

Delivery Evaluation of the Canada Centre for Community Engagement and the Prevention of Violence

Evaluation Report July 2020





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Cat. No.: PS18-52/2020E-PDF

ISBN: 978-0-660-35635-8

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Background

"Radicalization to violence occurs when a person or group takes on extreme ideas and begins to think they should use violence to support or advance their ideas or beliefs. These beliefs can fall along a wide spectrum of ideologies, including political and religious ideologies."

National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence (2018)

Established in 2017, the Canada Centre is a centre of excellence in countering radicalization to violence in the Canadian context. While the federal government had already been involved for many years in domestic and international efforts to counter the radicalization to violence, the Canada Centre was created to expand support for and coordination of these efforts and also, by its emphasis on prevention, complement traditional security and intelligence responses to radicalization.

The Centre's activities fall into three main areas:

- National leadership through the creation of the National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence (CRV) and engagement and coordination with multi-sector partners;
- Knowledge development and mobilization as part of the CRV Strategy, supporting and creating evidence-based resources and best practices; and
- Grants and Contributions (G&Cs) funding program supporting targeted programming through the Community Resilience Fund (CRF), which helps fund local initiatives that aim to prevent radicalization to violence in Canada.

Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

As a delivery evaluation, the purpose of this evaluation was to examine program design, implementation, and production of outputs, while also reviewing achievement of early outcomes, program efficiency, and alignment with federal priorities and departmental objectives. The evaluation covered the Centre's activities from July 2017 (launch) to September 2019 and used multiple lines of evidence to ensure triangulation of findings.

Interviews



Thirty interviews were conducted with program and other Public Safety (PS) staff, Expert Committee members, representatives of funded projects, Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group members, other relevant federal departments and agencies, and Canadian and international stakeholders.

Literature and Program Document Review



A bibliographic search was conducted to determine whether documents published by the Canada Centre have been referenced in the literature. Academic and grey literature on best practices in the design of programs to counter radicalization to violence were also reviewed.

Document and Data/File Review



Documents and data/files included relevant internal program documents, administrative and performance measurement data, CRF documents, reports funded in whole or in part by the Canada Centre, and financial data.

Limitations

External stakeholders had limited direct experience with or knowledge of the overall program design and implementation and focused their responses on Centre activities in which they had more involvement. The Canada Centre does not systematically track its outputs and outcomes, so certain performance indicators could not be quantified. Given that the Canada Centre is still relatively new, key informants cautioned that it was still too early to definitively assess its impact on helping to create and sustain multi-sector partnerships, a key component of its national leadership role.

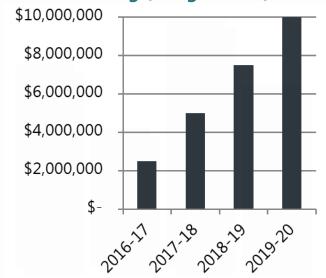
Relevance

Alignment with federal priorities and departmental objectives



Finding: The work and focus of the Canada Centre aligns with government priorities, federal roles and responsibilities, and departmental objectives.

Treasury Board allocated funding (Budget 2016)



The federal commitment to countering radicalization to violence is evident from the 2015 mandate letter to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to create an Office of the Community Outreach and Counter-radicalization Coordinator, which became the Canada Centre. This commitment was reaffirmed in December 2019, when the Minister was again mandated to "support the work of the [Canada Centre] and invest in front line programs that work to counter radicalization to violent extremism." The level of federal support to address radicalization to violence is found in the five-year financial commitment of \$35 million in Budget 2016, with \$10 million a year of ongoing funding.

The work of the Canada Centre directly supports one of Public Safety's six priority areas for the last three years, which is to "continue to advance countering radicalization to violence and counter-terrorism efforts with all levels of government, internal partners, and other stakeholders."

Relevance

Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)



Finding: The Canada Centre has taken several active steps to promote and advance GBA+ considerations in its work and in CRV programming more generally.

A federal priority is ensuring that differential impacts on diverse groups are considered in the development and implementation of government programs, policies, and legislation. The Canada Centre has taken several active steps to promote and advance GBA+ considerations in its work and in CRV programming more generally. In particular,

- GBA+ factors were considered throughout the development of the national strategy and incorporated in all related stakeholder engagement and public consultations.
- GBA+ considerations were taken into account when selecting members for the Centre's Expert Committee.
 The current Expert Committee is comprised of 10 members. Of these, four are women, five are men, and one identifies as gender nonconforming. Several members are visible minorities, and one is an Indigenous person.

 As part of the Centre's 2019 Mega Week event, a GBA+ workshop was convened by a CRF-funded organization to review progress, best practices, and lessons learned on integrating GBA+ into CRV programming. The resulting report is accessible online to assist organizations involved in CRV work (http://moonshotcve.com/gender-in-cveprograms/).

National Leadership Role



Finding: The Canada Centre is providing a national leadership role in countering radicalization to violence.



The evaluation found that the Canada Centre has effectively assumed a national leadership role in CRV, which had been a gap as no single body in Canada had fulfilled that function prior to 2017.

Development of a national CRV strategy was a key first step in providing national leadership. The Centre published the National Strategy on Countering Radicalization to Violence in 2018, 18 months after the Centre's launch. Based on consultations with key stakeholders, the National Strategy established priority areas to guide the federal government's support of CRV work: building, sharing, and using knowledge; addressing radicalization to violence in the online space; and supporting interventions in early prevention, at-risk prevention, and disengagement from violent ideologies.

The Canada Centre has achieved its performance indicators under the National Leadership activity area, mainly through the consultations and activities related to the development of the National Strategy, but also due to ongoing activities. The extent to which identified national priorities are being advanced as planned is not being collected or reported on, so the level of success in addressing priorities is difficult to determine.

National Leadership Role

Performance indicator and target | Level of achievement

Strategy is developed

Strategy completed

Number of sectors engaged in partnerships involving support from the Canada Centre [3 sectors]

Number and percentage of national strategy priorities being advanced as planned

CRF project documents provide evidence that all three priority areas are being addressed in some way, but there is no evidence of consistent tracking of this indicator.

Number of organizations engaged by the Canada Centre [>25]; and

Number of engagements conducted (e.g., formal consultations, meetings, etc.) [>50]

Number of significant products to support policy and legislation [>10]

To inform the Strategy, over 100 meetings were held with 275 different organizations and stakeholders in 14 cities across 10 provinces. The annual Mega Week hosted by the Centre continues to engage organizations.

Based on examples of products provided to the evaluation, it appears this target was met.

Most CRF-funded projects (93%) have at least one partnership and 86% have two or more. Partnerships across the CRF projects included no fewer than seven different sectors (number of projects in parentheses): community-serving/not for profit organizations (18), education (18), criminal justice system (16), other government stakeholders (14), international partnerships (10), health care (9), and other sectors (5), which included media and technology and faith-based organizations.

National Leadership Role



Strengths and successes

In addition to the development of the National Strategy, the evaluation found a number of other achievements indicating the national leadership role of the Centre, including its:

- establishment as a national leader among Canadian stakeholders (academics and community organizations) and international counterparts;
- support and/or participation in activities for identifying national priorities, gaps, and emerging issues and trends such as conferences, international fora, ongoing relationships with practitioners, and reports submitted by CRF-funded projects; and
- encouragement of multi-sector partnerships through CRF-funded projects and through support and facilitation of network-building opportunities, such as the Canadian Practitioners' Network for Prevention of Radicalization and Extremist Violence and the various multi-agency hubs and situation tables in place in cities across Canada.



Suggestions for improvement

More work could be done in the following areas, according to key informants who suggested:

- exploring potential synergies with other government departments and improving collaboration (e.g., Global Affairs Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police);
- playing a larger role in coordinating CRV efforts across Canada with the goal of being "nationally led, regionally coordinated, and locally delivered;"
- conducting more outreach to engage with youth and with frontline workers and organizations at the community level, particularly with those that may not see their role in CRV; and
- having a dedicated person to liaise with provinces and communities.

Knowledge Development and Mobilization



Finding: Knowledge development and mobilization has demonstrated some successes, but it is the activity most in need of attention.

One of the Canada Centre's primary activities is the funding, planning, and coordinating of research to better understand radicalization to violence and how best to counter it, and mobilizing research to front-line individuals working to prevent radicalization to violence. To support this activity, the Canada Centre supports knowledge mobilization and development in a variety of ways.

The Canada Centre has been involved in numerous conferences and events for researchers, practitioners, and partners. These have created an opportunity for stakeholders to meet and learn from one another, and to support the creation of a community of scholarship that is globally recognized. Notably, Mega Week is an annual event to bring practitioners, researchers, academics, other governmental stakeholders together for knowledge dissemination, networking, and showcasing services.

The Canada Centre is well placed to determine research priorities, act as the central custodian of produced research, and share findings with relevant actors. While it has assumed the first of these roles, it has made less progress on the latter two. For example, on Public Safety's website, there is a research catalogue that provides information on terrorism and radicalization to violence research funded by the CRF and Kanishka Project. This webpage includes links to funded projects reports. However, few people know to look for the research there, and it is not presented in a particularly straightforward manner. This ties into a broader supposition that the awareness of the Canada Centre and its activities outside of academic and research circles is limited.

Knowledge Development and Mobilization



The Kanishka Project was created in 2011 following a recommendation made in the final report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Investigation of the Bombing of Air India Flight 182. The Kanishka Project supported research on terrorism and counter-terrorism, expanded the community of researchers addressing such questions, and connected researchers with officials responsible for national security, as well as with the wider community.

Knowledge mobilization mechanisms

- Mega Week and other conferences where the Canada Centre is a co-sponsor are some of the primary forums used to share knowledge.
- Projects funded through the CRF are sharing their findings at workshops and conferences, and among themselves.
- The Canada Centre works closely with its counterparts in the Five Eyes, the Group of Seven, and the European Union. The Centre also leads the Government of Canada's engagement with the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism, and is involved with a number of other national and international research bodies and organizations.

Knowledge Development and Mobilization

It appears that the Canada Centre has made progress toward some of the performance indicators linked to knowledge mobilization, however data in some areas was limited or incomplete. As the Canada Centre matures, some indicators may require refinement or adjustment to reflect the actual knowledge mobilization and development activities undertaken.

Performance indicator and target | Level of achievement

Number of events, conferences, symposia with the CRV Office involvement [>25 a year] Unlikely to have been involved in >25 events, conferences and symposia annually.

Number of website hits for research products and number of downloads of research products 74,749 hits between April 1, 2017 and September 30, 2019. No information on the number of downloads of research products.

Number of organizations engaged in the CRV Office organized/funded events [>30] Target likely to have been met, though information is not available.

"Fit for use" index measure [75% of respondents report "fit for use" as good or very good]

No information was available.

Number of evidence-based practices reported being used by stakeholders

Unclear

Evidence and description of the reach and impact of knowledge products and research

Difficult to assess given project timeframes and limited information being reported to the Canada Centre.

Knowledge Development and Mobilization



Strengths and successes

- By providing funding to researchers and supporting opportunities for networking/sharing, the Centre has helped create a community of Canadian scholars.
- The Kanishka Project Catalogue has 21 knowledge products posted (only one after 2017) with 9 more in development, which meets performance goals. Of those posted, the level of impact and reach varied. For example, only 10 products were cited more than once or twice and had a combined 448 citations in Google Scholar, with over half of those (56%) occurring since the launch of the Canada Centre. These products have been cited in or disseminated by various multinational or international organizations, policy and research institutes, and, to a lesser extent, by media sources in Canada.
- Other performance indicators such as the engagement of organizations in Canada Centre-organized/funded events appear to be met.



Suggestions for improvement

- The Centre is not tracking its knowledge mobilization performance indicators and CRF-funded projects do not systematically report on them, which meant the evaluation could not address a number of the performance indicators for knowledge development and mobilization in a systematic way.
- The Centre could better promote and distribute research it has funded; in particular, reports from funded projects.
- The Centre could be more proactive in sharing other relevant information and research (i.e., serve as custodian or curator of research).
- Much of the knowledge mobilization occurs at events sponsored or co-sponsored by the Centre but the cost to attend can be a barrier for some stakeholders.

Grants and Contributions – Community Resilience Fund



Finding: The CRF is considered a useful mechanism for building capacity of organizations and practitioners across Canada. It is addressing identified priorities.

The Canada Centre leads the CRF, a key tool for supporting partnerships and innovation in countering radicalization to violence in Canada. The CRF is managed by the Programs Directorate under the Emergency Management and Programs Branch of Public Safety.

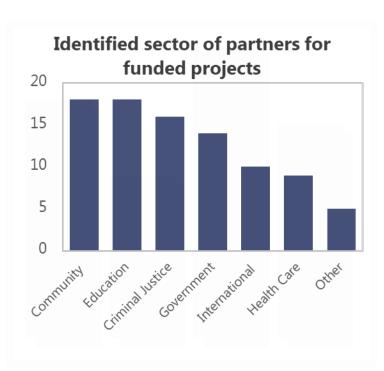
The CRF provides financial assistance to organizations addressing at least one of the three priorities outlined in the National Strategy. Applicants can also submit youth-led projects which seek to empower young people working to counter radicalization to violence. Activities eligible for CRF funding include research, programming, evaluation, and networking (including conferences, workshops and seminars).

A wide range of organizations and institutions are allowed to apply for the CRF, including:

- Community or professional organizations, societies and associations
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Provincial or local police service
- Universities and educational institutions
- Individual researchers
- Research institutions
- International non-governmental organizations
- For-profit institutions

While provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments can apply for funding, no federal institution is eligible.

Grants and Contributions – Community Resilience Fund



The CRF has held three calls for proposals since it was launched in December 2016. Over 200 applications were received. As of October 31, 2019, 28 funding agreements have been signed and 95% of funding committed between FYs 2016-17 and 2018-19 has been paid to projects. A Senior Steering Committee – co-chaired by the Director of Community Safety Programs (Public Safety) and the Senior Director of the Canada Centre – sets the terms and conditions of the CRF and recommends projects for funding. Representatives of other relevant government departments are also asked by the Canada Centre to review proposals.

Funded projects addressed the overall objectives of the Community Resilience Fund. The majority of projects (70%) addressed supporting evidence-based models and promising practices which address known risk and protective factors to prevent radicalization to violence, and half addressed empowering local communities to take steps to prevent all forms of radicalization to violence.

Partnership is a crucial element of the CRF projects. Seven unique sectors were identified as partners, and most projects had partners in multiple sectors.

Grants and Contributions – Community Resilience Fund

The Canada Centre has mostly met its performance indicators related to addressing priority areas through CRF-funded projects. The percentage of funding going to community-based programming is below the targeted amount, but key informants noted that it will require some time for community-based programming to develop the capacity to design and implement projects.

Performance indicator and target | Level of achievement

Number and percentage of applications funded addressing priority areas [90%]

100% (though priority areas are very broad)

Number and percentage of priorities that are addressed by released funding [95%]

100% of priorities or objectives have been addressed by at least one project (though priorities are very broad).

Canada Centre meets departmental G&C Service Standards* For 2016-17 and 2017-18, most cases met standards. In 2018-19, standards were met for all cases.

Percentage of available funding devoted to community-based programming [95%] 78.3%

*Public Safety's service standards are:

- Acknowledging the receipt of a funding request within 15 business days with the target set at 92% for achieving this standard
- For applications received prior to April 1, 2019 Communicating a funding decision within 52 weeks of receiving a complete application with the target set at 95% for achieving this standard
- Issuing a payment following receipt of all required documentation within 30 business days with the target set at 80% for achieving this standard

Grants and Contributions – Community Resilience Fund

Ability to address identified issues and priorities

- The CRF is funding projects to support the needs and priorities identified in the National Strategy.
- The CRF has appropriate processes, is receiving relevant proposals, and is funding projects that will advance the understanding of CRV in the Canadian context.
- The CRF has received 238 applications over the course of its three calls, including 106 in the most recent call (2018-2019).
- The CRF has funded 28 diverse projects from many regions, and different organizations and researchers.
 The accepted projects from the most recent call have not yet been announced.
- As few funded projects are completed, it is too early to determine the impact of funded projects as many of them are multi-year and some are just starting.



Suggestions for improvement

- The Canada Centre could consider identifying more precise priority areas and topics in order to provide more direction to applicants and leadership for CRV programming in Canada.
- The Canada Centre should require more accountability from funded projects in terms of reporting and evaluation so that it can determine if funded projects are effective.
- Public Safety should ensure that messages to funding recipients are consistent whether they come from the Canada Centre or regional officers of the Programs Directorate.

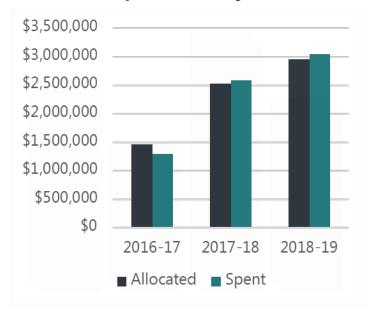
Efficiency

Program Administration



Finding: The Canada Centre is being administered efficiently based on available evidence, but there are gaps/unmet targets.

Canada Centre operating expenditures by FY



Canada Centre budget

As shown in the figure, the Canada Centre's operating budget increased from year-to-year, with its first full year of operations in 2017-18. Between 2017-18 and 2018-19, the operating budget grew by 17% from \$2.59 million to \$3.04 million. This was a planned increase to ramp up activities of the Centre.

Gaps/unmet targets

Available budget and expenditure information is high level, so details that would assist with an assessment of efficiency, such as the amount spent on conducting research activities, organizing conferences or other knowledge dissemination efforts, and managing the CRF, are not available.

Efficiency is also based on meeting performance targets and, as noted earlier, while many are met, there are some without sufficient evidence to assess, or they are not yet met.

- Evidence of whether a number of knowledge mobilization and development targets were met was not available.
- G&Cs target for percentage of available funding devoted to community programming was not met.

EfficiencyProgram Administration

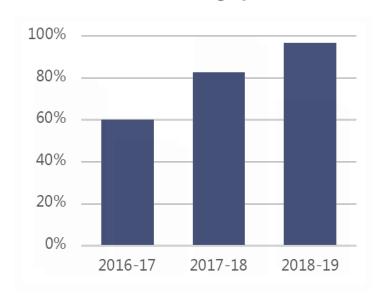
CRF efficiency

One measure of efficiency for G&Cs programming is the success in getting funding out the door. Based on this measure, the CRF has improved over time. In its first year, FY 2016-17, 60% of funding budgeted for G&Cs (Vote 5) was spent, which increased to 83% in FY 2017-18 and to 97% in FY 2018-19.

Another indicator of G&Cs program efficiency is leveraging federal funding with other funding so that each federal dollar spent results in more outputs/outcomes due to the combined funding sources. For the Canada Centre, the performance target is 80% of applications where over 20% of total funding is from other sources.

Currently, 21% of all applications and 43% of projects that received CRF funding had 20% or more of their total funding from other sources.

Percentage of budgeted CRF funding spent



EfficiencyProgram Administration



Duplication/unexplored synergies

Findings highlighted several synergies and minimal duplication between the work undertaken by the Canada Centre and that of other federal government programs. There is evidence that, by focusing on prevention and by articulating a coordinated federal approach to CRV, the Canada Centre is filling a gap in the government's approach to CRV. Several fora and mechanisms exist through which the Canada Centre can engage with other federal departments and agencies, including having representatives of these agencies review applications to the CRF.

Notwithstanding, findings suggest that the working relationship with several departments, including the RCMP, could be improved and strengthened so as to avoid any duplication and to explore potential synergies. In particular, stakeholders identified that there is potential overlap with Canadian Heritage's Anti-Racism Action Program (which supports its Anti-Racism Strategy), due to the ambiguous nexus between hate-motivated crime and radicalization to violence. For example, the Anti-Racism Action Program, similar to the Canada Centre, also prioritizes funding projects that target online hate and promote digital literacy. While the Canada Centre is identified in, and receives funding from Canadian Heritage's Anti-Racism Strategy, it is aware of this potential overlap with its Anti-Racism Action Program and is currently discussing its implications.

Efficiency

Canada Centre Delivery Model



Finding: The Canada Centre delivery model supports its objectives.

Integration of research, policy, and programming

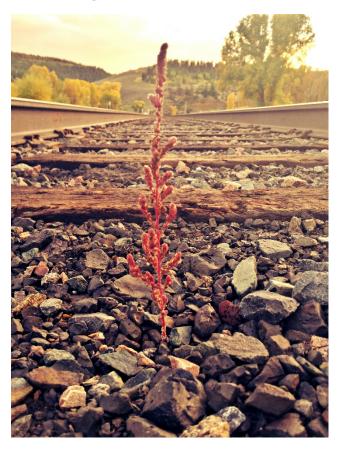
The Canada Centre integrates research, policy, and programming for its subject area, which is considered unique within Public Safety Canada. This model helps ensure that those three core activity areas are aligned and support one another. However, the integrated model is showing some strains. Due to the high demand for support on policy files, internal key informants noted that the Canada Centre personnel hired as researchers do not have sufficient time to devote to knowledge development and mobilization. A suggestion to better support the integration of policy and research was to reorganize the Centre from having separate policy and research teams to having teams based on topics of importance or streams of work.

Expert Committee

The Expert Committee is made up of non-government representatives who are appointed by the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness from a list of recommended candidates.

The Committee assists with policy advisory work as well as programming, including knowledge development and advice on CRV interventions. The Committee has a diverse membership from a variety of sectors and it provides a direct link between the community-level stakeholders and policy makers. The Expert Committee is considered by stakeholders to enhance the Centre's national leadership role and its role in community engagement. As it is newly formed (2019), it is too early to assess what its full impacts will be. A suggested improvement was adding someone to the Expert Committee who is an expert in the online sector.

EfficiencyCanada Centre Delivery Model



Shared management of CRF

The use of the Programs Directorate under the Emergency Management and Programs Branch of Public Safety for administrating the CRF is considered to work well with its expertise in developing and managing funding agreements paired with the Canada Centre's policy expertise. A suggested improvement was the need for Public Safety to ensure consistent communications with funding recipients from these two parts of Public Safety.

Gaps and limitations

The commitment and quality of the Canada Centre staff was noted by external stakeholders, but internal key informants noted that there have been some staffing challenges, including turnover and expertise gaps within the Centre.

Given those previous concerns, the current model might face capacity issues in some areas of suggested expansion, including:

- increasing engagement in curating, promoting, and distributing knowledge products;
- more directly supporting evaluation of funded projects (provision of tools, advice, and expertise, etc.); and
- more outreach and direct involvement in communities.

Conclusions

The Canada Centre's activities align with federal government priorities to prevent radicalization to violence. With its launch in July 2017, the Canada Centre is still relatively new, but it has shown progress in its three core activity areas.

As a focal point for the federal approach to CRV, the Canada Centre is fulfilling a national leadership role by developing the National Strategy on Countering the Radicalization to Violence, which has set national priorities to guide CRV work.

The Centre has convened national meetings (e.g., Mega Week) and supported other conferences that bring together stakeholders across Canada that work in CRV to share best practices and learnings.

By funding CRV projects through the CRF, the Centre is supporting interventions that should help develop an evidence base of the effectiveness of CRV programming.

The Centre appears to be operating efficiently but there is limited data to support an analysis of its efficiency.

The evaluation found some areas of gaps or potential improvements for the Centre to address.

- While the Centre has established a national and international profile in CRV, the evaluation found that the Centre's coordination with other federal departments could be improved and that there is the desire for the Centre to have a more visible role in the communities by conducting more direct outreach.
- The Centre's activity area of knowledge development and mobilization was identified as the activity area needing the most attention as the Centre could do more to identify and distribute knowledge products.
- As the G&Cs funding is intended to build a knowledge-base and evidence for the effectiveness of CRV programming, the Centre should encourage and support project-level evaluations.

Recommendations

The Assistant Deputy Minister, Portfolio Affairs and Communication Branch and the Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Management and Preparedness Branch should consider the following for the Canada Centre:



1. In terms of its national leadership role: explore opportunities to expand its coordinating role, including outreach at the stakeholder and community level.



2. In terms of its knowledge development and mobilization role: formalize the roles and responsibilities suitable for the Canada Centre as a curator and distributor, and even potentially a producer of research products.



3. In terms of its G&Cs role: provide necessary guidance to ensure that funded projects are monitoring and assessing their activities in line with the overall objectives of the Canada Centre.



4. The Canada Centre should put in place measures to systematically collect and report on its outputs and outcomes.

Management Action Plan

Recommendation	Action Planned	Planned Completion Date
In terms of its national leadership role: explore opportunities to expand its coordinating role, including outreach at the stakeholder and community level.	Revitalize the CC-led DG-level table of federal institutions and the FPT working-level network, and leverage the use and work of the CRV Expert Committee.	08/31/2021
	Develop a stakeholder and community engagement plan with updated objectives for 2020-2022; and, update the Canada Centre web presence.	08/31/2021
In terms of its knowledge development and mobilization role: formalize the roles and responsibilities suitable for the Canada Centre as a curator and distributor, and even potentially a producer of research products.	Set a Canada Centre biennial strategic knowledge mobilisation and research agenda.	08/31/2021
In terms of its G&Cs role: provide necessary guidance to ensure that funded projects are monitoring and assessing their activities in line with the overall objectives of the Canada Centre.	Develop and implement a performance monitoring guidance for projects in light of overall CC objectives; and, update the Annual Performance Report requirements accordingly.	08/31/2021
The Canada Centre should put in place measures to systematically collect and report on its outputs and outcomes.	Create and utilize a Canada Centre-specific performance measurement tool to collect and report on outputs and outcomes.	08/31/2021