.

### 1.3. Settlement and language training programs

Through the four Strategies, the Plan provided direction on how the existing settlement and language training programs should be enhanced and how the linkages between them strengthened. The settlement and language training programs delivered by CIC and MCI during the implementation of the Strategic Plan are described briefly below.

#### 1.3.1. CIC Programs

During the years under review, CIC delivered four main settlement and language training programs in Canada, including in Ontario. Table 1-2 provides a general description of each of these programs and their link to the four strategies.

In 2008, during the implementation of the Strategic Plan, CIC merged all its settlement programs, including language training programs, under an integrated settlement program (the Modernized Approach) with 5 streams; however, since no projects were delivered in the period under review using this approach, it did not affect the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

**Table 1-2: CIC Programs and their link to the four strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Language Instructions to Newcomers in Canada Program (LINC)/Cours de langue pour immigrants au</td>
<td>LINC/CLIC A</td>
<td>Direct delivery of language training in English (LINC) or French (CLIC) to newcomers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LINC/CLIC B</td>
<td>Capacity building for language training and assessment services organizations and the sector, including teacher training, development of new tools, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance measurement/research and evaluations of language training programs or needs assessment for those services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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7 CIC delivers programs in all provinces, excluding Quebec, British Columbia and Manitoba that deliver their own settlement and language training programs.

8 While CIC delivered other smaller settlement programs during this period, they are not included in this evaluation as they do not fall within the scope of the Strategic Plan. In addition, several initiatives, projects and programs were delivered at the national level supported partially from the COIA and other provincial allocations. This includes national programs such as the Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) and other projects. These projects also fall outside the scope of this evaluation.
**1.3.2. MCI Programs**

MCI delivers settlement, language training and employment-focused programs to newcomers\(^9\) in the Province. The budget for operating expenditures and grants and contribution funding allocated to these programs grew from $92M in 2005/06 to approximately $133M in 2009/10\(^{10}\). With the exception of the Municipal Immigration Information Online (MIIO), these programs did not receive funding through COIA. That said, given the Plan’s intent to increase collaboration and harmonization between CIC and MCI programs, Table 1-3 outlines the various MCI programs and their link to the four strategies.

**Table 1-3: MCI Programs and their link to the four strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP)</td>
<td>Provides settlement services such as assistance with finding housing, registering children in school and referrals to other services</td>
<td><img src="" alt=" " /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn English or French/ Adult Non-Credit Language Training Program</td>
<td>Known as English/French as a Second Language (ESL/FSL), this Program provides language training instruction through tuition-free language programs delivered by school boards</td>
<td><img src="" alt=" " /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^9\) Newcomers eligible to receive services in Ontario include permanent residents, Canadian citizens, and refugee claimants.

\(^{10}\) Results-Based Plan Briefing Book, MCI.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Interpreter Services Grants</td>
<td>Provides grants to social, health care, and legal service providers to provide interpreter services to help victims of domestic violence whose language is neither English nor French, available in 60 languages, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Administered by MCI and Funded by the Ontario government’s Women’s Directorate</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ontario Bridge Training Program (OBTP) (Co-funded with CIC for the ELT Component)</td>
<td>Assists skilled newcomers to access licensure and employment in their field, without duplicating previous training and education. Services include academic and technical training, opportunities to gain Canadian work experience, employment services, and workforce integration strategies.</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Experience Ontario</td>
<td>A multi-channel (phone, email, and in-person) access centre providing information and referral services to internationally-trained individuals (ITIs) to help them qualify for professional practice in Ontario</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Immigration Information Online (MIIO) funded through COIA budget.</td>
<td>Provides information to newcomers about specific municipalities, their offerings and services available. MIIOs provide funds to municipalities and engage them in the settlement process.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.4. Stakeholders

The key stakeholders involved in the delivery of the Strategic Plan were CIC and MCI, Ontario municipalities, service provider organizations, and newcomers and Ontarians at large.

- **CIC**: The Ontario Regional office and local CIC offices throughout the province (Peel/Halton, York, Ottawa, Toronto (2), Sudbury, London, Kitchener, Hamilton and Windsor) manage settlement programs in Ontario, including the establishment of contribution agreements with service-provider organizations and participation in COIA working groups and committees. At National headquarters (NHQ), several Branches also participate in the Strategic Plan through participation in various committees and working groups.

- **MCI**: The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration of Ontario (MCI) delivers several settlement and newcomer language training programs in the Province. MCI was actively involved in the development of the Plan, in its governance and working group structures. While not directly involved in project administration or management, MCI received reports from CIC on the expenditure of COIA funds.

- **Municipalities**: Municipalities are a stakeholder in the area of settlement as they are involved in addressing newcomer settlement needs in their communities. The involvement of municipalities in the Strategic Plan was defined under Strategy 3, which focused on engaging them in planning municipal-level strategies for attracting, retaining

### Exhibit 2: Role of Service Provider Organizations

Settlement programs are not delivered directly to newcomers by CIC or MCI. Rather, CIC and MCI provide funding to service provider organizations (SPOs) to deliver services to clients. Frequently, the same SPOs receive funding from both levels of government. SPOs may include not-for-profit and other non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, community groups, private sector businesses, and individuals.
and serving newcomers. As well, they were to be increasingly involved in settlement services planning and implementation through their participation in the Strategic Plan governance structure.

- **Service Provider Organizations (SPOs):** Service provider organizations in the context of this evaluation are the 347 organizations that received funding to deliver their program or provide services under the Strategic Plan. SPOs include settlement organizations (those that provide services mainly to newcomer clients) (192 of the 347 organizations), community and mainstream organizations with newcomer clients (such as school boards) (94) and organizations such as consulting or research companies that provide indirect services, such as capacity-building, the development of tools or research (61) (see Exhibit 2).

- **Newcomers** were the main beneficiaries of the Strategic Plan as they were to benefit from the investment through improved services. Newcomers include permanent residents and, in the case of provincial programming, they also include refugee claimants and Canadian citizens.

- **Ontarians** were to benefit from newcomers’ economic and social contributions to the Province, which the Strategic Plan aimed to facilitate.

1.5. **Roles and responsibilities**

1.5.1. **Governance**

The COIA was governed by a set of committees under the lead of the Joint Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Deputy Ministers of CIC and MCI (see Exhibit 3). The Management Committee was charged with identifying overall annual priorities and workplans for COIA, including the settlement and language training components.

Within the COIA governance structure, several committees contributed directly to the management of the Strategic Plan (elements not highlighted in Exhibit 3). Among those, the Settlement and Language Training Steering Committee was created to support the effective implementation of the Strategic Plan through identifying new topics for research, analyzing and approving recommendations received from the Working Groups, and establishing annual work plans for the overall Strategic Plan-related programming. This Committee was supported by two working groups: the Settlement Working Group and the Language Training Working Group. Both Groups were established in 2007 and were comprised of officials from CIC and MCI and municipal representatives. Their main roles and responsibilities were to provide input to the implementation of the Strategic Plan, develop annual work plans for their respective areas, and propose new initiatives based on research of emerging needs and service gaps. The Working Groups were also responsible for facilitating opportunities to harmonize programs and strengthen cross-program collaboration and coordination. Two other groups were also part of the Strategic Plan governance structure: the Evaluation and Accountability Sub-Committee and the Research and Accountability Working Group. These two groups were in charge of providing support to the performance measurement and evaluation functions of the Strategic Plan and provided input to this evaluation.
1.5.2. Program management

While the two orders of government, through participation in the consultation process and in the governance structure, identified key areas for new types of activities, the majority of the program implementation was managed by CIC’s regional and local offices. The exceptions were the MIIOs and OBTP which were managed by MCI.

1.6. Resources

Under the Agreement, the federal government committed to providing a total of $920M in new funding to support settlement and language training services in Ontario over the period 2005/06 to 2009/10 in addition to $540M in base funding previously allocated to the province. Out of the new funds, approximately $849M was allocated to support settlement programming in Ontario and the remainder, around $70M, was allocated to the management of other COIA activities and to national projects. National projects, funded through commitments from all provincial allocations, fall outside the scope of the Strategic Plan as they are guided by a set of different priorities.
As all ISAP, LINC, Host and ELT projects delivered in Ontario between 2006/07 and 2009/10 were guided by the Strategic Plan, to facilitate the analysis of the value added of the new funds, an assumption was made that the base funding was spent first and the new funds were spent once base funding was depleted. Table 1-4 shows that of the $849M in new funding that was committed for the Strategic Plan, $671M was actually spent for a variance of $178M. In addition, of the $70M allocated to other COIA activities, $30M were not spent, for a total variance between allocated COIA resources and expenditures equal to $207M.

Even though COIA was signed in the year 2005, the delivery of programs in the year 2005/06 was largely unaffected by the Strategic Plan or by additional COIA funds. Therefore, while the report presents information on the total budget and expenditures, by comparing the level of investment and number of activities in 2005/06 (supported largely by the base finding only) and the level of investment and activities in subsequent years, the evaluation focuses on an assessment of the value added of the new resources.

Table 1-4: Number of Projects and Expenditures for Employment-Specific Programming Resources – Resources ($ Millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vote 1-New funds</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$3</td>
<td>$7</td>
<td>$8</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$7</td>
<td>$8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vote 5-New funds</td>
<td>$3</td>
<td>$3</td>
<td>$63</td>
<td>$52</td>
<td>$180</td>
<td>$117</td>
<td>$287</td>
<td>$191</td>
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<td>Total New funds</td>
<td>$3</td>
<td>$3</td>
<td>$66</td>
<td>$59</td>
<td>$188</td>
<td>$122</td>
<td>$292</td>
<td>$198</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vote 5 - Base</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
<td>$108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Other COIA</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$9</td>
<td>$13</td>
<td>$8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vote 5</td>
<td>$1</td>
<td>$1</td>
<td>$1</td>
<td>$2</td>
<td>$8</td>
<td>$4</td>
<td>$13</td>
<td>$5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Other COIA</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$-</td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>$21</td>
<td>$11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Funds</td>
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<td>$111</td>
<td>$185</td>
<td>$169</td>
<td>$304</td>
<td>$241</td>
<td>$421</td>
<td>$317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIC financial systems

Note: Vote 1 refers to operating resources while Vote 5 refers to grants and contributions resources. Vote 5 Strategic Plan resources, in addition to Ontario Region funds, includes also ELT funds distributed to Ontario Region by NHQ in 2006/07 and the MIIO funds provided to MCI
2. Evaluation methodology

This section presents the evaluation methodology, including a definition of its scope, lines of evidence and strengths and limitations. For a more detailed discussion on the methodology, including each of the lines of evidence, see the Methodology Appendix.

2.1. Evaluation scope

Timeframe: The evaluation covered the period since the inception of the Strategic Plan in fiscal year 2006/07 to 2009/10. Since the year 2005/06 was largely devoted to the development of the Strategic Plan and not affected by its directions, information for year 2005/06 is included to present a baseline for an assessment of the value added of the Strategic Plan.

Funding: While the stated purpose of the Strategic Plan was to guide the new investment under the COIA, the Strategic Plan guided all projects delivered in Ontario under the ISAP, LINC, Host and ELT projects between 2006/07-2009/10. As it is not possible to separate the projects supported by the base funding from those supported by the new funds, an assumption was made that without the COIA, resources would remain constant at the 2005/06 level. Therefore, while the information on resources for 2005/06 is presented, it is only included as a base for comparison purposes.

CIC Programs: CIC main programs, such as ISAP, LINC, ELT and Host were included in the scope. Excluded are programs delivered in the province that were supported by other national initiatives (e.g., Canada’s Action Plan Against Racism) and national projects (e.g., Canadian Orientation Abroad).

MCI Programs: Discussion of the MCI programs is only partial and focuses mostly on the programs supported by COIA funding (MHOs), co-funded projects (Ontario BTP/ELT) and the analysis of linkages between CIC and MCI programs (e.g., language). It does not extend to an examination of any MCI programs in detail. Examples of MCI programs are provided as they relate to specific strategies under the Strategic Plan to present a more comprehensive picture of the programs delivered to support newcomers, and to provide background information to inform the analysis of harmonization efforts between the two levels of governments.

Outcome Levels: The logic model for the Strategic Plan (provided in the Methodology Appendix) was used to define the evaluation questions. The evaluation focused on an assessment of the degree to which immediate outcomes were achieved through the implementation of the four Strategies, rather than an assessment of outcomes of the programs as they relate to clients.\footnote{Outcome evaluations were recently conducted of the ISAP, Host and LINC programs.}

2.2. Lines of evidence

The evaluation relied on multiple lines of evidence to thoroughly address the questions and indicators as specified in the evaluation matrix (see the Methodology Appendix). Lines of evidence for this evaluation are briefly described below, while a more detailed description of the methodology for each of the lines of evidence, including a description of processes and challenges, is provided in the Methodology Appendix.

- Preliminary interviews (n=4): CIC, in collaboration with MCI, developed a methodology to assess the Strategic Plan (including the evaluation matrix) prior to engaging consultants to
conduct the evaluation. Once engaged, the consultants conducted four interviews with CIC and MCI representatives to confirm and clarify the scope of the evaluation and identify potential opportunities and challenges.

- **Document review:** Federal and provincial policy documents, CIC and MCI program documentation, documentation related to the work of the Settlement and Language Training Steering Committee and its two Working Groups, recent evaluation reports on settlement and language training programs, and selected publicly-available research and literature were reviewed (see the Methodology Appendix). The document review informed all evaluation questions.

- **Key informant interviews (n=34):** In-depth interviews were conducted with CIC representatives at National Headquarters (NHQ) and in the regional and local CIC offices in Ontario, with MCI senior management and program staff, with municipal representatives and with representatives of SPOs. The interviews informed all evaluation questions.

- **Case studies (n=10):** Case studies of specific COIA-funded projects or services delivered by SPOs were conducted. Case studies were selected to ensure that strategies 1 through 3 were covered (strategy 4 was covered through specific questions in each of the cases), that they included large urban and smaller centres, provided examples of projects that focused on specific target groups, and covered examples of new approaches, including projects co-funded by MCI and CIC, online initiatives, itinerant services and partnership initiatives. Each case study included a project document review, a set of interviews with management and staff of the organizations, and half included focus groups with clients and/or other stakeholders. Case studies were primarily used to assess performance and design and delivery.

- **Survey:** An online survey of Service Provider Organizations who received funding from CIC was conducted. One survey was sent to each organization to prevent multiple responses. Most of the surveys were addressed to executive directors or, in the case of larger organizations, to managers in charge of the programs. Of the 350 surveys sent, 143 completed responses were received (for a 43% rate of completion). While the survey did not include organizations funded exclusively by MCI, a significant proportion of the respondents received funding from both CIC and MCI (50%). The survey was organized around the questions relating to the four Strategies and design and delivery questions. Among the respondents, 84 identified themselves as settlement service providers and responded to questions regarding Strategy 1; 76 identified themselves as language service providers and responded to questions regarding Strategy 2. Other organizations that answered the survey were mainstream organizations (defined as organizations that provide services to a broad range of clients, including newcomers (e.g., hospitals)) (60) and organizations that provide indirect services (e.g., research, capacity building) (55). All respondents replied to questions regarding strategies 3 and 4 as well as design and delivery. Survey data were used to assess performance, and design and delivery.

- **Administrative data analysis:**
  - **Project profile:** Projects were identified through a unique record and were defined in terms of their objectives, the activities delivered, the delivery agent (i.e., SPO) and contribution agreement(s). An analysis of information was conducted after administrative data from various sources was combined into a single file. This exercise resulted in a

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12 Some of the settlement service providers may be also providing language services.
database of 982 projects delivered in Ontario between 05/06 and 09/10, which represents 99.5% of the Grants and Contributions (G&C) expenditures (Vote 5) in the Region during that period. A project may deliver more than one activity and can be a multi-year (mostly for Strategy 1 or 2) or a one-year investment (mostly for Strategy 3 and 4). As many projects deliver more than one activity (e.g., individual and group activities under ISAP), the main unit of analysis presented in the report is an activity rather than a project. This information was used to assess performance: a comparison of the number of activities delivered in 2005/06 versus 2009/10 was used as an approximation of the value added of the new funding. This metric is based on volumes only, as budgets and expenditures cannot be allocated to activities.

Client information: Three databases were used to compile client information where available. Information on the ISAP, Host and LINC programs was obtained from CIC’s Immigration-Contributions Accountability Measurement System (iCAMS13) database, while data on specific ISAP activities such as Settlement Workers in Schools, Library Settlement Partnership and Settlement Workers in LINC was obtained from the Online Tracking Information System (OTIS). Data on clients of the Enhanced Language Training program was available only for 2009/10 through the History of Assessments, Referrals and Training (HART system). Client information was used to assess performance.

2.3. Strengths and limitations

2.3.1. Strengths

- **Multiple data sources:** Multiple data sources were used to inform various questions, thereby ensuring triangulation of data, and increasing confidence in the findings.

- **Baseline:** One of the main strengths of this evaluation is the existence of a baseline. Fiscal year 2005/06 was used to provide a basis of comparison for progress made under the Strategic Plan. Throughout the report, information on the number of projects and expenditures are provided for both the baseline year and the most recent year under review. Therefore the value added of the additional funding in terms of the number of activities delivered can be assessed based on a comparison between the two years.

- **Consultations and feedback:** Feedback from CIC and MCI stakeholders was sought at various stages of the evaluation, including during planning, the design of all data collection instruments, and at the time of preliminary analysis and the creation of the draft report. Program staff in the Regional Office was also consulted during the development of the project profile to make sure the information is as complete and accurate as possible. The feedback received throughout the process was used to ensure that the evaluation responds to stakeholders’ needs and that all relevant information was taken into account.

- **Instrument design:** Recognizing that the interviewees and survey respondents, particularly municipal and SPO representatives, may lack awareness of the Strategic Plan, the design of the instruments was key in providing participants contextual information to ensure their input was relevant. The instruments were tailored to various groups of participants and included several appendices providing contextual and background information to assist the respondents in

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13 LINC client data are collected in the History of Assessment, Referrals and Training system (HARTs) and are subsequently downloaded to iCAMS.
providing relevant and reliable information. The data collection instruments are included in the Methodology Appendix.

- **Survey responses**: The response rate and the overlap between characteristics of the population of SPOs and survey respondents give a fairly high level of confidence in the survey findings (see the Methodology Appendix for the comparison of the SPO population with characteristics of respondents). The response rate of 43% is sufficient for the purposes of this evaluation as the profile of the respondents is similar to that of the SPO population in Ontario.

- **Newcomer demographics**: To provide information on the basic characteristics of newcomers coming to Ontario, CIC Facts & Figures publications for Ontario were used. While the numbers are based on the intended province of destination rather than an actual province of residence at the time of the evaluation, triangulating this data with client data suggests that around 92% of current clients had initially identified Ontario as their province of destination. As a result, the information gives an accurate demographic profile of newcomers in Ontario.

### 2.3.2. Limitations

Below are the challenges that were encountered during the conduct of the evaluation and that had an impact on the interpretation of data:

- **Project information**: The lack of a central, complete and comprehensive database that provides detailed project information by strategy presented a challenge. To develop such a database, data from various CIC databases and administrative documents was combined and projects were subsequently coded by strategy based on a predetermined coding scheme. Difficulties in the combination of data from various administrative databases became a challenge and significantly affected the timeline of the evaluation. While triangulation of data was used to validate information where possible (see Methodology Appendix for details on the process employed), some under- or over-estimation of the frequency of the delivery of specific activities is possible.

- **Client information**: While it was possible, to a large extent, to determine the number of clients by program, there were challenges in determining the number of clients by strategy and the number of unique clients accessing all relevant services. This is due to a lack of linkages between the various databases used to collect information (e.g., ISAP A data is collected in iCAMS, while the SWIS component of ISAP is collected in OTIS). Therefore, while the number of clients served in each individual program is known to a large extent, the total number of clients by Strategy is not. In addition, while all SPOs report the number of clients for the LINC program, not all SPOs report for ISAP A and the Host programs. This results in potentially underestimating the number of clients benefiting from those Programs.

The limitations stated above have been taken into consideration during the design of the data collection tools, and the data collection and analysis phases of the project. The under-or over-representation of the frequency of some project activities and client information had some impact on assessing the full extent of the changes to the programs and their reach and, consequently, of the value added of the Strategic Plan. Information about the number of specific services is a reflection of the minimum change recorded rather than a complete picture of the change. This does not affect the general direction of the trends, only their full magnitude. As a
result, these limitations do not have a significant impact on the overall findings, conclusions and recommendations found in this report.
3. Evaluation findings

This section summarizes the major findings of the evaluation regarding relevance, performance and design and delivery.

3.1. Relevance of the strategic plan

Using evidence from interviews, the document and literature review, and case studies, the following section describes the findings related to relevance, to respond to the following evaluation question:

• *Is the development and funding of the COLA Strategic Plan consistent with federal roles and responsibilities?*

The evaluation assessed this question by examining the consistency of the Strategic Plan with roles and responsibilities of the federal government, alignment between the Strategic Plan and federal government priorities and the overall need for the Strategic Plan. As the Strategic Plan is solely focused on the province of Ontario and involved the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration in its planning and implementation, the roles and responsibilities of the provincial government and its priorities are also examined.

3.1.1. Consistency with roles and responsibilities

**Finding:** The Strategic Plan enabled both levels of government to collaborate in a joint and strategic approach to direct federal investments in settlement services in Ontario. That said, the views of both levels of government differ regarding who should be leading the delivery of settlement services in the province. While both levels of government agree that municipalities play a key role in local planning and identifying local needs, representatives from each level of government felt that their respective level of government was best positioned to provide settlement services, with the other level of government providing input and helping to set broad directions.

To determine the extent to which the Strategic Plan is consistent with federal roles and responsibilities, one must first define the federal roles and responsibilities in relation to immigration and, by extension, to settlement.

**Constitutional considerations:** From a constitutional point of view, immigration stands somewhat apart, being among the very few areas of concurrent jurisdiction (*Constitution Act, 1867*, s. 95) where only in cases of a conflict would there be paramountcy of federal laws. While recruitment and selection of newcomers to Canada could be shared with provinces, only the federal government may grant citizenship to a newcomer and establish the conditions and procedures to be followed in order to grant citizenship (*Constitution Act, 1867*, s. 91.25). As a result, each of the two orders of government may intervene as much or as little as seems appropriate in the area of immigration, depending on the objectives and preferences of their respective governments. The Strategic Plan provided an opportunity for both levels of government to participate in defining settlement priorities and approaches and how to achieve them, thus fulfilling the constitutional shared jurisdiction provisions.

**Legislative and policy frameworks:** In order to fully understand the federal roles and responsibilities relative to immigration and, more specifically, integration, it is necessary to turn to other framework documents. Section 8 of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) permits the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to enter into agreements with provinces regarding
any issues legislated by IRPA. In addition, section 10.2 specifies that ‘The Minister must consult with the governments of the provinces respecting (...) the measures to be undertaken to facilitate their integration into Canadian society’. Thus, in this light, the Strategic Plan is an example of a consultative approach to address the integration of newcomers and aligns with the roles and responsibilities of the federal government.

**Perceptions of key stakeholders:** Given the wide variety of approaches available to deal with immigration issues, key stakeholders, including officials from CIC and MCI were asked to provide their views on the roles and responsibilities of each order of government. Overall, stakeholders interviewed felt that municipalities were best positioned to provide advice on local needs and undertake planning at the local level. The same level of agreement among interviewees was not found with respect to the roles of the federal and provincial governments.

MCI representatives interviewed for the evaluation felt the federal government’s role should be to set national frameworks and policies and focus on pre-arrival, while the provincial role should focus more on the delivery of settlement and integration services. The fact that the province has jurisdiction over matters such as education and healthcare was seen as positioning it well to create bridges between mainstream social services and the immigration sector. The provincial representatives also thought that this would allow for better coordination of settlement and language training services with other provincial programs in the fields of education and employment, both of which are perceived critical to the successful settlement process.

CIC representatives felt that the role of the federal government should encompass all aspects from pre-arrival to settlement, integration, citizenship and multiculturalism. In their view, the federal government plays a significant role in the development of national frameworks to ensure consistency in the application of service delivery mechanisms across the country. The role of the provincial government should be to help set direction and provide input on how programs could be developed.

### 3.1.2. Alignment with priorities and objectives

**Finding:** During the period under review, priorities of both levels of government were aligned as they shared a desire to ensure successful economic and social integration of newcomers and a vision for collaborative and coordinated efforts to achieve those outcomes. Given the variety of options available to put those priorities into action, having a joint plan that established specific strategies and supported a coordinated approach was appropriate. The Strategic Plan, however, only provided direction regarding federal settlement programming, thereby limiting its reach and scope.

**Federal objectives:** The current IRPA describes a number of objectives, including the following, which are particularly relevant for the purpose of this evaluation:

- To permit Canada to pursue the maximum social, cultural, and economic benefits of immigration;
- To support the development of a strong and prosperous Canadian economy, in which the benefits of immigration are shared across all regions of Canada; and
- To promote the successful integration of permanent residents into Canada, while recognizing that integration involves mutual obligations for new immigrants and Canadian society (IRPA 2001, s. 3).
As the lead federal government department in matters of immigration, CIC’s mandate is based on the principles of shared jurisdiction of Section 95 of the Constitution Act, 1867, the Citizenship Act, and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The mission of the department includes the integration of immigrants into Canada in a way that maximizes their contribution to the country. Aligned with this mission is the department’s Strategic Objective to ensure successful integration of newcomers to Canada. CIC’s strategy to ensure the achievement of this outcome is to collaborate with key partners to deliver the highest-quality programs that are efficient and responsive to community needs.

The set of settlement programs delivered by CIC at the time of the inception of the Strategic Plan were the ISAP, LINC, and Host Programs. In 2008, the set of settlement programs delivered by CIC were merged into one program, known as the Modernized Approach, with five expected outcomes:

A. Information/Orientation – Newcomers make informed decisions about their settlement and understand life in Canada;
B. Language/Skills – Newcomers have language/skills needed to function in Canada;
C. Labour Market Access – Newcomers obtain the required assistance to find employment commensurate with their skills and education;
D. Welcoming Communities – Newcomers receive help to establish social and professional networks so they are engaged and feel welcomed in their communities; and
E. Policy and Program Development – To ensure effective delivery and achieve comparable settlement outcomes across Canada.

The new projects delivered in Ontario will have to follow this new programming framework. A set of projects governed by this new approach is to begin in Ontario in 2011/12.

Provincial objectives: The Province of Ontario has used a different approach for establishing its own specific policy goals and objectives relative to immigration. It has not opted for an overall legislative framework, rather, it has proceeded with a mixed approach that includes but is not limited to:

− Specific provisions dealing with newcomers within a number of pieces of legislation relating to various areas such as social assistance, disability support, family benefits, health, and education; and
− The establishment, in 2007, of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner dealing with foreign credentials (Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006).

On that basis, the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration has set five policy priorities specific to immigration:

− Attraction initiatives (particularly as they relate to addressing labour market needs through immigration) and enhancing pre-arrival services;
− Coordination of settlement services, including coordination with the federal government to increase federal funding;
− A comprehensive language training system, including working with the federal government to develop a joint language assessment and training system;
− Labour market integration; and
− Community and employer engagement including engagement of municipalities (MCI, 2011).
The period covered by the Strategic Plan coincided with a policy milestone, as the Province of Ontario and the federal government signed in November 2005 the first Labour Market Development Agreement. In accordance with the Agreement, the province of Ontario became responsible, as of January 1, 2007, for the design and delivery of all labour market programs and services funded through the Employment Insurance Program.

**COIA obligations:** As per the COIA, Canada and Ontario agreed that one of the key priorities was to undertake joint development of a strategy for settlement service delivery and language training in Ontario and to examine harmonization in the delivery of settlement services funded by Canada and Ontario. The Plan was designed in order to address this priority by outlining specific actions under four strategies.

The four strategies included in the Strategic Plan directly aligned with the overall goals of both orders of government: Strategies 1 and 2 aimed to improve the delivery of settlement services and language training as well as their coordination; Strategy 3 emphasized the need for partnerships, a goal particularly important when policy goals overlap; and Strategy 4 supported an outcome-driven approach to the implementation of the Strategic Plan, which both orders of government had embraced.

The scope of the plan, as originally conceived, was to primarily guide the new federal investment under COIA. As stated in the Plan itself, “to guide the new investment under the COLA, the federal and provincial governments, with input from stakeholders, have jointly developed this Strategic Plan.” In that sense, the Plan was largely a joint federal-provincial approach to investing federal funding for language training and settlement programs. The provincial programming was not systematically incorporated into the implementation of the Plan. This has posed some challenges in understanding the full picture of the investment, programming and results in Ontario that flow from both the federal and provincial initiatives.

In addition, while the Strategic Plan stated as its focus the delivery of settlement and language training services, it also acknowledged that “these supports cannot not be considered in isolation. The connections with Ontario’s labour-market initiatives (including the Labour Market Development Agreement), educational programs, and social services are considered critical to achieving the goal of successful integration of newcomers to the province.” While this statement appears in the Strategic Plan, it does not elaborate on any actions to be taken to align the Plan with other federal and provincial initiatives and policies.

### 3.1.3. Need for the strategic plan

**Finding:** Through the Strategic Plan, which provided a more focused approach to settlement and language training while allowing for flexibility and innovation, funders and service providers were in a better position to address a variety of needs and react to the changing environment in which they operated.

The significant immigration and economic trends that Ontario experienced throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan supported the need for such a Plan. By having a more focussed approach to settlement and language training that also allowed for flexibility, funders and providers of these services were in a better position to react efficiently to the changing environment in which they operated. The Strategic Plan provided for a directive, but at the same

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14 Strategic Plan for Settlement and Language Training, 2006
time flexible, approach that was guided by assessments of newcomer needs. These assessments, which were commissioned by the Settlement and Language Training Working Groups over the course of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, allowed for changes in program directions and the development of new activities as they were emerging.

**Immigration trends:** During the implementation of the Strategic Plan, immigration in Ontario declined, yet the province remained the primary destination for newcomers to Canada. In 2005, as COIA was being negotiated, 54% of newcomers who came to Canada selected Ontario as their intended province of destination (CIC, 2010). This means, in practical terms, out of more than 262,000 newcomers who immigrated to Canada in 2005, close to 141,000 landed in Ontario. Of this group, the vast majority (80%, 112,000) landed in Toronto. The second province of destination in terms of volume of immigration was British Columbia, which welcomed close to 45,000 newcomers. Four years later, in 2009, the number of newcomers coming to Ontario had decreased to approximately 107,000, including close to 83,000 (77%) who landed in Toronto. For Ontario, this represented a decline of 24% and, for Toronto, a decline of 27%. The only other province that experienced a decrease during the same period was British Columbia but to a far lesser degree (7% decline). All other provinces saw their volume of newcomers increase. As illustrated in Table 1-4, the most significant reduction in the number of newcomers to Ontario was among economic immigrants (from almost 80,000 (57%) in 2005 to around 55,000 (51%) in 2009) and refugees (from almost 22,000 (16%) in 2005 to less than 13,000 (12%) in 2009). Over this same time period, the proportion of immigrants in the family class increased from 25% to 31% although absolute numbers declined. Regardless of these declines, in 2009, two out of five newcomers to Canada landed in Ontario (see Table 3-1).

**Table 3-1:** Distribution of newcomers to Ontario, by categories (2005 – 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family class</td>
<td>35,032</td>
<td>38,351</td>
<td>35,541</td>
<td>33,805</td>
<td>33,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic immigrants</td>
<td>79,559</td>
<td>62,616</td>
<td>53,684</td>
<td>59,118</td>
<td>54,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugees</td>
<td>21,892</td>
<td>18,704</td>
<td>15,516</td>
<td>11,860</td>
<td>12,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other immigrants</td>
<td>4,040</td>
<td>6,219</td>
<td>6,574</td>
<td>6,094</td>
<td>6,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category not stated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.0014%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0000%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of immigrants - Ontario</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140,525</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of immigrants - Canada</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>262,241</td>
<td>251,642</td>
<td>236,754</td>
<td>247,247</td>
<td>252,179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Economic trends:** The period covered by the Strategic Plan also saw radical economic shifts, as Canada joined most industrialized countries in facing a recession. The Canadian economy slowed throughout 2008 and, by its fourth quarter, the country was officially facing a recession that cost approximately 420,000 jobs throughout Canada (Department of Finance, 2010) and hit particularly hard in Ontario (Sturgeon, 2009). It is generally understood that newcomers tend to face higher unemployment rates than the rest of Canadians and this trend was undoubtedly exacerbated by the 2008/09 recession. As illustrated in Table 3-2, the unemployment rate of newcomers in Ontario reached just above 10% in 2009 and has not experienced the same subsequent decline as in the rest of the population. By far the worst hit, recent newcomers’ unemployment rate has continued to climb during the recovery phase of our economy, reaching close to 17% in 2010, more than double the rate for the overall population.
Table 3-2: Unemployment rates among Ontarians (2006–2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population group</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landed immigrants</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants landed 5 or less years earlier</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants landed more than 10 years</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Labour Force Survey

3.2. Performance

The key findings of the evaluation regarding performance focus on the degree to which the actions under each of the four strategies led to the immediate outcomes, as suggested in the Strategic Plan. The following describes the findings and evidence related to performance based on interviews, case studies, the survey of SPOs, as well as the document and literature review.

3.2.1. Strategy 1 - Settlement services

The purpose of Strategy 1 was to develop a flexible, coordinated system of settlement services with strong linkages and clear pathways to services newcomers need.

The three questions that the evaluation addressed under Strategy 1, in alignment with immediate outcomes are as follows:

Immediate outcome: address gaps in availability and accessibility

- Has implementation of the Strategic Plan addressed gaps in the nature and type of settlement services available in Ontario?

- Has implementation of the Strategic Plan addressed barriers to accessing settlement programs and services in Ontario?

Intermediate outcome: improve client pathway management

- What has been the progress towards the establishment of a seamless, diverse, flexible and effective network of services that is coordinated to provide clear pathways to newcomers?

To answer these questions, the evaluation assessed the degree to which the proposed activities to address gaps in services and existing barriers to service use under Strategy 1 were delivered. Overall progress toward a network of services was also assessed by looking at coordination at the service provider and government levels.

As indicated in Table 1-2, projects supported under Strategy 1 of the Strategic Plan focused on activities under three existing programs: ISAP, the Host Program and the co-funded OBTP/ELT Program. Annual expenditures for Strategy 1 direct service projects increased from $28M in 2005/06 to $163M in 2009/10. Over the same period, the number of direct service projects increased from 111 to 304 and included a variety of activities that aimed to address service gaps and target specific groups. Annual expenditures for indirect services (specifically capacity-building) went from $2M in 2005/06 to $30M in 2009/10 and number of projects from 19 to 56.

15 The gaps identified are provided in Exhibit 1 in Section 1.2 of this report
16 The results of capacity-building activities are described in section 3.3 of this report.
Detailed tables, outlining the number and type of activities under Strategy 1 delivered in the years 2006/07–2009/10 as compared to 2005/06, are presented in the Methodology and Project Profile Appendix.

**Addressing gaps in availability**

**Finding:** Under the direction of the Strategic Plan, activities were undertaken in Ontario to address service gaps. As a result, more information became available to newcomers through self-help and assisted activities, referrals were improved and the provision of services through non-settlement organizations was expanded. Efforts were also made under the Strategic Plan to assist newcomers to find employment and to work with employers to increase their ability to hire newcomers. Although the challenges in this area go far beyond service delivery, particularly with respect to credential recognition, there remains a need to provide employment-related services to newcomers and to educate employers.

During the consultations that led to the Strategic Plan, several key gaps in settlement services were identified, including employment-related services, and information and guidance. The Plan identified several activities that were to be enhanced or introduced to address some of these service gaps under Strategy 1 (see Exhibit 4).

This section examines the extent to which activities were delivered in three areas:

- information and referral activities;
- networking activities; and
- employment-related activities.

**Information and referral activities**

The provision of information was examined from two perspectives: pre-arrival and post-arrival.

- **Pre-arrival information:** The provision of standardized pre-arrival information has chiefly been the responsibility of the federal government and is normally delivered through national projects (e.g., Canadian Orientation Abroad). Based on administrative data, three projects focusing on providing pre-arrival information were funded by the Ontario Region. These projects, which were designed for a much broader audience than those interested only in pre-arrival information, included: the Canada Day-to-Day DVD; the Ontario Day-to-Day DVD; and, in fiscal year 2009/10, the Orientation to Ontario project. The Orientation to Ontario project was co-financed by CIC and MCI and includes group sessions, online modules and printed materials. In addition to these three projects, the implementation of the MCI’s Municipal Immigration Information Online (MIIO) also allows potential newcomers access to information on specific municipalities. The settlement service providers surveyed in general do...

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17 While not among the actions stated in the Strategic Plan, employment-related activities have been included in subsequent workplans.

18 As indicated earlier, national projects are outside the scope of this evaluation.
not provide pre-arrival information, and they indicate little change in that regard over the five-year period. Service providers indicate there is still room for additional efforts in orienting newcomers to life in Canada and that there is a fair amount of frustration from skilled newcomers related to the gap between their experience in the job market and information they received prior to their arrival.

- **Post-arrival information**: SPOs have focussed on providing post-arrival information and guidance and orientation to life in Canada, and three-quarters of organizations surveyed as part of this evaluation indicated having enhanced this dimension to their services over the last five years (see Figure 3-1). In addition, the majority of surveyed service providers had enhanced networks for referrals, first- or one-stop-shop services and information and referral services.

**Figure 3-1: Changes in post-arrival information and referral activities as reported by SPOs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Expanded or enhanced</th>
<th>New aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information, guidance or orientation to life in Canada</td>
<td>[Bar Graph]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and referral services</td>
<td>[Bar Graph]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of networks for referrals</td>
<td>[Bar Graph]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First stop or one-stop shops</td>
<td>[Bar Graph]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPO Survey (N=84)

Services to newcomers provided by settlement organizations include such activities as point of entry reception, traditional individual or group activities, and the development of one-stop shop approaches. As illustrated in Table 3-3, the number of funded activities in these areas has increased over the past five years.

- **Point of entry reception**: One project, known as IRIS (Immigrant Reception and Information Services), received multi-year funding to undertake point of entry activities. Funding for IRIS, delivered by one organization in Ontario, increased from $0.2M in 2005/06 to $0.9 M in 2009/10. IRIS, delivered by SPO representatives at ports of entry, provides interpretation services, the arrangement of transportation, and information booklets and contacts for future use (see Exhibit 5).

**Exhibit 5: Immigrant Reception and Information Services (IRIS)**

Immigrant Reception & Information Services (IRIS) at Toronto Airport provide immigrants arriving at Pearson International Airport terminals with information at the kiosks located next to the immigration counter. A "Welcome to Canada" package including the national welcome to Canada booklet, application forms and information on how to apply for a Social Insurance Number, OHIP and the Child Tax Benefit are provided. Kiosk service assistants greet each newly arrived immigrant in person. Services are available in English, French and other languages. Information materials are also in multiple languages.
• **Traditional individual or group activities**: Traditional individual ISAP activities (e.g., needs assessments and referrals, information and orientation, translation and interpretation, para-counselling, and referrals to specialised services) increased from 75 in 2005/06 to 132 in 2009/10. Growth was also recorded for group information activities, which increased over three-fold compared to baseline (2005/06).

• **One-stop shops**: One stop shops or service hubs can play an important role in increasing newcomers’ knowledge of, access to, and use of the full array of settlement services. This model addresses the distance, lack of transportation or transportation cost barrier, and also aims to respond to as many of a client’s needs as possible from a single location. Under the direction of the Strategic Plan, one-stop-shops, known as “Welcome Centres”, were developed to provide a full range of services under one roof. Operated jointly by a number of community agencies, the Centres guide newcomers through the maze of information and resources. A recent interim evaluation of the Vaughn Welcome Centre found that: *The crux of the Welcome Centre model is having a wide range of core services needed by newcomers under one roof. The vast majority of clients said that they found it very helpful to have services for newcomers in one place because it saved them time and money, and they were able to receive the services (when they needed them) in a timely manner* \(^{19}\).

In addition, other organizations, while not formally recognized as a one-stop shop, also strive to provide a multitude of services to newcomers at one location. As indicated in Figure 3-1, 53% of settlement SPOs surveyed reported having enhanced this service and 9% reported that first stop or one-stop shops are a new aspect of their service delivery over the last five years. The case study conducted with the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association describes how an organization combines a wide range of services for newcomers, and demonstrates the utility of a one-stop shop (see Exhibit 6).\(^{19}\)

### Table 3-3: Number of projects that include post-arrival activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2005/06</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Point of entry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional individual services</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group information and orientation services</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-stop-shop (Welcome Centres)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Estimates based on the project profile. Subject to data limitations stated in the methodology section.

In addition to services provided by settlement organizations, self-help tools were also developed with the assistance of COIA funding. Examples of these tools include Newcomer Information Centres (NICs), municipal portals, websites, and information kiosks.

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• **Newcomer Information Centres**: NICs provide newcomers with referrals to community and government programs and services, computer and internet access, self-directed resource centres, and group information sessions. Topics covered include employment, credential evaluation, housing, health services, citizenship, and recreational services. Based on administrative data, there were 10 NICs funded in 2009/10, up from 2 in 2005/06, and a total of 10 NICs were funded over the five-year period.

• **Municipal Portals**: MIIOs are an example of a website resource that newcomers can access on their own. These municipal portals combine information from a number of service providers and other community resources into a single source that the newcomer (or potential immigrant) can access directly. Since its introduction in 2006, 21 municipalities (representing 128 communities and covering 90% of landings in Ontario) have launched their websites. MIIO in North Bay is an example of this initiative (see Exhibit 7).

• **Websites**: The settlement.org website and its sister site etablissement.org hosted by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), an umbrella organization for SPOs in Ontario, is yet another example of a resource that may be accessed by newcomers directly. While the settlement.org website was created prior to COIA, it has been enhanced during the last 5 years. The etablissement.org website was created under the direction of the Strategic Plan. The French site is not just a carbon copy of the English site. Rather it is a site that presents information relevant to francophone communities. In addition, in 2010 OCASI was also supported to develop the In-My-Language websites providing information to newcomers in 11 different languages.

• **Information kiosks**: Newcomer information kiosks are located in Newcomer Information Centres, Welcome Centres and CIC offices across Ontario. These touch-screen kiosks have basic settlement information for newcomers in a series of videos on various settlement topics that can also be sent to an email address. The videos highlight services that newcomers may not know about, and refer newcomers to settlement agencies and other community organizations. The videos are also available online on the Welcome to Ontario YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/welcometoontario](http://www.youtube.com/welcometoontario). Two kiosks were funded as a pilot in 2009, and subsequently expanded to 20 kiosks in 2010.

Another set of activities funded through COIA were those that focused on providing information in places frequented by newcomers but not necessarily settlement organizations. Examples of such activities include Settlement Workers in Schools, the Library Settlement Program and Settlement Services in LINC.
• **Settlement Workers in Schools**: SWIS is a partnership between settlement agencies, boards of education and CIC designed to benefit families and school students, and also assist the schools to better serve their newcomer population. SWIS and its newly introduced Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) and Welcome and Information for Newcomers (WIN) are delivered by placing settlement workers in schools. NOW/WIN services were created during the Strategic Plan period and focus on assistance in middle-school and high-school environments. The number of projects containing a SWIS component almost tripled between 2005/06 and 2009/10 (see Table 3-4).

• **The Library Settlement Program**: LSP provides settlement workers, employed by settlement agencies, to work in local public library branches. Workers assist newcomers by providing one-on-one settlement information and referral as well as group information sessions. In addition, through community outreach, workers help to make the public libraries more accessible. The LSP more than tripled between 2005/06 and 2009/10 (see Table 3-4). The number of families that received services through LSP in 2009/10 was around 15,000, while the number of clients totalled 33,000.

• **Settlement Services in LINC**: SSIL projects place settlement workers in locations that provide language services. A new approach introduced in 2007/08, three projects that include a SSIL component are currently supported under COIA funding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2005/06</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWIS</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOW/WIN</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Settlement Program (LSP)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Services in LINC (SSIL)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Numbers based on the project profile. Subject to data limitations stated in the methodology section

**Networking activities**

Research indicates that newcomers tend to obtain information primarily from family and friends. While print and web-based materials can be informative and are relatively inexpensive to produce, the consultations conducted in 2006 revealed that personal contact remains essential (InterQuest, n.d.). To meet this need, projects funded under the Host Program focused on assisting newcomers by helping them start or expand their networks, thus helping them create personal contacts with established Canadians and vary their information sources regarding life in Canada/Ontario. Based on administrative data (see Table 3-5), Host Program projects that include networking activities have increased three and a half times in five years, while funding has increased more than eight times.

Under the Host Program, several projects focused on youth. Host youth projects facilitate the matching of newcomer youth to other youth volunteers to enable the newcomer to learn about Canadian culture, improve their spoken English in conversation circles and boost their self-esteem. For instance, the Mentoring Mosaic Project addresses the physical, intellectual, social, and integration needs of youth, while the Spot youth community centre enables newcomer youth to socialize with each other and with Canadian youth.

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Table 3-5:  Host program projects that include networking activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2005/06</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects with networking activities</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures</td>
<td>$2.4M</td>
<td>$17.8M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects offering individual matches</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects offering group activities</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of projects offering leadership development</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Numbers based on project profile. Subject to data limitations stated in the methodology section.

Employment activities

At the time of the inception of the Strategic Plan, many immigrants reported a lack of information on the Canadian job market and difficulties in having their credentials recognized. Employment ranked first on the list of newcomer needs identified in the Strategic Plan consultations. In order to address these issues, efforts were made to provide employment-related services to newcomers and to work with employers to increase their ability to hire newcomers.

- **Support to newcomers**: Job Search Workshops (JSW) delivered under ISAP, and the CIC/MCI co-financed Ontario Bridge Training Program/Enhanced Language Training (OBTP/ELT) program, in addition to traditional ELT and OBTP delivered by CIC and MCI respectively, received funding under the Strategic Plan. Table 3-6 presents the number of projects and funding (where available) for the JSW, OBTP and ELT activities.

  - **Job Search Workshops**: JSWs are short-term pre-employment workshops (between 16 and 24 hours) designed especially for recent immigrants. The workshops are offered during the day, evenings, and on weekends and cover such subjects as: resume & cover letter writing, completing job applications, researching local employers and labour market information, job search tips, and job interview skills. Clients are provided with resources and tools necessary to conduct a job search, such as telephones, computers, printers, fax machines, photocopiers, as well as access to labour market materials, newspapers, and the internet.

  - **Ontario Bridge Training Program/Enhanced Language Training**: As presented in Table 3-6, the number of projects under the OBTP/ELT program grew from 10 to 40 between fiscal years 2006/07 and 2009/10. The OBTP/ELT, in addition to providing occupation-specific level language training (discussed under Strategy 2), provide employment-focused support though networking, mentoring, and internships. Support is also provided to internationally trained professionals (ITPs) in a variety of professions including but not limited to: childhood educators, financial, accounting and administration professionals, health professionals, IT professionals, and engineers. Two of the funded projects provided support to newcomers in the development of their own business.

  - **Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP) Conferences**: The Conferences for IEP and stakeholders in the employment sector took place in several cities across Ontario between 2007 and 2010. The Conferences provide an opportunity for newcomers to network with employers, to increase their knowledge of employment services. As well, the conference provides an opportunity for employers and others (regulatory bodies, credentialing organizations, service providers and government) to exchange ideas.

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21 2006/07 was used as a baseline in this case as it is not possible to know the number of ELT projects delivered in 2005/06 and the co-funded ELT/OBTW projects were not delivered that year.
Table 3-6: Number of projects and expenditures for employment-specific programming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Number of SPOs</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>$</th>
<th>Number of SPOs</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projects with Job Search Workshops activities</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>n/a*</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>n/a*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-funded Ontario Bridge Training Program/ELT</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$0.7M</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>$10M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Number of projects and expenditures are based on the project profile. Subject to data limitations stated in the methodology section.

* It is not possible to identify the funds committed to JSW activities as they are often delivered as one of many services in a project.

– Working with employers: Through the Strategic Plan, existing projects such as the Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), which focuses on the integration of skilled immigrants in the Greater Toronto Region labour market, were expanded. Another example is Hire Immigrant Ottawa which addresses the issue of integration of skilled immigrants from an employer perspective, focusing on identifying the needs of employers and breaking down the barriers employers face in hiring skilled immigrants.

Today, while there is increasing awareness and engagement of employers in initiatives aimed at the employment of skilled immigrants, and there are more employment and occupation-specific services offered than in 2005, timely accreditation of skilled newcomers and the lack of Canadian work experience were still being cited by employers and newcomers as major gaps at the time of this evaluation.

Beyond the Strategic Plan, both levels of government are addressing these issues, which require an approach that goes beyond service delivery. The Federal government has invested in the Foreign Credential Recognition Program, and the Province of Ontario has established the Office of the Fairness Commissioner to deal with issues related to foreign credential recognition (Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006).

While issues related to Canadian work experience and credential recognition encompass more than just service delivery, efforts are also required to ensure that employers value diversity and newcomers’ skills, and to raise awareness about how to recruit skilled immigrants. For example, Alboim, Finnie, and Meng found that, generally, “work experience is discounted by a factor of almost 70%” for foreign workers applying in Canada” (cited in Omidvar, 2010). Service providers interviewed as part of this evaluation mentioned the fact that employers are more interested in diversity issues and that there has been a shift from simply focusing on ensuring newcomers are “job-ready” to also assisting employers in managing a diverse workforce. Some however felt that progress was limited and that more could be done to engage and educate employers, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). One SPO suggested that the inclusion of community economic development groups may be worthwhile as they are often successful in engaging employers.
Addressing gaps in availability for specific target groups

Finding: Among the four target groups identified under the Strategic Plan, significant progress has been made over the past five years in the number and variety of programs targeting youth. While projects focusing on the needs of women, seniors and Francophone immigrants were delivered, progress was not as significant.

Although all immigrants are likely to face many of the same concerns during settlement, there are additional challenges for some groups of newcomers. Recent literature and the 2006 consultations that led to the Strategic Plan identified the specific needs of four target groups: youth, women, seniors, and francophone immigrants (see Exhibit 8).

As indicated in Table 3-7, the number of clients in each of the target groups increased over the course of the Strategic Plan.

Exhibit 8: Target groups and their needs as identified in the consultations

Youth (ages 13-19)
- Specific supports for youth, including youth-oriented settlement services;
- After-school programming;
- Participation in social, cultural and recreational activities with their Canadian peers;
- Understanding of the education system.

Women
- Affordable day care for their children so that they could seek employment;
- Special services to address spousal abuse and family violence in the home.

Immigrants over 50
- Employment opportunities Interpreters to assist them during key life activities such as visiting a doctor.

Francophone community
- Settlement services in French;
- Networks that support French-speaking immigrants.

Source: Strategic Plan (2006)

Table 3-7: Number of clients per target group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Settlement program</th>
<th>2006/07</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host Program</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>2,064</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISAP Program</td>
<td>18,800</td>
<td>28,036</td>
<td>9,236</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWIS/WIN/NOW</td>
<td>11,377</td>
<td>45,472</td>
<td>34,095</td>
<td>300%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSP</td>
<td>7,251</td>
<td>7,251</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>Host Program</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISAP Program</td>
<td>4,702</td>
<td>9,674</td>
<td>4,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Host Program</td>
<td>1,708</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>1,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISAP Program</td>
<td>37,002</td>
<td>55,540</td>
<td>18,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francophone or bilingual clients</td>
<td>Host Program</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ISAP Program</td>
<td>3,173</td>
<td>5,290</td>
<td>2,117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: iCAMs. Subject to data limitations stated in the methodology section.

In addition, data from the survey suggests that there has been an overall increase in the percentage of SPOs that focus on the target groups, with youth being the most prominent group (see Figure 3-2).
**Figure 3-2: Changes in SPOs’ focus of services on target groups**

![Bar chart showing changes in focus on target groups]

Source: SPO Survey (N=84)

**Youth:** According to the 2006 Census, 30% of the Ontario population aged 15 to 24 years are first-generation immigrants and 22% are first-generation visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2006a). This substantial portion of Ontario’s youth faces unique challenges:

- They must simultaneously manage their transition from childhood to adulthood and from their traditional or original culture to their host community.

- The major issues for youth often focus on identity conflicts between their family’s traditional culture and that of their peer group, and difficulties with school systems, such as recognition of language ability and prior education (Anisef et al., 2005).

- Newcomer children may be at higher risk in other areas. A 2002 study by Ma concluded that male youth may be in particular need of social counselling to address conduct and emotional disorders (cited in Anisef et al., 2005).

- Surveyed immigrant youth rated social inclusion as their greatest need, which is consistent with models that consider integration as an ongoing multi-generational process (Policy Solutions, 2005).

- Employment is also an issue for newcomer youth (Wilkenson and Stapleton, 2010).

Overall, there has been an increase in programming targeting youth and their various settlement needs under the Strategic Plan over the last five years. In fact, among all four target groups, programming aimed at youth has increased the fastest. Thirteen percent of funded projects over the last five years have focused on youth, totalling 128 across Ontario in 2009/10, compared to only 18 in 2005/06. More than 8 out of 10 settlement service providers surveyed indicated they focus on youth and over 50% indicated that their focus had increased (See Figure 3-2). Much of the increase can be attributed to ISAP Youth, a new sub-program of the traditional ISAP program, which provided traditional ISAP settlement services targeting specific youth needs, as well as other activities such as youth drop-in centres, leadership building, resource centres, and homework help. Other youth-centered activities funded through ISAP A include SWIS, NOW and WINs delivered in school settings (from elementary to high-school levels). These projects, in addition to having settlement workers provide services, involve youth that work directly with newcomer youth. For instance, under NOW and WIN, a key feature is the role of the Peer
Leaders, students who were themselves newcomers in previous years. As mentioned earlier, youth clients for all settlement programs grew over the last 5 years (see Table 3-7).

When compared with those under ISAP, projects under the Host Program have had the greatest share of youth among their clients. This is not surprising considering the new Host Youth component was tailored to that purpose. The first five such projects were delivered in 2007/08; by 2009/10, 23 Host Youth projects were in place. Projects under this program focused on the development of matches between youth with other youth in schools, matching high school students with university/college students and creating programs with a specific focus on music, theatre, art, sports, or other areas of interest. Individuals under 25 years of age represented between 33% and 37% of the Host clientele in 2009/10, having expanded slightly faster than the overall clientele.

Other projects funded under the Strategic Plan have been successful in engaging youth in settlement related activities in various ways, including: drop-in centres for youth; group cooking, art or sports and other recreational activities; and using social networking for outreach and promotion of group activities. The case studies also highlighted specific examples of programming that was successful, such as the creative arts program at WoodGreen Community Services in Toronto. This program encourages self-expression through photography and provides opportunities for youth to exhibit their work. The Spot is another example (see Exhibit 9). Located at the Jane/Finch Community Centre, also in Toronto, this is a place where youth can meet and take part in youth-led programming or programming developed with the help of youth.

While there has been an increase in the number of projects targeting youth, not all are successful. Some initiatives did not succeed, in part because outreach was not successful (i.e., youth did not participate). In addition, research supported by the Settlement Working Group, revealed that participation in youth activities could be challenging, particularly for girls from certain religious groups and cultures. Parents do not want their teenage girls in groups with boys or without what was perceived as appropriate supervision. This illustrates the difficulties in determining exactly what motivates youth to engage in programs and identifying what barriers may exist.

**Women:** Since many organizations provide services to newcomer women as part of their overall clientele, they may not identify women as a specific target group in their programming. Based on administrative data, as of 2009/10, 10 of the funded projects focused on women specifically as a target group, while only 2 in 2005/06 indicated such a focus. That said, even though projects do not appear to be specifically targeting women, the number of female clients for both ISAP and the Host Program increased (see Table 3-7). In the survey, service provider organizations also indicated the expansion of services for women (see Figure 3-2).
In addition, a review of the type of organizations that received funding revealed that the number of family/women-centered organizations receiving funding increased from 7 in 2005/06 to 17 in 2009/2010. The amount of funding provided to those organizations increased from $3.5M in 2005/06 to almost $11.2M in 2009/10.

In the past five years, through the ISAP A and the Host programs specifically, services have been increasingly tailored for newcomer women within a ‘family’ perspective. For example, the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) childhood development project focuses on preparing children for the school system, but also focuses on the parents, and brings services to women in their homes. The case study conducted with the Working Women Community Centre is an example of the combination of such services tailored to women (see Exhibit 10). Yet another example of innovation in this area is the emergence of a mobile (or itinerant) service model in settlement service provision, bringing settlement officers to family resource centres where they can interact with parents, usually women. This is the approach taken by WoodGreen Community Services in Toronto. Through COIA funding, the WoodGreen Immigrant Settlement Division offers mobile settlement services to approximately 20 sites at any given time, including an Ontario Early Years Centre in their area.

Another example of the expansion of the number of projects that target women’s needs are the SWIS/NOW/WIN activities that, in addition to benefiting students, also include workshops and support with respect to family and parenting issues, health and safety issues, finances, housing, and legal advice, all of which target parents. Around 25,000 families received services from SWIS/NOW/WIN in 2005/06 increasing to almost 37,000 in 2009/10.

Seniors: Newcomer seniors have significant needs and can face challenges securing employment or other financial support, accessing health care, and participating in social interactions. As many recent immigrant seniors are admitted under family-class, sponsored by relatives, they are not required to have employable qualifications as are economic-class immigrants (Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006). However, during the consultations that led to the Strategic Plan, seniors

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Exhibit 10: Working Women Community Centre

Established in 1976, the Working Women Community Centre (WWCC) provides settlement services to isolated immigrant women and their families at numerous centres in Toronto. In addition to participating in a Local Immigration Partnership, funding through COIA has enabled the WWCC to administer a number of programs. These include LINC; ISAP, which includes the Job Search Workshop initiative and the innovative HIPPY Program which is an in-home program that assists newcomer parents with preparing their pre-school children for entering kindergarten.

HIPPY Program

In addition to ensuring enhanced success for children heading to kindergarten, the program is unique in that it enables parents to play a key role in this learning and settlement process. Home Visitors are employed to work with families in their homes and provide a new set of instructional materials weekly. Using role-play, they spend one hour per week with the parent(s) reviewing the materials which the parents then deliver to their child in 15-minute daily sessions. Newcomer families make a two-year commitment to participate 30 weeks per year, with the program which runs concurrently with the school year.

During focus groups, newcomer parents explained that the program has not only been integral to helping their children succeed at kindergarten, but has also been a very positive experience for them as they are able to participate in a fun and creative way to support their child’s educational development.

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22 Ontario Early Years Centres are places where parents and caregivers can take part with their children in a range of programs and activities, get answers to questions, get information about programs and services that are available for young children and their families, and talk to early years professionals, as well as other parents and caregivers in the community. Source: [www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/oeyc/index.aspx](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/topics/earlychildhood/oeyc/index.aspx)
ranked employment as their greatest need (InterQuest, n.d.). Newcomer seniors are especially dependent on employment since Canada and Ontario’s income security programs are restricted. In most cases, they cannot access such programs until they have lived in Canada for a minimum number of years (ISPR, 2000). Also based on the 2006 consultations, seniors were the only group to rank health as a top need, and were the most likely to face language barriers to receiving health and medical services. It was also noted that, as seniors are more likely to face barriers to social interaction (e.g., financial, linguistic, mobility) as they adapt to their new society, they are also in need of additional supports to prevent marginalization (InterQuest, n.d.).

While the needs are documented, there is little information about services targeted toward seniors under the Strategic Plan. As is the case for other specific groups, since many organizations provide services to newcomer seniors as part of their overall clientele, they may not report them as a target group in their programming. However, some growth has been observed: based on administrative data, as of 2009/10, 16 funded projects focused on seniors as a target group, while only 1 in 2005/06 indicated such a focus, and the number of clients 56 years of age and over for ISAP and Host services increased over two-fold in five years (see Table 3-7). Senior programming includes recreational, educational and supportive services to seniors, frequently in the form of seniors groups that engage in conversation or activities. These projects also included indirect services, such as needs assessment of seniors.

In addition, initiatives designed to overcome barriers related to mobility, lack of transportation, and transportation costs may assist seniors, but it is not possible to examine this in greater detail with the information currently available.

**Francophone immigrants:** In the 2006 consultations, francophone newcomers frequently reported having difficulty accessing English classes, in addition to facing a general lack of French-language settlement services and support networks (InterQuest, n.d.).

The number of projects focusing on francophone newcomers has increased from 12 in 2005/06 to 45 in 2009/10. These projects include direct services, such as information and referrals; Enhanced Language Training and occupation-specific language training in French (see Exhibit 11), specifically in health services, technology, and financial services; as well as JSW activities; the Host program; and several initiatives aimed at capacity building in the sector and the development of networks for francophone organizations. Many of these initiatives are delivered in partnerships with other SPOs and non-SPOs. Several projects focused on support for the development of francophone networks in the province.

Data from CIC’s Facts and Figures publication indicate that between 2005 and 2009 around 31,000 newcomers to Ontario indicated an ability to speak French. The number of francophone clients (i.e., French-speaking or bilingual) increased for both ISAP and Host Programs (see Table 3-7). While there is more programming targeting francophone immigrants, it is mostly led by

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**Exhibit 11: La Cité collégiale**

La Cité collégiale is a well-established college offering a wide range of postsecondary programs in French in Ontario. It has implemented a range of language-training programs for newcomers in Ottawa. In addition to LINC and ELT programs, the college offers Occupation-Specific Language Training in the fields of health services and construction. The institution also offers the program Arrimage Emploi, which assists newcomers throughout the job search process.

The experience of La Cité collégiale illustrates the critical role of French-language service providers in responding to the needs of newcomers whose first official language is French. Programs offered by La Cité allow newcomers to operate in a linguistically familiar environment allowing them to strengthen their knowledge of French, particularly as it relates to workplace requirements, and to learn English, as required.
smaller service providers. Twenty-one francophone service provider organizations received funding over the last five years. In 2005/06, 8 organizations received slightly less than $1M in total and in 2009/10 there were 16 organizations receiving $11.5M in total. Three of these were francophone colleges, while others were francophone community organizations.

Of the settlement service providers surveyed, 38% reported they do not provide services in French, 30% reported the focus remained unchanged over the past five years, a quarter indicated they have increased their services in French and only 1 stated that it introduced services in French.

**Addressing gaps in accessibility**

**Finding:** The resources provided through the Strategic Plan have addressed several barriers to accessing settlement programs and services by, for example, expanding service hours, addressing the need for qualified interpreters, and expanding childminding services. SPOs have also expanded the way they deliver their programs to bring services closer to home through online, remote or itinerant services.

**Geographic distribution:** At the inception of the Strategic Plan, it was clear that although immigrants to Ontario previously concentrated in the inner city of Toronto, population growth and the effects of the housing market were leading newcomers to shift further out of the city, toward inner and then outer suburban regions, or toward other nearby urban centres such as Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Windsor (Wang & Truelove, 2003). Almost two-thirds of settlement SPOs who participated in the evaluation survey indicated their organization expanded or enhanced its geographic coverage (see Figure 3-3). A review of information provided in the Canadian Newcomer magazine revealed that many of the larger organizations have between two and six locations in addition to their main offices. Given the lack of a baseline, it is not possible to know the magnitude of this change over the past five years.

Through the data collected in case studies, it has been confirmed that many of the visited organizations were able to expand their locations over the last three years. In some areas, the introduction of mobile (or itinerant services) and services at home has helped to improve access. Fourteen projects delivered during the years under review indicated having itinerant, mobile or satellite services. SPOs also introduced services in places frequented by newcomers through such initiatives as the LSP which increased the range of venues at which newcomers could access services (Seidle, 2010).

**Delivery methods:** Over the past five years, service delivery methods were enhanced or introduced by 69% of the settlement organizations that responded to this survey question (n=80) (see Figure 3-3) while 4% introduced a new delivery model (e.g., on line, by telephone). Some SPOs offer services on evenings and weekends (e.g., for youth or families who are not available on weekdays). As indicated in Figure 3-3, most of the settlement SPOs surveyed enhanced their operating hours (including but not limited to evening and weekends). For some, it is a challenge to have flexible hours because of the limited availability of space or personnel.

In addition, the accessibility barrier is increasingly addressed by online information. Municipal immigration portals and other web-based information sources, as well as online language training and employment training programs, have also helped overcome barriers such as remote location, lack of transportation or high transportation costs, and limited business hours.
**Figure 3-3: Changes in SPO approaches in addressing barriers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service delivery methods</th>
<th>Geographic distribution</th>
<th>Operating hours</th>
<th>Child minding services</th>
<th>Other support services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expanded or enhanced</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New aspect</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPO Survey (N=80)

**Language interpretation:** Under ISAP A, service providers receive funding to provide interpretation and translation services to enable newcomers to access settlement and non-settlement services. Based on individual client information from iCAMS, over 15,000 clients received translation services, and almost 22,000 received interpretation services in 09/10 which compares with 8,700 and 15,000 in 2005/06 respectively. During consultations, issues were raised regarding the number of interpreters, which was deemed to be insufficient, given the fact that language was considered a barrier to accessing both settlement and mainstream services. In response, a study on the feasibility of interpretation and translation services was proposed under the Strategic Plan to inform how these services could be delivered. This study, which was completed in 2009, found that interpretation is an emerging service delivery field, there is little information in the way of practice or research and provision of these services is uneven in both rural and urban areas. Establishment of provincial standards for translation and interpretation services with a standardized training approach was recommended. In 2010, the implementation of the study recommendations began with the launch of the first project to develop guidelines and standards to guide delivery of interpretation services in Ontario.

**Childminding:** Under the Strategic Plan, funding was provided to expand the number of occasional childminding places available, and there was an increase over the five-year period. Childminding also was extended to infant-care. The growth of childminding services for ISAP A projects could not be assessed due to a lack of administrative data; however, improvements to such services was reported by a large proportion of settlement SPOs (46%) who responded to the evaluation survey.

**Other support services:** The number of settlement projects funded under the Strategic Plan that offered any other support services (e.g., transportation or services for the disabled) cannot be assessed; however, as illustrated in Figure 3-3, out of the settlement SPOs who participated in the survey, over one-third had enhanced their support services over the last 5 years.

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23 See Methodology Appendix for description of the challenges in assessing childminding.
Improving client pathway management

Strategy 1 included a focus on the development of a flexible, coordinated network of settlement services. This section assesses progress in creating such a system.

**Finding:** While progress has been made in the development of information and referral systems that link newcomers to the resources they need through all stages of their settlement and integration process, some duplication in services between the two levels of government exists.

Depending on the delivery model, separate and independent agencies within an area may offer settlement services, forcing immigrants to make multiple contacts to access the information and services they need. Research indicates that service providers can be far more effective when they share information among themselves so that clients can get information about and referrals to any part of the settlement services sector from any first point of contact (Wayland, 2007). The following sections discuss efforts made to develop partnerships, coordinate services among SPOs and coordinate government programs in an effort to improve client pathway management.

**Partnerships among SPOs:** At the time of the development of the Strategic Plan, there had been little progress in creating effective partnerships for service delivery to address a variety of newcomer needs. Findings from the 2005 ISAP evaluation found that partnerships to deliver services were not common at that time, appearing among only 36% of all service providers, while 69% reported having established referral networks to respond to newcomers’ needs (GGI, 2005). In contrast, 8% of settlement SPOs responding to the current survey indicated partnerships with other SPOs, and 82% indicated partnerships with non-SPOs.

In addition, three-quarters of the settlement SPOs who participated in the current evaluation agree that there are effective information and referral systems that link newcomers to the resources they need through all of the stages of their settlement and integration process (see Figure 3-4).

**Service coordination:** Over the course of this evaluation, some SPOs interviewed indicated that newcomer issues are now viewed as “everyone’s issues” (i.e., they are no longer only the business of settlement service providers, CIC, and MCI). While in some communities, settlement agencies met and coordinated efforts to a certain extent prior to the COIA Strategic Plan, non-settlement agencies, employers, and other local decision makers are now part of these networks. Over the five years of the Strategic Plan, local efforts have led to greater coordination and integration of settlement services with other, non-settlement services, such as health services, libraries, police services, and schools.

To some degree, the private sector has also become more engaged in newcomer integration. For example, TRIEC, which bring stakeholders together with employers, has been successful in increasing awareness and engaging employers in newcomer integration. Larger employers (e.g., in the financial services sector in Toronto) are engaging in newcomer integration at this time, specifically, by helping to provide newcomers with clearer pathways to employment and information relating to managing their finances. Smaller employers do not necessarily have the resources to learn about and engage in newcomer integration to the same extent.
Government program coordination: One of the objectives of the Strategic Plan was to streamline settlement services in Ontario. SPOs perceive that there has been some progress in the development of a coordinated CIC and MCI network of services that supports newcomers' settlement; however, it is not viewed as positively as the development of the coordination among SPOs described above (see Figure 3-4 and Figure 3-5).

SPOs and governments agree there continues to be some duplication of services between levels of government but differ on their assessment of the degree of duplication. Some argue that, despite the Strategic Plan, which called for better harmonization, the federal and provincial governments are still running two parallel sets of programs and services while others point to examples where services are seen to be complementary. The following examples illustrate the difficulties in determining whether services provided are duplicative or complementary:

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24 The discussion of the two language programs delivered by CIC (LINC) and MCI (ESL) are discussed under Strategy 2.
• **Traditional ISAP and NSP:** An example of the difficulty in determining the level of overlap, duplication or complementarity in programming is the ISAP A and the Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP). Both focus on the provision of key information regarding settlement processes, suggesting a certain degree of overlap. That said, while both provide similar services, eligibility for the NSP is broader as it provides services to temporary residents, refugee claimants and naturalized Canadians. ISAP serves around 100,000 clients annually, and NSP provides services to around 80,000 clients annually in 30 communities in Ontario. The degree of overlap in clients between the two programs is not known and frequently, organizations provide both NSP and ISAP programming. As well, with the recent changes to the ISAP program through the introduction of specialized services such as SWIS/WIN/NOW, NICs, and LSP, many activities supported by CIC are not provided by MCI.

• **Host Program/Networking support:** The provincial government does not support any community networking or mentoring projects, with the exception of some group activities under NSP.

• **ELT and OBTP:** Under the Strategic Plan, ELT and OBTP are an example where the two governments are delivering a co-funded program where MCI funds the work component and CIC funds the higher-level language training component of the program. While CIC still delivers the ELT program and MCI delivers the OBTP, a significant number of projects are now supported jointly, contributing to the coordination of services. The MCI supported OBTP program provided support to 41,000 clients since 2003 in 220 projects in over 100 professions. It should be noted that in 2010/11, CIC signed a single contribution agreement with MCI for all bridge training programming.

3.2.2. **Strategy 2 - Language training services**

The purpose of Strategy 2 was to build on existing services to develop and implement a comprehensive language assessment, referral and training system that assists newcomers to become competent in English or French as quickly as possible.

The three evaluation questions addressed under Strategy 2, in alignment with immediate outcomes, are as follows:

**Immediate outcome: address gaps in availability and accessibility**

- **Has implementation of the Strategic Plan addressed gaps in the language services provided to newcomers in Ontario?**

- **Has implementation of the Strategic Plan addressed barriers to accessing language training programs and services?**

**Immediate outcome: improve client pathway management**

- **What has been the progress towards the development and implementation of a coordinated language assessment, referral and training system?**

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25 Source: MCI website.
To answer these questions, the evaluation assessed the extent to which the proposed activities under Strategy 2 were delivered. To assess the development of a coordinated system, linkages between federal and provincial assessment, referral and training aspects were analyzed.

As indicated in Table 1-2, projects supported under Strategy 2 of the Strategic Plan focused on activities under two existing programs: LINC and ELT). Expenditures for Strategy 2 direct service projects increased from $75.8M in 2005/06 to $173.5M in 2009/10 and the number of direct service projects increased from 131 to 188. A variety of services were delivered through projects that aimed to address service gaps and barriers. Expenditures for indirect projects increased from $0.6M in 2005/06 to $10.8M in 2009/10 and projects from 4 to 20 respectively.

Detailed tables, outlining the number and activities delivered in years 2006/07-2009/10 as compared to 2005/06 for Strategy 2, are presented in the Methodology and Project Profile Appendix.

Addressing gaps in availability

Finding: Over the last five years, there has been an increase in the number and range of language assessment and training programs and services to fill the gaps identified under the Strategic Plan. An increase in employment- and occupation-specific language training and the expansion of LINC training to include more advanced levels of proficiency took place. In addition to expanding language training services, the linkages between language training and settlement services have also improved.

Several activities have been identified in the Strategic Plan to address the language training gaps (see Exhibit 12). For the purposes of this evaluation, they have been classified into three areas: expansion of language training levels; employment-related language training; other targeted language training initiatives; and coordination between language and settlement services.

Expansion of language training levels: LINC clients, as they gain proficiency in the language, move between LINC levels. In 2005/06 there were 5 LINC levels, in addition to basic literacy training. With the support of COIA funding, LINC language training levels have been expanded. Available client data suggests that the first LINC levels 6 and/or 7 projects were delivered in 2006/07. In 2009/10 the number of projects providing higher level training had increased to 22. As well, the survey revealed that expansion of these types of services has occurred over the past five years (see Figure 3-5). While the number of offerings increased, so too did enrolment. In fact, enrolment in higher level language training grew rapidly, and made up an increasing share of total LINC training services, reaching enrolment of 4,091 in 2009/10.

Exhibit 12: Activities to be enhanced under Strategy 2

- Expand LINC levels beyond 1-5 to include literacy and higher level language training;
- Develop and implement ongoing system of occupation-specific language training;
- Coordinate and implement common standards for language assessment and evaluation;
- Expand LINC home study;
- Explore alternative methods for language training delivery in remote locations;
- Enhance computer-based language learning;
- Study language mentoring approaches and expand pilots;
- Expand the role of assessment centres to include referrals;
- Develop FSL tools and curricula;
- Establish language in workplace programs;
- Develop client centered programming.


26 The results of capacity-building activities are described in Section 3.3 of this report.
(11% of clients). During the last five years, literacy training was also provided; however it grew at a slower speed with 1,083 clients in 2005/06 (3% of LINC clients) to 1,719 in 2009/01 (5% of LINC clients). To support this expansion, new language assessment criteria and guidelines, relevant curricula and other materials have been developed, and additional professional development opportunities have been provided.

While the levels have expanded, some service providers indicated a remaining gap in the provision of more intensive language training and more advanced levels beyond LINC level 7. Expansion up to level 12 was suggested in the Strategic Plan but this did not take place, with the exception of the ELT program which provides training up to level 10. Language service providers indicated that the current offerings are not sufficient to help newcomers achieve their language-training objectives, particularly among those who wish to pursue a postsecondary education.

**Employment-related language training**: From CIC’s perspectives, there is a very effective system of enhanced language training. The ELT and OBTP programs have been developed to respond to learners’ needs by providing language training that is relevant to specific occupations rather than general English or French language training. In addition to ELT, comprehensive occupation-specific language training, including Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels 6 through 8, is being delivered through 14 colleges in Ontario though the Occupation Specific Language Training project, including language training in such professions as business, health sciences, human services, construction, automotive trades and technology.

As illustrated in Figure 3-6, many of the language training providers surveyed increased their focus on employment-related and occupation-specific language training over the last five years.

[27] According to the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, CLB levels 6 and 7 are equivalent to LINC level 6 while CLB levels 7 and 8 are equivalent to LINC level 7. ([www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=434](http://www.language.ca/display_page.asp?page_id=434))
**Other targeted language training initiatives**: Other language training initiatives were introduced or expanded under the Strategic Plan, although to varying degrees:

- The development and provision of computer-assisted language training, was reported by 56% of SPOs. Specific projects included LINC Home Study.

- The provision of language training to seniors increased over the past five years, based on the survey (see Figure 3-6); however, only 3 projects in the project database identified seniors as a client target group. The project database suggests that, increasingly, specific language training for youth is delivered with 13 such projects being delivered starting in 2007/08. Project data indicates that there were 3 projects delivered to people with disabilities (hearing and general disabilities).

- Ten percent of SPOs surveyed indicated they had introduced or enhanced French language training. During the years under review, administrative data show that 6 CLIC projects were delivered in 7 communities in Ontario.
Coordination between language and settlement services: While the main purpose of language services is to provide language training, the improved linkages between language and settlement services was also one of the objectives of the Strategic Plan. According to the survey of SPOs, this appears to have occurred over the past 5 years including referrals, coordination, and linkages with provincial training programs (see Figure 3-6).

Addressing gaps in accessibility

Finding: Some progress has been made in addressing barriers to accessing language training, especially with respect to LINC/CLIC childminding support that enables parents to participate in language training. Access has also increased through the expansion of LINC services, especially in large centres and the introduction of innovative approaches (e.g., home study) in smaller or more remote centres.

A number of initiatives were funded to address barriers that prevented newcomers from fully benefiting from language training services:

Childminding: Funding for childminding, including infant case, has generally followed the expansion of LINC services over the years of the Strategic Plan. Based on administrative data, in five years, the estimated number of initiatives funded under LINC that provide childminding has increased from 51 to 94\(^2\)\(^8\). Several key informants and half (49%) of the language service providers surveyed reported that they expanded, enhanced, or added childminding services for LINC participants over the last five years. In 2009/10, there was a decrease in the number of individuals on waiting lists due to the reason that “childminding was not available,” after the number of those cases had risen steadily in the prior three years. Based on administrative data, around 12% of clients receive childminding and that percentage remained stable over the years (4,115 in 2005/06 to 4,434 in 2009/10).

Timing: Client-level data indicate that when clients are waitlisted, it is mostly because of the absence of a suitable schedule; this was the reason in 88% of cases in 2009/10 (a decrease from 92.5% in 2005/06). As is the case for other settlement services, there is a need for more evening and weekend language classes, but some SPOs struggle to offer services on evenings and weekends because of limited availability of staff or space, or due to an insufficient concentration of enrolment to justify adding classes. Among the language service providers that participated in the evaluation survey, half (53%) offer services on evenings and weekends and have expanded or enhanced them, and another 3% have added evenings and weekends to their operating hours in the last five years.

Location: Some service providers – mostly in large centres – have added locations for LINC services in part due to the increase in funding under the COIA Strategic Plan. Some SPOs that provide LINC services also do so in partnership with other settlement organizations and mainstream service providers, at their site(s), on an as needed basis. At the time of this evaluation, it was not possible to quantify the evolution of the number of locations; however, some larger organizations, such as Boards of Education, deliver language training services in up to 40 different locations. In the survey, 47% of the language service providers indicated that they expanded or enhanced their geographic coverage, and another 9% indicate that increased geographic coverage is a new aspect of service delivery in the last five years.

\(^{28}\) It is not possible to determine the total number of seats, since not all organizations consistently report that information.
Methods: According to the evaluation survey, 58% of language service providers indicated their organization expanded or enhanced their service delivery methods over the last five years, or diversified them (e.g., added online services). While home study programs exist all across Ontario, in Northern Ontario, some SPOs are experimenting with other innovative practices to overcome access barriers. Specifically, distance education programs over the web and videoconferencing are in development, and the idea of a web portal for remote LINC assessment is also being investigated. It is expected that the latter would help reduce the amount of travel required by assessment staff in Northern Ontario.

Transportation: According to CIC guidelines, all initiatives funded under LINC can provide assistance with transportation to 20% of their clients (for public transportation, where available). Based on available data, the percentage of LINC clients that receive transportation assistance declined from 21% in 2005/06 to 16% in 2009/10 (from 7,210 clients to 5,934).

Improving client pathway management

Strategy 2 aimed to develop a harmonized system of language assessment, referral and training. This section looks at the extent to which this system was developed.

Finding: Through efforts under the Strategic Plan, the LINC/CLIC and ESL/FSL assessments and referral systems are becoming coordinated. The delivery of language training has been to some extent harmonized by using common tools in both language programs.

As previously outlined in Table 1-2 and Table 1-3 of the report, there are two systems of language assessment and training services: federally funded programs under LINC/CLIC and provincially funded programs referred to as ESL/FSL. Each system includes three basic components: assessment of language skills, referrals, and the provision of training.

Assessments: Through the COIA Strategic Plan, the LINC/CLIC and ESL/FSL assessment systems are becoming more coordinated. The recommendation from the Language Training Working Group to establish a Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) was embraced by both levels of government. CLARS is being piloted from January to June 2011, and phased implementation is planned for 2011-12. While the development and piloting of CLARS has required a considerable amount of coordination, stakeholders in the sector perceive this as a positive initiative. Interestingly, almost two-thirds of service providers who participated in the evaluation survey indicated that centralized language assessment for both LINC/CLIC and ESL/FSL has been established already, at least to some extent. Over three-quarters of them also reported that CIC and MCI have created a coordinated network of language assessment and training services at least to some extent over the last five years.

Referrals: Language assessment and training providers reported having expanded or enhanced their information and referral services, and their use of networks for referrals over the five years of the Strategic Plan. Among the language training providers surveyed, 68% have expanded or enhanced their information and referral services, and 58% have expanded or enhanced their use of networks for referrals. As a result of CLARS, the referrals to both language programs may improve as the assessors will be able to direct clients to one of the services, based on client need and eligibility.

Training: For the most part, the delivery of language training sessions is not systematically linked or coordinated. Some language assessment and training providers warn that there is duplication
within the language training sector in some communities – especially in Toronto – and they expect this to be dealt with by the various local planning mechanisms that are supported under the COIA. While the delivery of language training has not been formally coordinated, it has been harmonized to some extent by, for example, using common curricula guidelines, professional development opportunities for teachers and teacher accreditation.

**On-going student assessment:** Some language training and assessment service providers also indicate the need for another system – a unique student record – that would enable all providers of language assessment and training services to monitor and assess the progress of individuals through various levels and determine the appropriate next steps, regardless of where they take courses or how often they move within the province. A unique record would help standardize and minimize gaps in recording the progression of an individual, and thus help language assessment and training providers improve pathways for newcomers through the language services continuum. Some progress in creating such a record has been made under the Coordinated Language Assessment and Referral System (CLARS) which is currently being piloted. If rolled out, CLARS would provide a unique record as provincially-funded language training programs will adopt the federal data management system known as the History of Assessment, Referral and Training System (HARTs). HARTs provides a unique record for every student and would enable both governments to track students taking training through both systems.

**Eligibility:** Two sets of programming with essentially the same objectives, but not the same eligibility criteria, can be confusing for newcomers and can make it challenging to coordinate services in a given area. LINC/CLIC is only available to permanent residents and protected persons, while ESL/FSL services are available to all newcomers and naturalized Canadian citizens. This creates situations whereby some SPOs have individuals on waiting lists for ESL classes, but cannot enrol them in available LINC programs in their area due to ineligibility. In addition, there are differences between LINC and ESL in terms of eligibility for childminding services as they are only available through LINC. Furthermore, some newcomers have to choose between continuing LINC training and applying for citizenship (once they are eligible to do so). This was mentioned as a potential disincentive to apply for citizenship.

### 3.2.3. Strategy 3 - Partnerships

The purpose of Strategy 3 was to work with municipalities and federal-provincial government departments to enable partnerships that will integrate newcomers in the economic and social life of Ontario communities.

The two evaluation questions addressed under Strategy 3, in alignment with immediate outcomes are as follows:

- **Immediate outcome:** engage partners, municipalities and employers

  - Have municipalities, the provincial government and other partners been engaged in the implementation of the Strategic Plan? Are the efforts of these partners sufficiently coordinated?

- **Intermediate outcome:** align mechanisms and partnerships

  - Exhibit 13: Activities to be enhanced under Strategy 3

    - Fund innovative programs that address employment and labour market integration;
    - Fund development of online and other municipal resources;
    - Provide opportunities for municipalities to participate in planning of integration services in their communities;
    - Memorandum of understanding with City of Toronto;
    - Development of Regional Newcomer Employment Networks.

*Sources: Strategic Plan and Action Plan (2006).*
What has been the progress towards services that are planned and coordinated through community stakeholder mechanisms and processes?

The evaluation assessed progress under Strategy 3 based on an assessment of the implementation of the planned partnership activities (see Exhibit 13) including specific partnership projects and the projects under the three other strategies that had a partnership component.

As indicated in Table 1-2, projects supported under Strategy 3 of the Strategic Plan focused on activities under two existing programs: ISAB B (mostly LIPs) and MIIOs delivered by MCI. Expenditures for Strategy 3 increased from $0.25M in 2005/06 to $10M in 2009/10. The number of CIC projects increased from 4 to 38. In addition, the MCI’s MIIO projects grew from 13 in 2006/07 to 19 in 2009/10.

Detailed tables, outlining the number activities for Strategy 3 delivered in 2006/07-2009/10 as compared to 2005/06, are presented in the Methodology and Project Profile Appendix.

Engaging Partners, Municipalities and Employers

Finding: The implementation of the Strategic Plan provided an opportunity to bring together various partners and led to the involvement of a broader range of local stakeholders, including municipalities, in providing services to newcomers.

Involving municipalities: A defining characteristic of the Strategic Plan was its focus on municipalities to successfully support the settlement of newcomers. As indicated in the Plan, “successful settlement and integration essentially means the involvement of newcomers in local social networks, local labour markets, local civic activities and local schools.” To achieve this, enhanced participation of local partners was deemed necessary.

With the exception of the City of Toronto, which had offered some services specifically targeted to newcomers (often short-term or emergency measures to support newcomers or refugee claimants), municipal governments in Ontario had typically played a limited role in planning and delivering services to newcomers prior to the introduction of COIA, even though they delivered critical services that undoubtedly had an impact on the settlement process. While Toronto continues to receive the vast majority of newcomers (77% in 2009), cities such as Ottawa, Hamilton, St. Catherine’s-Niagara, Kitchener, London, and Windsor each welcome between 1,000 and 6,000 newcomers every year, and many other smaller municipalities also welcome newcomers on a yearly basis.29

Two significant initiatives involving municipal authorities received funding under the Strategic Plan:

- The implementation of the MIIO program by the provincial government, allowed municipalities to develop portals tailored to their specific social and economic characteristics. Being complementary to the provincial portal (www.immigrationontario.ca), these municipal portals play the dual role of promoting the host municipality as a landing location of choice for newcomers, and of facilitating access to support and services for newcomers as they establish themselves. During the time under review, 21 municipalities received funding for MIIOs. The case study of the North Bay MIIO found that these initiative led to better coordination of services as the local organizations, settlement and others, came together to

provide information on their services. This led to a greater understanding of information gaps and to the creation of new services. When it was discovered that the newcomers in North Bay did not receive any structured support services, the MIIO partners spearheaded the creation of a settlement organization.

- Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) were established to provide a collaborative framework for the development and implementation of sustainable local and regional solutions for successful integration of immigrants to Ontario. The purpose of these partnerships is to engage a wide range of local stakeholders, such as municipal authorities, school boards, employers, boards of trade, professional associations, ethno-cultural and faith-based organizations, as well as provincial or federal departments, in the development of local strategies related to immigration. LIP initiatives lead to the establishment of a partnership council, which, in turn, establishes priorities and develops the required strategies and action plan. Over the period covered by the Plan, 34 LIPs have been funded. The first LIP initiatives emerged in 2008/09, with $234,000 of funding provided for seven such initiatives. In total, $9.7M of COIA funding was invested in LIP initiatives. At the time of the evaluation, 15 LIP initiatives had been funded in Toronto and the remaining 19 were distributed throughout Ontario. To date, LIP initiatives have largely focused on the development of strategic priorities and action plans. The next phase is to implement these action plans. Local partners hold high expectations and a failure to turn these action plans into actual initiatives could jeopardize the viability of these local partnerships. The Strategic Plan facilitated the development of LIPS; however, it is not entirely certain that the progress made is sustainable in the absence of a similar mechanism to support their implementation.

Involving other federal and provincial government departments: While the objective of Strategy 3 was to “work with municipalities and federal-provincial government departments to enable partnerships that will integrate newcomers in the economic and social life of Ontario communities”, the resulting action items identified in the Plan focused on engaging municipalities in the planning of integration services for their communities, and fostering community partnerships to develop and implement local solutions to newcomer integration challenges. No actions were listed related to the engagement of federal-provincial government departments. As such, it is not possible to assess results with respect to this group.

Involving other partners: Funding provided under the Strategic Plan also supported a wide range of other partnerships at the SPO level. At the time of the evaluation, 137 of the funded projects over five years included a form of partnership. As indicated in Table 3-8, the bulk of these projects have involved partnerships among settlement SPOs and between settlement and mainstream SPOs (such as health care providers, school boards, and police services) and their numbers have grown steadily. Other initiatives include the establishment of Regional Newcomer Employment Networks (RNENs) which bring employers together with stakeholders to increase awareness of newcomers’ skills and the need to diversify their workforces. While TRIEC (a RNEN-type initiative) was continuously supported, other RNENs in Ontario were created with support mostly from MCI and other funders.
### Table 3-8: Number of projects with partnership activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Settlement SPOs partnerships with other settlement SPOs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service bridging (direct support to non-SPOs)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Newcomer Employment Networks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement SPOs partnerships with mainstream SPOs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other partnerships (including networks)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Numbers based on project profile. Subject to data limitations stated in the methodology section.

### Aligning mechanisms and partnerships

**Finding:** At the local level, partnerships resulted in an increased ability to address the needs of newcomers while at the same time creating an understanding among non-settlement organizations of newcomer needs.

An increased level of local partnership has clearly been a feature during the implementation of the Strategic Plan. Among all service providers surveyed as part of this evaluation, 81% indicated they are now engaged in collaborative efforts or formal partnerships. In addition to traditional SPOs, these partnerships can involve provincial and federal agencies, municipalities, health care providers, libraries, police services, educational institutions, employers, and professional associations. Local partnerships have generally led to a greater coordination of activities and an improvement in the range and quality of services provided to newcomers.

Survey respondents indicated that these partnerships have contributed to:

- The establishment of services that better address the needs of newcomers (79%);
- The provision of a wider range of services (78%);
- Greater awareness and understanding among non-settlement organizations of the needs of newcomers (72%);
- An increased capacity to plan and coordinate settlement services locally (70%); and
- Innovative approaches to service delivery (68%)

A focus on local planning has led, in some instances, to the actual involvement of newcomers in the design of services. Evidence gathered during case studies indicate that some communities have directly involved newcomers in, for instance, designing a local web portal or in developing strategic priorities as part of a LIP.

Particularly because they involve a wider range of organizations, the emergence of local partnerships has also had an impact on the so-called traditional settlement organizations, and their umbrella organization, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI). An increasing number of non-traditional SPOs are now planning to deliver or are already delivering services to newcomers, in addition to referring them to traditional settlement organizations on an as-needed basis. Evidence gathered in interviews indicates that this new environment has raised challenges when it comes to defining the relationship between traditional SPOs and new program delivery organizations. For example, the competition for scarce human resources, particularly those with the knowledge and experience in providing services to newcomers, results in “poaching” between organizations.

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30 The percentages refer to respondents who, on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 means the highest level of agreement, selected 4 or 5 to indicate their agreement with the proposed statement.
3.2.4. Strategy 4 - Evidence base

The purpose of Strategy 4 was to build the evidence base to support the design, funding and administration of settlement and language training programs. Several key activities were identified to be expanded or introduced (see Exhibit 14), in alignment with immediate outcomes.

The following evaluation question was assessed under Strategy 4:

Immediate outcomes: improve the availability of information, improve program accountability, and ensure program management is needs and outcomes focused:

- Is program planning and design/revision needs- and evidence-based?

The expenditures used to support activities under Strategy 4 increased from $1M in 2005/06 to $3M in 2009/10 and the number of projects from 7 to 10 respectively.

Detailed tables presenting the number of activities for Strategy 4 delivered between 2006/07-2009/10 as compared to the baseline of 2005/06 is presented in the Methodology and Project Profile Appendix.

Finding: The Strategic Plan design was the product of extensive consultations in Ontario, including reaching out to settlement organizations and newcomers. Through the years, efforts have been made to increase the availability and use of information on the emerging needs of newcomers through various research studies, pilot projects and evaluations. While research has informed planning and delivery of services, measuring Plan performance has been limited due to information gaps.

Improving availability of information

Research and evaluation studies: Research has been undertaken as part of the implementation of the Strategic Plan in areas that included but were not limited to:

- Needs/status assessments such as research on the needs and challenges of newcomer seniors and the availability of essential infrastructure in specific communities;
- Assessments/evaluations of pilot projects such as the Job Search Workshops and the Library Settlement Partnership;
- Immigration issues such as the contribution of immigration to the current demographic profile in the province and the views of opinion leaders on cultural diversity and immigration.

The Settlement and Language Training Working Groups used this research, when needed, to develop specific recommendations for consideration by the Steering Committee for Settlement and Language Training and the Management Committee. Ultimately, some recommendations led to Calls for Proposals (CFPs) issued under COIA to help address specific issues. One area where research has clearly led to a new policy orientation is in relation to the CLARS initiative. Other
areas include targeted groups (e.g., youth, women, seniors) and programming with regard to orientation to life in Canada/Ontario.

In addition, the federal government has conducted program evaluation activities, and the findings from these studies have been shared with MCI. Recent examples of this are the evaluation of the Federal Skilled Worker Program, which was completed in August 2010 and the evaluations of the ISAP and Host Program from which the results for newcomers in Ontario were shared with MCI. MCI has shared the overview of the results of a learners’ survey conducted for the adult English and French language training, the goals and design of the 'Making Ontario Home' survey on immigrant service needs and satisfaction (2010), and the program highlights and perceived service gaps (through COIA Language Training and COIA Settlement Working Groups).

**Improving program accountability**

While performance measurement activities have been carried out at the SPO level, the same is not true at the level of the Strategic Plan. Although a Performance Measurement Strategy for the Strategic Plan was developed, it has not been finalized nor implemented. In addition, limitations of the current data systems (iCAMS and CAMS) make it difficult to assess progress (see the discussion on limitations in the Methodology Appendix). Quarterly reports were provided by CIC to MCI, outlining activities and outputs as well as financial information. These quarterly reports were used by MCI to monitor expenditures.

**Ensuring program management is needs- and outcomes-focused**

At the SPO level, data collected through ongoing client satisfaction surveys, focus groups, or more informal communication with newcomers is generally integrated by SPOs into the ongoing management of programs and services. In addition, this information serves to meet reporting requirements set by the federal or provincial governments. However, the interviews and case studies confirm that not all service providers currently have the institutional capacity to systematically proceed with the collection of this type of data. What remains even more challenging is to collect data that can speak to the project outcomes and not strictly to the outputs.

### 3.3. Design and delivery

This section presents findings related to the overall design and delivery of the COIA Strategic Plan and, more specifically, to the immediate outcome of improving the capacity of service provider organizations and the federal government to manage and/or deliver the settlement and language training activities. It also addresses issues surrounding the overall governance of the Plan. This section addresses the following evaluation questions:

- **Has implementation of the Strategic Plan increased the capacity of SPOs to deliver services to newcomers?**
- **Has implementation of the Strategic Plan increased the capacity of government to manage and monitor settlement programs?**

#### 3.3.1. Improving capacity

For the purposes of this evaluation, “improving capacity” was defined as efforts aimed at strengthening the management (including the development and use of systems, resources and tools) and governance of an organization to improve their performance and impact.
Improving the capacity of service provider organizations

Finding: While it took some time to build the capacity of service provider organizations, the increase in financial resources that accompanied COIA and the capacity-building activities it supported enabled SPOs to expand and improve the quality of their services, experiment with innovative approaches to service delivery, and generally improve their management capacity.

SPOs vary widely in size, in reliance on COIA funding, and in capacity. There are large SPOs, in many cases with more diversified sources of funding, particularly in the Greater Toronto Area, and there are smaller organizations in large and small communities that focus solely on services to newcomers and are more dependent on COIA funding. In addition, over the past five years, new organizations joined the ranks of organizations working with newcomers. While there were 167 organizations providing direct services in 2005/06, this has increased to 247 by 2009/10.

The increase in funding available in Ontario led CIC to invest in capacity development in the settlement and language training sector. As a result, the number of projects with a capacity-building component grew more than five-fold between 2005/06 and 2009/10.

Overall, there were 23 capacity-building projects funded in 2005/06 and 76 in 2009/10 under Strategy 1 and 2, which supported such activities as the development of visual materials, various media and websites, training and professional development, and publications, including curricula. The funding for these types of activities grew from $2.7M in 2005/06 to $40.7M in 2009/10, under both Strategy 1 and Strategy 2. Table 3-9 presents the variety of capacity-building activities funded (since one project may deliver more than one product, the number of activities does not equal number of projects).

Table 3-9: Number of projects with capacity-building activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>2005/06</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tools and professional development (for Strategy 1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools and Guidelines (for Strategy 2)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training / professional development (for Strategy 2)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences (for Strategy 1 and 2)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications (for Strategy 1 and 2)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual materials / media / websites (for Strategy 1 and 2)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination and support (for Strategy 1 and 2)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Project Profile. Subject to data limitations stated in the methodology section

The following list provides examples of the types of activities funded among those listed in Table 3-9:

- **Tools and guidelines:** Tools developed to support service delivery include guidelines for working with seniors and their families, tools to support the delivery of SWIS activities, a manual for ISAP workers for providing occasional childcare, and a repository of online resources for newcomers. Under Strategy 2, tools, guidelines and curricula were developed to guide the delivery of new approaches, such as higher level English language training. Examples of projects include the development of an online version of CLIC 3 and 4, a French level 5-6-7 curriculum, the LINC 6-7 curricula, adaptation of LINC curricula to French language training, curricula for occupation-specific language training, and the development of teaching resources for teachers of LINC 6-7.
• **Training/professional development:** Projects included training on the provision of assessment services for the expanded language levels, language training at higher levels, childminding service provision, communication methods, cultural sensitivity, learning objectives, learning outcomes, and student evaluation. In addition, information sessions regarding the Modernized Approach for Settlement and specific calls for proposals were provided by CIC. OCASI, through a CIC-funded project, also provided board governance training for SPOs.

• **Conferences:** Conferences were used for professional development and information sharing. Settlement and language training-related workshops and conferences were organized by CIC, MCI, or large SPOs (e.g., Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council). Examples of conferences under Strategy 1 include the conferences for IEP (internationally trained professionals), ISAP conferences, SWIS conferences, Host conferences, childminding conferences for ISAP workers, and the annual OCASI Executive Directors Forum to bring directors of settlement organizations together. To build capacity for the delivery of Strategy 2, several conferences were conducted, such as several “Teaching English as a Second Language” and LINC administrators conferences.

• **Publications:** Publications included documents such as newsletters that provide updates on the development of several programming approaches (e.g., SNAP newsletter), the Canadian, First Steps (RAP orientation booklet), an information kit for family-class sponsorships, French and English versions of a Canadian cultural profile, a manual for cultural competencies, the translation of medical materials, and a youth resource book. The number of activities also includes the publication of conference materials.

• **Visual materials, various media and websites:** Projects include the development and implementation of Settlement.org, Etablissement.org, Settlement.atwork.org, JSW, Host websites, and a Youth portal on the OCASI website, all of which constitute online information resources for settlement workers and newcomers. Projects also included the development of a series of videos and resource booklets to educate and build cultural competency of staff members from volunteer organizations, healthcare providers and businesses in a specific municipality.

• **Coordination and Support:** Activities in this category support a province-wide, coordinated approach to the delivery of specific services: e.g., SWIS (English and French), JSW, Host, and LSP. Support also included program promotion, professional development (including conferences for settlement workers, and various meetings) and information sharing.

In some cases, SPOs required time to increase their capacity to effectively use the additional financial resources available under COIA. In a few instances, SPOs interviewed mentioned that some organizations were simply lacking the capacity to manage this

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**Exhibit 15: Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County**

The Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County (MCC) was created in 1973. Through COIA funding, MCC opened an additional location that is more accessible to newcomers via public transportation, built HR capacity, expanded the existing programming and also added new services. The MCC now offers ISAP, ELT, LINC, and Host programming and is involved in a variety of other initiatives concerning immigrant youth, women, family health and community activism. The new location is offering childminding to service recipients and employs a part-time nurse to educate, advise and consult newcomers on health issues. MCC has developed multiple partnerships with ethnic organizations, community centers, and local businesses. The organization has been using these partnerships to reach, inform and attract newcomers as clients.
increase. This may have resulted in an inability to spend the available new resources. It was also mentioned that some organizations experienced challenges with the management of their finances.

Based on interviews, case studies (see Exhibit 15) and survey results, overall, the financial resources and the support and training provided to SPOs though the COIA investment have, in many cases:

- enhanced SPOs’ capacity to design and plan new services and to expand existing services and provided the flexibility necessary to experiment with innovative programs and services;
- enabled them to improve their management capacity, including financial, governance and human resources capacity to better attract and retain qualified workers, thus developing more expertise; and
- enhanced the quality of programs and services.

**Service enhancements:** Fifty-eight percent of the SPOs surveyed\(^{31}\) indicated that the COIA funding and the support and training provided greatly or fully enhanced their organization’s capacity to design and plan new services. In addition, 52% felt it had greatly or fully enhanced their ability to provide innovative programs and services, 59% felt it had improved the quality of programs and services, and 56% indicated it had allowed for improvements in the delivery and management of programs and services (see Table 3-10). The flexibility that came with increased funding has also enabled SPOs to tailor their support. For instance, one organization has launched programs and services for young entrepreneurs who have recently immigrated to Canada. Another recent initiative has “job developers” working directly with employers to facilitate the link between newcomers and potential employers.

In some cases, the additional resources have not led to new services or programs, but rather to an expansion in the number of service delivery locations and/or the availability of additional equipment to better serve newcomers. Service providers have piloted or implemented new tools which may contribute to capacity such as a language objective repository, a language training portfolio, and the LINC voucher pilot project.

**Improved management capacity:** The organizations participating in the survey indicated an improvement in their operational capacities such as infrastructure (40% rated this area as 4 or 5), in their financial systems (24%), or their governance systems (20%). From a staffing perspective, 48% indicated that they can train staff and 49% that they can hire qualified staff (see Table 14).

More than one-third of survey respondents indicated they had not enhanced their governance or financial systems as a result of COIA funding (39% and 36% respectively). It is not clear whether this is due to the fact that these systems were already well developed and did not require support or whether the funding was simply not used for this purpose.

**Performance measurement capacity:** There is some progress in the area of performance measurement with 40% indicating an improvement in the development of monitoring tools, the monitoring of their services (41%), and obtaining and sharing information (49%) (see Table 3-10). However, at the time of this evaluation, some SPOs indicated a lack of capacity in the sector to undertake performance measurement and contribute to evaluations. In relation to this, a

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\(^{31}\) This question was asked of all respondents to the survey and therefore includes settlement service providers, language training providers and other organizations (n=143).
federal-provincial-territorial working group of Deputy Ministers is examining suitable approaches for outcomes measurement of settlement and language training services.

**Table 3-10: Impact of capacity-building activities on organizational capacities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent has COIA funding and the support and training provided enhanced your organization’s capacity to...</th>
<th>Little improvement (rated as 1 or 2)</th>
<th>To some extent (rated as 3)</th>
<th>Large improvement (rated as 4 or 5)</th>
<th>Not applicable / Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design and plan new services?</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide innovative programs and services?</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the quality of programs and services?</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliver and manage programs and services?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop or improve your organization’s infrastructure?</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve your organization’s governance system?</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve your organization’s financial system?</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train staff?</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire qualified staff?</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop program monitoring, performance measurement, or evaluation tools?</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and evaluate programs and services?</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain and share information?</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: SPO Survey (N=143)

Survey respondents who indicated COIA funding, support, and training did not enhance their organization’s capacity in one or more of these areas (n=46) felt it was due to the following reasons:

- COIA funding only focuses on service delivery;
- CIC has limited the funding that is available to enhance organizational capacity;
- their organization was unable to access funding to enhance its capacity; and/or
- their organization did not receive support or training from CIC or under COIA.

To address the capacity of the sector, in 2009, CIC’s Ontario Region developed a capacity-building strategy which identified the weaknesses of the ad hoc approach to capacity building employed until then, especially as it related to a lack of clarity in the role of CIC in providing such support. The strategy proposed a more strategic approach to capacity-building, including grounding the efforts in an assessment of capacities and the development of tools for CIC to perform such an exercise. To date, CIC Ontario Region provided funding for the promotion, roll-out, data collection and production of an Ontario region-wide report by OCASI that will aggregate data collected though a capacity self-assessment tool (developed with funds provided by the Trillium Foundation).

One of the issues mentioned during the case studies was the need to provide multi-year funding to ensure sustainable development of capacities. While multi-year funding is available, not all SPOs are aware of this. They indicated a need for multi-year funding agreements to continue to support the capacity-building process, support real innovation, and develop longer-term strategies to better serve the needs of the newcomer population. It is not clear why SPOs indicated that funding guidelines do not support ongoing projects and efforts when multi-year funding has been available since 2005.
Federal government capacity

The increase in funding provided through COIA required an increase in the capacity of the federal government to fund the delivery of the significant number of projects, to work with different project partners, and to create tools to support project delivery. This section describes progress in the development of the CIC’s capacity to ensure delivery of the Strategic Plan.

Finding: Given the rather sudden increase in funding, interviewees across all stakeholder groups (i.e., federal and provincial governments and SPOs) felt the human resources required within CIC to launch and implement the COIA Strategic Plan were underestimated. This was perceived to have delayed the implementation of new projects resulting, in some cases, in funding lapses. While the capacity of the federal government to support the delivery of an increased number of projects in Ontario is perceived to have increased over the last two years of the Strategic Plan, further improvement is still required, mostly in terms of timely processing of calls for proposals by CIC.

Financial Management: As indicated in Table 1-4, in 2009/10 the annual budget allocation under the Strategic Plan reached $411M, versus $111M budgeted for fiscal year 2005/06. By the end of 2009/10, of the $1.39B in available funds, only $1.21B was spent, with Vote 5 funds lapsing over the years under review.

Allocations for contributions to projects under COIA (Vote 5) increased quickly. Tremendous increases in funding required similar increases in administrative capacity for CIC, which could not be expanded quickly enough to avoid delays in the distribution of funding, according to interviewees. The contribution funds have also been challenging to disburse, partly as a result of the limited availability of human resources and the process of decentralization of services in Ontario that took place in 2007.

The stated goal of reaching a level of funding of $3,000 per newcomer was only reached in 2009/10 with $3,870 of expenditures per newcomer to Ontario (see Table 3-11).

Table 3-11: Expenditures per newcomer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005/06</th>
<th>2006/07</th>
<th>2007/08</th>
<th>2008/09</th>
<th>2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures</td>
<td>$111,000,000</td>
<td>$169,275,653</td>
<td>$240,898,955</td>
<td>$317,485,569</td>
<td>$413,581,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of newcomers to Ontario</td>
<td>140,525</td>
<td>125,892</td>
<td>111,315</td>
<td>110,896</td>
<td>106,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditures per newcomer</td>
<td>$790</td>
<td>$1,345</td>
<td>$2,164</td>
<td>$2,863</td>
<td>$3,870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIC financial system.

Management of the Contribution Agreement Process: According to service providers and some government representatives at both the federal and provincial levels, the human resources required from CIC to launch and implement the COIA Strategic Plan were underestimated — specifically in the first two years — to deal with the significantly higher number of proposals and Contribution Agreements. As the Strategic Plan required a joint planning approach, the time required to effectively plan and implement service delivery was significant: the Working Groups met frequently (there were 63 meetings of working groups), planning done in a collaborative and consultative manner was supported by extensive discussions, and the requirement of evidence-based decision-making impacted the resource requirements and frequently the time that was needed to develop and later implement various recommended new activities, including the Calls for Proposals (CFPs). Although there were many recommendations to pursue as a result of the 2006 consultation process and the early work of the working groups in 2007, government and SPO capacity was not sufficient early on to allow for their implementation. Time was required to
develop the capacity to evaluate and establish priorities, set up relevant consultative frameworks and conducts the required research. Establishing such processes took time to ensure both the conceptual and operational frameworks necessary for the expansion and enhancement of programs were put in place.

The federal government’s capacity is perceived by interviewees to have increased over the last two years of the Strategic Plan, specifically in terms of planning programs and services, as evidenced mainly by the various CFPs since 2007 (approximately 10), and the massive CFP to deliver the Modernized Approach launched in 2009/10. However, it appears that further improvement is still required. SPOs consulted as part of this evaluation indicated that CIC does not process and approve applications and funding in a timely manner. According to service providers and some program staff, while the proposal deadlines are too short in some cases, the proposal approval process and the contribution agreement negotiation process can be very long, and funding can be awarded late within a fiscal year, in some cases even jeopardizing the ability to implement the planned activities. Recognizing this, in 2010 CIC implemented new service standards under which applicants should receive notification of the funding decision within 90 days. Survey respondents were divided as to whether the timeline for the negotiation of a contribution agreement suited their operational requirements (46% agreed or strongly agreed and 45% disagreed or strongly disagreed).

While communication between the two orders of government and SPOs has improved under COIA, according to key informants, there is still room for improvement. Although CIC held information sessions and carried out other outreach activities, SPOs indicated more could be done in terms of clarity, specifically with regard to CFPs and the Modernized Approach. Service providers who responded to the survey (n=143) were more positive: three-quarters agreed or strongly agreed that the CFPs from CIC over the five years have been clear, while 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

In the interviews, some MCI respondents commented that, while it was not required, their involvement in the approval process for new Contribution Agreements would have been helpful.

**Performance Measurement:** SPOs have noted that CIC appears to be still looking for the right balance in terms of reporting and monitoring requirements. While the case studies found that the reporting requirements placed on SPOs are extensive, the Department – both headquarters and the Ontario regional office – seem to lack the required human resources to fully monitor program delivery. SPOs and governments alike indicated that maintaining a dual set of programming, accountabilities and reporting requirements (one federal and one provincial) is ineffective. However, some service providers found the federal and provincial reporting requirements complementary as opposed to overlapping. In fact, among service providers who participated in the evaluation survey (n=143), 43% agreed or strongly agreed that the monitoring and reporting requirements of CIC and MCI have been complementary, while 25% disagreed or strongly disagreed. CIC and MCI both require narrative reports on project activities undertaken, on the outputs that were generated, such as publications or websites, and statistics on clients served, as well as detailed reporting on spending at project completion, or annually for multi-year projects. In addition to narrative reporting providing client information, CIC requires detailed reporting on clients served and services provided via the iCAMS/HARTS/OTIS databases. Work to develop tools to capture client outcomes has only just begun through the Settlement Program.
3.3.2. Governance

The federal and provincial governments have established an elaborate governance structure to support and oversee the implementation of the Strategic Plan. This evaluation assessed the extent to which roles and responsibilities were clearly established, whether partners communicated effectively, and whether the various committees fulfilled their respective mandates.

Finding: While the Settlement and Language Training Working Groups at the core of the governance structure provided important guidance throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan, overall, the governance structure was deemed to be cumbersome.

Governance of the Strategic Plan: As stated in Section 1.5, only part of the COIA governance structure deals specifically with the Strategic Plan: the Steering Committee for Settlement and Language Training, the two Working Groups (Settlement and Language Training), the Research and Accountability Working Group and the Evaluation and Accountability Sub-Committee. The Working Groups have undertaken the bulk of the work in support of the Strategic Plan's implementation:

- The Language Training Working Group: By the time of the evaluation, it had held 34 meetings and had covered a wide range of issues such as the coordinated language assessment system, language training in and for the workplace, self-oriented learning and alternative learning methods, and coordination of language training.

- The Settlement Working Group: By the time of the evaluation, it had held 29 meetings that covered issues such as underserviced areas, pre-arrival services, capacity-building, language interpretation and translation, youth, women, and seniors.

The work of these two groups has had a direct impact on the implementation of the Strategic Plan. As described previously, some of recommendations from these working groups have been implemented, perhaps the most significant of which is the CLARS project. However, it should be noted that these two working groups have formulated over 100 recommendations and not all of them have been implemented to date. The Steering Committee for Settlement and Language Training, which received these recommendations, clearly stated that it would not be in a position to address them all. Some interviewees were, in fact, critical when it came to assessing the level of commitment from the Steering Committee. They felt the Committee, which met infrequently, could have been more proactive in following-up on working group recommendations.

Looking toward the future, views were divided when it came to the governance structure of the Strategic Plan. Provincial representatives interviewed found the structure to be ineffective. While there was mention of progress made by the Working Groups, the fact that many of the recommendations were not implemented was felt to have limited their effectiveness. Many of the federal government representatives interviewed agreed that the structure could be streamlined, but felt it was generally successful in achieving its objectives.

The governance structure for the Strategic Plan does not operate in a vacuum. Over time, CIC has established several committees and working groups whose purpose is to address different aspects of language training and settlement services offered throughout Canada. These other structures within CIC may also address issues that relate to activities occurring in Ontario, but that are beyond the scope of the Strategic Plan. At the time of the evaluation, 30 such structures were active:
- Regional internal working groups (n=6);
- National headquarters committees, working groups, and advisory groups (n=9);
- Intergovernmental committees and working groups (n=10); and
- Regional advisory committees (n=5).

**Communications between Canada and Ontario:** An agreement such as COIA has required an unprecedented level of collaboration between the two orders of governments. Several representatives from the provincial and federal governments noted that the level of information sharing between the two orders of government was limited. According to some individuals consulted, informal relationships outside the governance structure facilitated collaboration, but there was still room for improvement.
4. Conclusions and recommendations

This section of the report includes a series of conclusions and recommendations based on evaluation findings.

1. In the event that a new partnership arrangement is put in place in the future, it is recommended that the two orders of government assess current needs and determine priorities to develop a new joint plan to guide services to newcomers.

In a highly dynamic environment of shifting immigration trends, difficult economic conditions, and a significant increase in federal investment in settlement and language training programs since 2005/06, the Strategic Plan was largely successful in providing a strategic direction and overall parameters to guide the range of stakeholders providing support to newcomers in Ontario. Informed by extensive consultations with key stakeholders, the Strategic Plan also allowed for flexibility in the development and implementation of approaches to address newcomer needs. Five years after its introduction, while progress has been made, in cases where projects are just now entering their implementation phase, such as the LIPs, it is not entirely certain that progress is sustainable without a similar mechanism to guide and support future efforts. There is a strong rationale for developing a new joint plan founded on current needs, gaps and barriers that would provide timely and relevant direction and guidance in the event of a future partnership arrangement between the two levels of government.

2. During the development of any future joint plan, it is recommended that a more comprehensive and a whole of government approach is adopted by including both federal and provincial programming and by taking into account other relevant emerging broader policy frameworks.

Careful consideration should be given to the appropriate scope of a new Strategic Plan. The scope of the first Plan included only the federal programming. While the province of Ontario has taken into account the objectives of the Strategic Plan, its programming was not systematically integrated with the Plan. This has posed some challenges in understanding the full scope of the investment, programming and results in Ontario that flow from both federal and provincial initiatives. The scope of the Plan was also restricted due to limited direct involvement of relevant federal and provincial ministries (other than immigration) in program design and delivery. At the same time, any emerging relevant policy frameworks such as the Modernized Approach, which will drive settlement services, and the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement, which will drive employment services, will need to be considered in determining the scope and content of any future Strategic Plan.

3. It is recommended that the governance structure of any future joint plan be streamlined and redesigned, reducing the number of committees, and establishing clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

The governance structure to guide the implementation of the Strategic Plan was established within the broader COIA structure. This was not as effective as originally hoped as it was considered to be too cumbersome by many provincial and federal government interviewees. While the Settlement and Language Training Working Groups that formed the core of the structure to deliver the Plan undertook a significant amount of work, many of the recommendations they made to the Steering Committee for Settlement and Language Training were not implemented.
4. It is recommended that any future joint plan, in addition to settlement and language training, include a separate strategic priority to address employment in a comprehensive and structured way, taking into account the roles played by various stakeholders in this area.

The Strategic Plan has contributed to addressing a number of gaps and barriers to the development of new and innovative services, and to increasing access to services. While employment needs were addressed through a variety of activities for newcomers and employers, labour market integration issues were understated in the design and directions provided by the Plan. Given the critical role of economic integration in ensuring successful settlement outcomes, and the wide range of stakeholders involved in ensuring successful economic integration, it is important to build on the partnerships currently in place, including those with other federal and provincial departments, Service Provider Organizations, potential employers, professional associations, and credentialing bodies, to facilitate the economic integration of newcomers.

5. As the two orders of government pursue the full implementation of the coordinated language assessment and referral system (CLARS), it is recommended that they investigate the feasibility of creating a harmonized language training system.

It is widely recognized that language skills are the foundation for the successful social and economic integration of newcomers. Progress has been made in implementing a coordinated language assessment and referral system (CLARS). While there is a strong rationale for having a standard assessment approach, the development of an increasingly harmonized approach to programming should be investigated to determine whether synergies, efficiencies and enhancements to the quality of instruction could be gained and client pathways improved. While there are differing eligibility requirements for newcomers under the two programs, an integrated system would ensure that the client will have a clear and seamless path to language training, irrespective of eligibility criteria.

6. It is recommended that any future joint plan include the development and implementation of a performance measurement strategy to guide on-going joint performance data collection activities and to ensure information is available to support future evaluation activities. As part of this strategy, a review of existing federal and provincial databases and systems should be undertaken, with a view to ensuring the availability of performance information to assess outcomes, while not over-burdening SPOs and others who will be tasked with providing data. The systems should also be supported by tools, guidance and training to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected.

The collection of performance measurement data is the responsibility of program management and should be undertaken on an on-going basis. Generally speaking, the measurement of progress under the Strategic Plan was limited. While some data was collected on activities and outputs by program management, it was housed in different databases, making it extremely difficult to assess progress. For the purposes of this evaluation, information from a variety of existing databases was assembled by the evaluators to create a comprehensive picture of activities and clients, which allowed for the assessment of some outputs (projects, activities and partially, clients) and immediate outcomes.