



## SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS IN NORTHERN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (SINED) PROGRAM

April 2018

### THE EVALUATION

The evaluation was conducted to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the SINED program over a five-year period (from 2012/13 to 2016/17) to meet Government of Canada accountability requirements, to ensure program delivery aligns with the needs and expectations of Northerners, and to identify areas for improvement.

The evaluation included a literature review, a review of administrative and performance data, an economic impact analysis, an onsite file review of funded projects, key informant interviews (with SINED funding recipients and external stakeholders as well as CanNor personnel), an online survey and four case studies.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- *SINED is an economic development program that strengthens key economic sectors in Canada's three territories by supporting projects that increase northern economic growth and diversification, support innovation and capacity development, and create jobs for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Northerners.*
- *SINED funding is provided to business associations, economic development organizations, territorial and municipal governments, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).*

Budget (contributions): \$18.2M/year

### WHAT THE EVALUATION FOUND

- There is still a need, across the three territories, for economic development programs that promote sustainable economic growth and diversification in the North.
- SINED is deemed to support these goals, while advancing federal government priorities related to innovation and partnerships with Northern and Indigenous communities.
- Estimates from an economic impact analysis of SINED investments between 2009/10 and 2013/14 suggest that every \$1M invested by the program led to an overall increase of \$2.2M in Canada's territories Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and contributed to 18 person-years of full time employment.
- Between 2015/16 and 2016/17, for every dollar invested by SINED, an additional 96 cents was leveraged from other sources.
- While stakeholder survey data suggests that SINED increases Northerners ability to respond to economic development opportunities, better performance indicators and data are needed to provide more insights on the program's impact.
- Finally, SINED funding recipients reported challenges with some aspects of the program's administration (e.g. duration of funding cycles, application and review processes as well as reporting).



## WHAT WAS RECOMMENDED

The evaluation's findings led to specific recommendations for program improvements:

1. Implement two application intake periods throughout the year for designated amounts.
2. Develop longer funding agreements or program A-base funding to allow long-term project funding.
3. Develop more defined funding guidelines to ensure a more consistent understanding of eligible projects across the territories.
4. Review and define the Performance Measurement Indicators so that they are more relevant to the Northern context and provide the required insights on the program's impacts/results.
5. Develop a reporting template to support consistent reporting and easier tracking of SINED outputs (i.e. program results).
6. Develop a database to track project outputs and outcomes (i.e. project results), by region.
7. Consider delegating levels of approval to increase efficiency of the approval process.
8. Consider allowing approved project funds to be rolled over from one year to the next if they are not expensed in the year allocated.

## WHAT WAS CANNOR'S RESPONSE

The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CanNor) accepted or partially accepted all of the recommendations and developed a response that explains how these recommendations will be implemented. Additional details can be found at the following link.

[Management Response and Action Plan \(MRAP\)](#)