
Evaluation Services Directorate
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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AAD	Aboriginal Affairs Directorate
ALI	Aboriginal Languages Initiative
APP	Aboriginal Peoples' Program
AFN	Assembly of First Nations
CIRNAC	Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
CoE	Centre of Excellence
ESD	Evaluation Services Directorate
FPCC	First Peoples' Cultural Council
FTE	Full-Time Equivalents
Gs&Cs	Grants and Contributions
GCIMS	Grants and Contributions Information Management Systems
ILB	Indigenous Languages Branch
ILCP	Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program
ISC	Indigenous Services Canada
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
NAB	Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting
NIO	National Indigenous Organizations
NRCC	National Research Council of Canada
NWT	Northwest Territories
NZ	New Zealand
OCIL	Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages
PCH	Canadian Heritage
PM	Prime Minister
PNR	Prairie and Northern Region
PRG	Policy Research Group
P/T	Provincial/Territorial
STR	Subject to recovery
TLA	Territorial Language Accords
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Executive summary

Program Description

The Aboriginal Peoples' Program (APP), which was renamed the Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program (ILCP) after the evaluation period, was implemented to contribute to the efforts of Indigenous communities to preserve, promote and revitalize their Indigenous languages and cultures. Through program funding, Indigenous governments, communities, organizations, and territorial governments developed and delivered innovative and culturally relevant programs and other initiatives. The APP had three core program funding elements: the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI), Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting (NAB) and Territorial Language Accords (TLA). It also supported National Indigenous Peoples' Day, and Scholarships and Youth Initiatives—National Aboriginal Achievement Awards.

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation covered the years 2014-15 to 2018-19 and addressed the APP's relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. The evaluation team used a mixed methods approach to collect and analyze data that included a document review, administrative data review, stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions with program applicants and recipients and an expert panel discussion.

Findings

Relevance

The evaluation found that there was an ongoing need for the APP. Many Indigenous languages are endangered in Canada and the programming provided important supports to Indigenous language preservation, promotion and revitalization. There was an increase in demand for APP funding over the evaluation period.

The programming was well-aligned with Government of Canada priorities. A review of similar programs offered in Canada determined that the APP was complementary to other initiatives, with unique features including a national scope, higher levels of funding, and activities that focused on Indigenous language preservation, promotion, and revitalization.

Key informants, focus group participants and the expert panel members agreed that the APP supported the delivery of many valuable language projects. The Program, however, was not able to make a significant impact on reversing the current downward trend in the use and fluency of Indigenous languages given the complexity of the issues, the long-term nature of achieving outcomes and the funding envelope.

Effectiveness: Achievement of Expected Outcomes

The programming contributed to the achievement of most expected program outcomes. The ALI component supported the delivery of an average of 129 projects and 189 participatory activities per year from 2014-15 to 2018-19, reaching an average of 7,428 participants annually. The most frequent participatory activities delivered were in-class language and culture instruction, language and culture camps and language nests; in total, these activities provided an average of 25,320 hours per year of language instruction over the evaluation period.

The NAB element supported the delivery of over 300,000 broadcast hours of Indigenous content over the 5-year evaluation period, with a marked increase year over year. Of these total hours, the number of hours broadcast in Indigenous languages increased from 36% in 2014-15 to 51% in 2018-19.

APP projects have mobilized communities to use and share Indigenous languages and cultures. A majority of ALI participants reported that the projects helped them share their Indigenous cultures (90%), identity (87%) and/or languages (91%). The evaluation found that ALI projects were particularly impactful in the context of engaging Elders in language and culture initiatives, youth using and sharing their Indigenous languages and cultures, and women developing and delivering language and culture nests to better support language fluency.

APP recipients and expert panellists reported that initiatives such as the APP support the revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures, therefore playing a role in reversing the downward trend in language use. Recent actions and initiatives undertaken by the Government of Canada will continue to support Indigenous communities progress towards the preservation, promotion, and revitalization of Indigenous languages and culture going forward.

Efficiency

Improvements were made to the APP program over the 5-year period to better meet the needs of recipients and communities, particularly related to the ALI application process. The implementation of multi-year funding in 2018-19 was seen as responsive to community needs and more conducive to long-term strategic planning and achieving outcomes. The additional time that APP staff took to understand the projects and communities led to improved access to funding and streamlined project delivery.

However, the evaluation identifies opportunities for further improvements to program delivery. The timing of application deadlines for proposal submissions, service standards not being met and delays in funding decisions led to some funds being recovered from recipients and to some projects not being undertaken. Examination of alternative delivery models suggest offering more flexibility and a continuous funding model, which would allot ongoing funding to support multi-year initiatives and reduce uncertainties for recipients.

The demand for the program outweighed available funding. For example, the NAB element was opened to new applicants in 2015-16. This led to an increase in the number of funding recipients from 13 in

2014-15, to 24 in 2018-19 without change to the funding envelope. While positive in increasing the overall program reach and increasing broadcasting hours of Indigenous content, an unintended impact of this change was a decrease in annual funding for the 13 original recipients, resulting in reductions to their staff and programming.

Recommendations

There was a delay in finalizing this report due in part to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Changes occurred to the program after the evaluation period and the evaluation acknowledges that the program has already taken actions to address the recommendations in this report.

Recommendation 1:

The evaluation recommends that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Community and Identity, with Indigenous partners, build upon the findings of this evaluation and the programming changes already implemented since 2019, and continue examining and implementing delivery approaches that support the evolving needs of Indigenous communities and maximize opportunities for flexibility.

Recommendation 2:

The evaluation recommends that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Community and Identity, complete the review of its program grants and contribution processes launched in Fall 2021 with the Chief Financial Officer Branch, to establish and implement consistent standards for service delivery and timely funding decisions.

Recommendation 3:

The evaluation recommends that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Community and Identity, with Indigenous partners, continue measures to review the needs and priorities of Indigenous broadcasters in the North, with the goal of making changes to the Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting program element as needed.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation of the Canadian Heritage (PCH) Aboriginal Peoples' Program (APP).¹ It covers the five-year period from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and examined the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the program. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the *Financial Administration Act* and the Treasury Board Policy on Results (2016), and as detailed in PCH Departmental Evaluation Plans.

2. Program profile

The APP contributed to the efforts of Indigenous communities to preserve, promote and revitalize their Indigenous languages and cultures through funding to Indigenous governments, communities, and organizations, and with territorial governments. Eligible Indigenous organizations could apply to two of the APP Grants and Contributions (Gs&Cs) program elements:

- **Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI):** supported the preservation, promotion and revitalization of Indigenous languages through community-based projects and activities. Contributions were delivered either by PCH or by third-party Indigenous organizations;² and
- **Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting (NAB):** supported the production and distribution of Indigenous audio and video content for television or radio broadcasting. Between

Additional context on the evaluation

There was a delay in finalizing this report due in part to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Changes occurred to the program after the evaluation period. In July 2019, the *Indigenous Languages Act* was enacted. The Commissioner and first directors of the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages were appointed in June 2021, in collaboration and consultation with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and the Métis National Council (MNC).

The Aboriginal Peoples' Program was renamed Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program in 2019-20. The new program is grounded in the *Indigenous Languages Act* with a focus on the co-development of an Indigenous Languages Funding Model to facilitate the provision of adequate sustainable and long-term funding.

The evaluation acknowledges that the program has already taken actions to address the recommendations in this report. Additional information on this work can be found in Section 6.

¹ As of June 6, 2019, the program has been renamed the Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program. Given that the evaluation period is 2014-15 to 2018-19, the former program name will be used in this document.

² The First Peoples' Cultural Council in British Columbia (BC) was the first to sign a first third-party delivery agreement with APP. The Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre and the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres and PCH implemented third party delivery agreements in 2018-19.

1983³ and through to 2014, the same 13 original intended recipients received funding. In 2015-16 the program was opened to new applicants.

The APP also managed three other components which have specified recipients:

- **Territorial Language Accords (TLA):** permanently funded government-to-government agreements to support territorial governments in their activities related to the preservation and promotion of Indigenous languages. Each territorial government had a different approach to how it allocated its TLA funding. The Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Nunavut negotiated four-year agreements directly through the APP. In the Yukon, three non-self-governing Nations were funded directly from agreements negotiated through the APP and 11 self-governing First Nations were funded directly through Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC).
- **National Indigenous Peoples' Day:** had a single named recipient—Aboriginal Experiences, Arts and Culture. It supported activities in the National Capital Region that provided opportunities to become better acquainted with the cultural diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, discover the unique accomplishments of Indigenous peoples in various fields, and celebrate their significant contributions to Canadian society.
- **Scholarships and Youth Initiatives—National Aboriginal Achievement Awards:** had a single named recipient—Indspire. It supported scholarships and career fairs for Indigenous youth as well as the broadcasting of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards Gala.

2.1. Program history

The ALI and NAB elements of the APP were first launched in 1998⁴ as short-term funding mechanisms to support Indigenous communities across Canada in meeting language and culture preservation and revitalization objectives. Since 2015, the APP has undergone several changes to its structure and program elements. In summary:

- In 2015-16, NAB changed its funding model to an open and competitive model, from its former model of allocating funds to a pre-determined list of recipients.
- In 2016, the TLA each saw an increase in funding from approximately \$1 million to \$5 million.
- Budget 2017 announced increased funding to support Indigenous languages and cultures, including \$69 million over three years (2017-18 to 2019-20) to support a range of activities related to learning materials, language classes, culture camps, and archiving Indigenous languages. This amount included \$19.1 million a year over three years for Gs&Cs provided

³ The element was previously a stand-alone program launched in 1983 and called the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program with annual funding of \$13.3 million.

⁴ The origins of the Program can be traced back to 1971 with the creation of the Aboriginal Representatives Organization Program. In 1998, following the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, ALI was created.

through ALI. It also included \$10.1 million in operating expenditures for the three-year period.

- As a result, the ALI budget was increased from \$5 million to \$19.1 million in both 2017-18 and 2018-19.
- In 2018, the management of NAB was transferred from PCH Headquarters (HQ) to the Prairies and Northern Region (PNR).
- Program changes occurring after the evaluation period are mentioned in section 6 of this report.

2.2. Program activities, objectives and expected outcomes

The objectives of the APP, described in Table 1, were to strengthen Indigenous cultural identity and participation in Canadian society and to preserve and revitalize Indigenous languages and cultures.

Table 1: Program objectives and expected outcomes*

Objective	Immediate outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Ultimate outcome
To strengthen Indigenous cultural identity and participation in Canadian society, and to preserve and revitalize Indigenous languages and cultures	<p>Indigenous language stakeholders implement projects to revitalize, preserve and promote Indigenous languages.</p> <p>Public sector organizations in the territories develop their ability to revitalize, preserve, and promote Indigenous languages and offer service in Indigenous languages.</p>	<p>Mobilized groups, organizations and communities use and share Indigenous languages within Indigenous domains and cultural contexts.</p> <p>Public sector organizations in the territories and communities implement projects to revitalize, preserve, and promote Indigenous languages and offer service in Indigenous languages.</p>	Reversal of the current downward trend in the use and fluency of Indigenous languages.

*In 2018, the APP Performance Information Profile was updated and included 34 results indicators.

2.3. Program management and governance

Program management and governance for the APP shifted in 2019, from the now non-existent Aboriginal Affairs Directorate (AAD) to a newly created Indigenous Languages Branch, which is part of PCH’s Community and Identity Sector. The Branch is responsible for implementing the *Indigenous Languages Act* in collaboration with Inuit, Métis Nation and First Nations partners, conducting negotiations, developing policy and managing the day-to-day operations of the Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program. As noted above, delivery of NAB has been carried out by the Department’s Prairies and Northern Region since 2018.

2.4. Program resources

As shown in Table 2, over the five-year evaluation period, the APP had spending of \$140.5 million in Gs&Cs and \$17.8 million in salary along with operations and management (O&M).

Table 2: APP Program expenditures, 2014-15 to 2018-19 (\$M)

Expenditures	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
Salary + O&M	\$ 3.7	\$2.8	\$2.0	\$3.9	\$5.4	\$17.8
Gs&Cs	\$20.0	\$18.0	\$19.0	\$37.0	\$46.5	\$140.5
Total	\$23.7	\$20.8	\$21.0	\$40.9	\$51.9	\$158.3

Source: PCH Finance Branch

The full-time equivalents (FTEs) dedicated to the delivery of the APP varied throughout the evaluation period from a low of 20.5 in 2016-17 to a high of 44.9 in 2018-19.

Table 3: PCH's APP full-time equivalents, 2014-15 to 2018-19

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
35.6	27.3	20.5	34.3	44.9

3. Approach and methodology

PCH's Evaluation Services Directorate (ESD) was responsible for leading this evaluation. The ESD used a mixed-method approach, including both qualitative and quantitative sources of information and analysis. Findings from all sources of evidence were triangulated to draw conclusions and support recommendations.

An internal evaluation project team conducted the document and administrative data review and the internal interviews with APP senior and middle management. The team worked with the PCH Policy Research Group (PRG) to conduct a horizontal scan of comparable programs at the federal, provincial and international level. An external contractor conducted focus groups, individual interviews with APP recipients, and an expert panel.

Evaluations that examine programs for Indigenous communities must be culturally appropriate and responsive to cultural values. To ensure that the evaluation was conducted in a way that was aligned with Indigenous practices, the ESD team actively pursued knowledge of the cultures and preferred research methodologies of the communities involved in the APP. The selection of the study methodologies was guided by the notions of respect and reciprocity. They included opportunities to share perceptions through focus groups and through a panel of Indigenous languages experts.

3.1. Scope, timeline and quality control

The evaluation covered the five-year period from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and was conducted between September 2019 and March 2020. It was designed to focus on program relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, highlighting specific areas identified by senior program management. During the evaluation, program stakeholders identified the need for a better understanding of:

- the evolving needs of Indigenous communities with respect to the program funding mechanisms⁵;
- any gaps and barriers to a successful application including those related to accessing, delivering, distributing or spending APP funds; and
- possible alternative funding models to the APP.

Based on input from program management, review of program risks, and to meet evaluation timelines, the National Indigenous peoples' Day and the Scholarships and Youth Initiatives—National Aboriginal Achievement Awards elements were not a focus of the evaluation. Both elements apply and receive a direct annual transfer of funding to a single named recipient.

Quality assurance was addressed through adherence to program evaluation standards within the Government of Canada and oversight within the ESD. A working group of program representatives was formed at the outset of the evaluation to provide advice and validate certain information.

3.2. Calibration

The evaluation was calibrated to focus attention and resources on questions of highest importance to senior management decision-making. As much as possible, the evaluation leveraged existing administrative data with targeted data collection to address questions and gaps. For example, focus groups and key informant interviews were conducted to obtain perception data from applicants, recipients, and subject matter experts in response to specific questions.

3.3. Evaluation questions

The evaluation focused on questions of programming relevance, effectiveness and efficiency as presented in Table 4. The evaluation framework, including the indicators and data collection methods, is presented in Annex A.

⁵ Program stakeholders raised particular questions relating to ALI which was undergoing review as a result of the recent Royal Assent of the *Indigenous Languages Act* and the upcoming creation of the OCIL.

Table 4: Evaluation questions by core issues

Core Issue	Evaluation questions
Relevance: Ongoing need for the program	1.1. Is APP responding to the current and changing needs of the Indigenous communities?
Effectiveness: Achievement of expected outcomes	2.1. Have the funded projects supported the preservation, promotion and revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures in communities across Canada? 2.2. Have the APP funded projects mobilized communities to use and share Indigenous languages and culture within their domains and cultural context? 2.3. To what extent has the mobilization of Indigenous communities had a positive impact on the preservation, promotion and revitalization of the Indigenous languages and culture?
Efficiency: Demonstration of efficiency	3.1. To what extent is the APP delivered in the most efficient way? 3.2. Were there any improvement initiatives to address gaps in program delivery? ⁶

3.4. Data collection methods

During the planning phase of the evaluation, a preliminary literature review was conducted to assist with the selection of appropriate methodologies that would facilitate a streamlined project timeline, inform the team on culturally appropriate research methods, and provide an initial understanding of the program.

3.4.1. Document review

Program documents were reviewed for both situational awareness of Program activities and outputs and to assess performance. Over 300 documents describing the Program, including both successes and challenges, were reviewed during the conduct of the evaluation.

3.4.2. Administrative data review

Program administrative and annual performance data was used to assess the achievement of expected outcomes and the efficiency of application and funding mechanisms. PCH's Gs&Cs Information Management Systems (GCIMS) data was also retrieved and analyzed to determine the Program's compliance with service standards. Program expenditures are only presented in the report and were not analyzed for economy.

⁶ This question was adjusted during the evaluation to align with demonstration of efficiency. The original wording can be found in annex A.

3.4.3. Interviews with stakeholders

Key informant interviews were used to collect information and perceptions from a variety of stakeholders about programming relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. Interviews were conducted with internal Program management as well as with funding recipients from ALI, NAB and TLA. Of 34 key informant interviews completed, 10 were with PCH employees and 24 were with program recipients; ALI (16), NAB (6) and TLA (2).

3.4.4. Focus Groups

Focus groups of four to eight stakeholders were conducted to collect in depth perceptions and stories related to all evaluation questions. Participants included ALI and NAB funded recipients (6) and unfunded ALI applicants (4). One focus group was conducted with six representatives of APP projects that were classified as subject to recovery (STR), meaning they had to return a portion or all of their allotted funds due to an inability to launch or complete projects with the fiscal year timeframe. Focus groups participants were not included in key informant interviews.

3.4.5. Expert Panel

An expert panel comprised of academics, Indigenous community leadership and experts in Indigenous language acquisition and cultural promotion was convened to discuss both program design and delivery and best practices in Indigenous languages acquisition. The expert panel included eight participants and was designed to include regional and distinction-based representation.

3.4.6. Horizontal scan

To support questions of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, the evaluation examined similar initiatives to APP delivered within Canada (both federally and provincially) and internationally. Programs including nine initiatives delivered by the Government of Canada, 32 Provincial/Territorial (P/T)-level programs, and 20 international initiatives.

3.5. Constraints, limits and mitigation strategies

Table 5 below outlines some challenges experienced in the conduct of the evaluation and mitigation and calibration strategies implemented to address these limitations.

Table 5: Constraints, limits and mitigation strategies

Limitation	Mitigation Strategy
<p>The program underwent multiple changes during the period covered by this evaluation. Program data was not always collected consistently in the same format.</p>	<p>To the extent possible, the evaluation relied on existing administrative data. The program was consulted to review, validate, and correct data questions and errors.</p>
<p>As per most program evaluations, attribution of the program activities to the achievement of long-term expected outcomes –the preservation, promotion and revitalization of the Indigenous languages and culture - was not possible.</p>	<p>The evaluation focused on the outputs and shorter-term results of the programming, where attribution is highest. Recognizing that other factors, initiatives, and policies contribute to longer-term outcomes, the evaluation highlighted the program’s contribution.</p>
<p>Conduct and reporting for this evaluation were delayed due to a number of factors including changes to the program’s governance and subsequent limited availability of program representatives; suspension of focus group activities under the caretaker convention during the 2019 federal election; and the global COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p>While PCH was not able to have the final report approved according to the schedule in the PCH’s Departmental Evaluation Plan 2019-20 to 2023-24, preliminary results were shared with program management to support decision-making until the report could be published.</p>
<p>The number of focus group participants was small.</p>	<p>Outreach was conducted first by email and followed up by telephone. The random sample of applicants and recipients was exhausted. Other qualitative data from engagement with Indigenous communities supported the focus group findings.</p>
<p>The evaluation team is developing its capacity to conduct evaluations that respect reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.</p>	<p>The evaluation team partnered with evaluation consultants with experience in evaluating programs with Indigenous peoples. The team sought to be culturally appropriate and responsive to cultural values. The notions of respect and reciprocity guided the evaluation work including the focus groups and a panel of Indigenous language experts.</p>

4. Findings

4.1. Relevance

4.1.1. Ongoing needs for supporting Indigenous Languages

Evaluation question: Is the APP responding to the current and changing needs of Indigenous communities?

APP is responding to many current and emerging needs related to Indigenous language preservation, promotion and revitalization. Indigenous languages are endangered in Canada. APP provided direct supports to address language preservation, promotion and revitalization; there was an increase in demand for the funding over the evaluation period. While key informants agreed that the APP supported the delivery of many valuable language projects, they also acknowledged that the programming was not able to address all needs. A review of similar programs offered in Canada determined that the APP is complementary to other initiatives, with unique features including a national scope, higher levels of funding, and focus on Indigenous language preservation, promotion and revitalization.

Many Indigenous Languages are at risk of becoming dormant

Many Indigenous languages in Canada are at risk of becoming dormant and research shows that three out of four are endangered.ⁱ As shown in Table 6, all 90 Indigenous languages in Canada were vulnerable and 39% critically endangered according to 2013 data.⁷

Table 6: Status of Indigenous languages in Canada

Indigenous Language Status	Number of Indigenous languages
Vulnerable/unsafe	23
Definitively endangered	5
Severely endangered	27
Critically endangered	35
Total	90

Source: [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#) – 2013 data

The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings (2015) highlights what Indigenous peoples have long stated – that the purpose of the residential school system, with its 100+ year history in Canada, was to “break the link with their languages, culture and identity.”ⁱⁱ In 2019, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) declared the International Year of Indigenous Languages, further underscoring the need to preserve, promote and revitalize Indigenous languages that are at risk of disappearing.ⁱⁱⁱ

⁷ UNESCO counts approximately 90 Indigenous languages spoken in Canada whereas Statistics Canada counts 70 in 12 language families as noted in the Canadian Heritage fact sheet entitled, “Indigenous Languages in Canada.”

There was significant demand for the APP funding over the evaluation period

Analysis of Program administrative data demonstrated an increased demand for the NAB and ALI elements over the five-year period as illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7: ALI and NAB funding requested (\$M), 2014-15 to 2018-19

Requested funding	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
ALI	\$15.7	\$13.5	\$14.8	\$17.4	\$23.7	\$85.1
NAB	\$10.7	\$11.4	\$8.0	\$13.2	\$14.3	\$57.6

Funding for the TLA element also increased over the evaluation period from \$3 million in 2014-15 to \$12.1 million in 2018-19, mostly due to greater funding transferred to the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut. There was no funding increase for the NAB component.

There was also an increase in the number of ALI and NAB projects funded over the evaluation period (Table 8). For example, ALI funded 100 projects in 2014-15, which increased to 185 in 2018-19. Similarly, NAB funded 13 projects in 2014-15 and 24 in 2018-19.

Table 8: APP funded projects by FY, 2014-15 to 2018-19

APP Elements	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
ALI	100	92	83	186	185	646
NAB	13	15	17	21	24	90
Total	113	107	100	207	209	736

Source: Program Administrative Data

The APP addressed important Indigenous language needs

All ALI and NAB funding applicants and funding recipients who participated in focus groups as well as expert panel participants agreed that APP project funding allowed valuable community initiatives to be undertaken that supported the preservation, promotion and revitalization of their Indigenous languages.

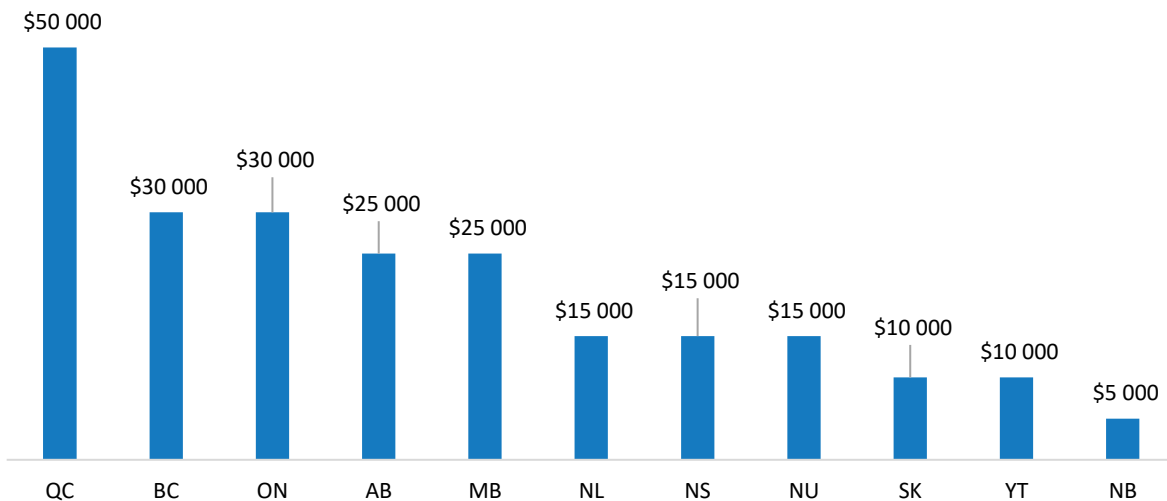
External Key informants, focus group participants and expert panel members highlighted the ongoing needs for programming to support communities in bolstering their capacity to preserve, promote, and revitalize their languages and cultures. They indicated that the APP was one of the only funding sources available for language initiatives and, without it, many projects would not have been possible.

However, the APP was not able to address all demands and needs within Indigenous communities related to language and culture. Given the extent and complexity of the issue and the level of program funding available, internal key informants and expert panel members agreed that the Program was not able to make a significant impact on reversing the current downward trend in the use and fluency of Indigenous languages in Canada.

There were no other programs that offer the same level of funding for similar activities

A horizontal scan was conducted for the evaluation to identify provincial and territorial programs with objectives similar to the APP. The scan identified several programs exclusively available to Indigenous communities in Canada. However, none duplicated the APP in terms of national scope nor came close to matching the APP funding levels for the same type of activities. As shown in Figure 1, the total maximum amount of funding available per recipient organization from provincial or territorial sources in 2019 for Indigenous Language activities or projects varied across the provinces and territories, ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000. In comparison, the average funding per APP recipient in 2018-19 was \$102,000 for ALI and \$350,000 for NAB.

Figure 1: Maximum P/T funding per recipient organization for Indigenous Language activities in 2019



Source: APP Evaluation Horizontal Scan, 2019, Data was not available for NWT.

Other federal and P/T programs complemented the APP

The programs identified through the horizontal scan were found to be complementary with the objectives of the APP. For example, the First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) funding could be used in conjunction with APP funding to bolster language initiatives in British Columbia. Additionally, Québec offers an annual grant for radio programming in Indigenous languages, which complements the NAB element of the APP. Several key informants suggested that the various APP elements complemented one another, as applicants could utilize more than one element simultaneously (e.g. ALI and NAB, NAB and TLA) to better support the achievement of outcomes.

Most other federal funding programs are directed at predetermined service delivery organizations both on and off reserve and do not have a primary goal of language revitalization or preservation. For

example, the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) and the National Research Council of Canada (NRCC) have programming for digitizing Indigenous languages and developing the information technology to preserve oral histories. LAC offers grants of up to \$100,000 and NRCC offers grants between \$100,000 and \$300,000. Also, while Employment and Social Development Canada delivers funding to Indigenous service delivery organizations to design and deliver job training services and it can be used towards Indigenous languages and cultures training and translation, it is not the primary focus of the program.

The variability in funding opportunities and limited focus on languages at the federal and P/T level reinforces the importance of maintaining federal support for Indigenous languages and cultures. This was supported by feedback from APP recipients, a majority of whom reported that they relied primarily on the APP to fund language and culture initiatives and indicated that, in comparison to other programs, the APP was more flexible in terms of the types of projects funded and provided greater funding amounts.

The APP program was well aligned with Federal Government and PCH key priorities

The Government of Canada has clearly identified reconciliation with Indigenous peoples as a key priority^{iv}. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Calls to Action were accepted by the Government of Canada, which committed to a nation-to-nation approach to reconciliation.^v In 2016, it committed to co-develop and enact the *Indigenous Languages Act* to align with the TRC Calls for Action on Indigenous languages; the Act received Royal Assent in June 2019.^{8,vi} Budget 2019 allocated \$333.7 million over five years beginning in 2019-20, and \$115.7 million ongoing annual funding to support the implementation of the *Indigenous Languages Act*.^{vii}

Between 2015 and 2019, mandate letters for the Ministers of Canadian Heritage have identified the preservation, promotion and revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures and the implementation of the *Indigenous Languages Act* as priorities. Also included in 2019, was the provision to provide predictable and sufficient long-term funding to support the revitalization of Indigenous languages.^{viii, ix} Going forward, the new Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages (OCIL) will be mandated to support the revitalization of Indigenous languages and publish an annual report on the vitality of Indigenous languages in Canada and the effectiveness of the government's efforts.

⁸ Reference: calls to Action 13, 14 and 15.

4.2. Effectiveness: achievement of expected outcomes

4.2.1 Projects supported the preservation, promotion, or revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures in communities across Canada

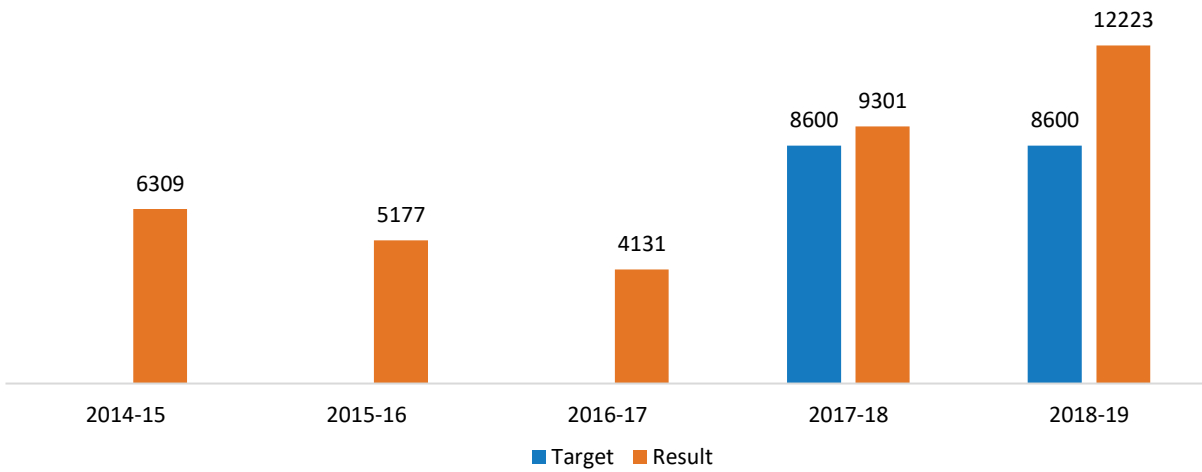
Evaluation question: Have the funded projects supported the preservation, promotion and promotion of Indigenous languages and cultures in communities across Canada?

Overall, there is evidence that the programming supported the preservation, promotion, and revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures across Canada. APP supported the delivery of an average of 159 projects from 2014-15 to 2018-19, reaching an average of 7,428 participants annually. The most frequent participatory activities delivered were in-class language and culture instruction, language and culture camps and language nests, providing an annual average of 25,320 hours of language instruction over the evaluation period. There was an increase in the number of hours of new Indigenous content broadcast on radio and TV through NAB. The evaluation found that the TLA successfully met its outcomes of supporting the territories in hiring personnel and producing educational resources to support the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages.

In total, the APP provided funding to 795 Gs&Cs projects over the five-year evaluation period, or about 159 per year. An average of 129 ALI projects funded per year were implemented over the period, with an average of 251 participatory activities annually. The number of projects surpassed the target set at 170 as of 2017-18 after the ALI budget was increased.

An annual target of 8,600 ALI participants was set in 2017-18 and was achieved both that year (9,301) and the following year (12,223). Figure 2 illustrates the number of ALI participants reached, per year, over the evaluation period compared to the performance target.

Figure 2: Target vs. actual number of ALI participants by fiscal year, 2014-15 to 2018-19

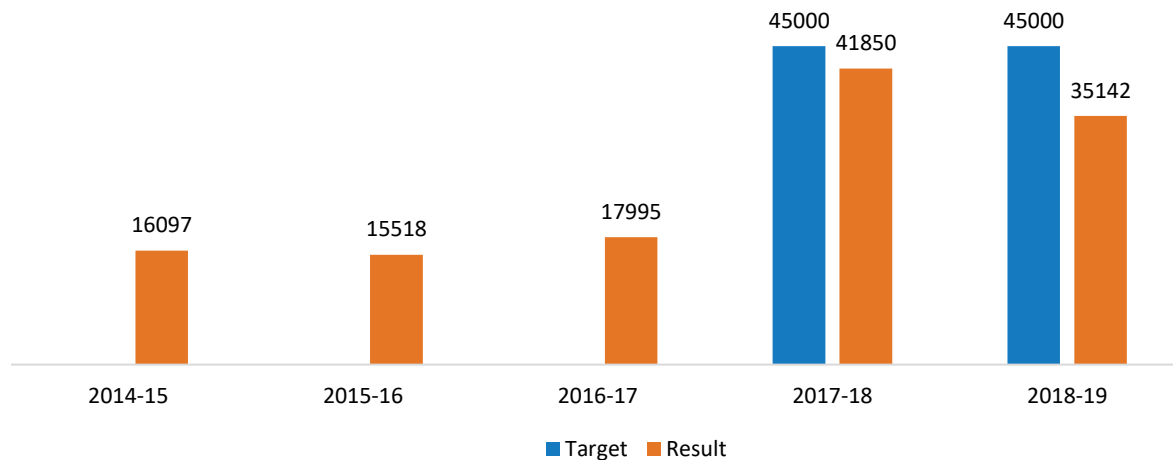


Source: Program Administrative Data

Note: Targets were not established until 2017-18.

Figure 3 shows the target and actual annual number of hours of instruction delivered through the ALI. An average of 25,320 hours of instruction were provided annually through ALI projects during the evaluation period. The target was set at 45,000 hours in 2017-18 and the program reported 41,850 hours of instruction were provided, with 35,142 hours in 2018-19. Though the target was not met, the number of ALI instruction hours increased over the 5-year evaluation period.

Figure 3: Target vs. actual number of hours of instruction by fiscal year, ALI, 2014-15 to 2018-19



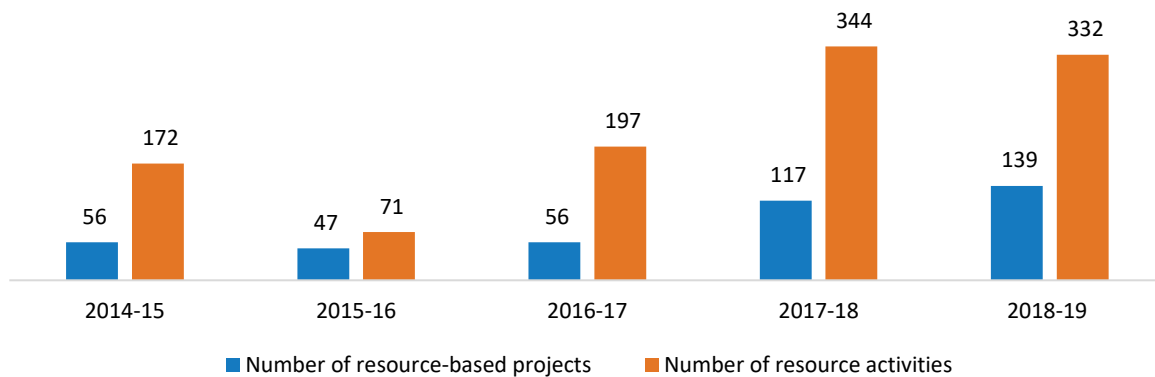
Source: Program Administrative Data

Note: No targets were identified before 2017-18

A variety of participatory activities were supported through these projects each year, with the most frequent being in-class language and culture instruction (an average of 156 delivered per year), followed by language and culture camps (57), and language nests (19).

As illustrated in Figure 4, on average, 83 ALI projects funded annually were designed to develop resources, such as learning materials, or document and archive languages. The target was set at 106 in 2017-18. Those projects facilitated the development of an average of 223 resources per year over five years.

Figure 4: Number of ALI resource-based projects and activities, by fiscal year, 2014-15 to 2018-19



Source: Program Administrative Data

ALI project recipients produced a variety of resources. The most common was the development of various types of literature with content in Indigenous languages with an average of 107 resources per year, followed by learning material (38) and audio and video material (30).

NAB supported the delivery of new Indigenous content on radio and television

Another indicator used to assess the achievement of the immediate outcome was the number of hours of new Indigenous content broadcast on radio and TV that was developed with NAB project funding. The number of hours of Indigenous content broadcast increased from 36,502 in 2014-15 to 84,891 in 2018-19. The proportion of new Indigenous content broadcast in Indigenous languages grew from 36% in 2014-15 to 51% in 2018-19. Table 9 below illustrates the annual number of hours of new Indigenous content broadcast from 2014-15 to 2018-19.

Table 9: Number of hours of new Indigenous content broadcast, 2014-15 to 2018-19

New Indigenous Content	Number of hours 2014-15	Number of hours 2015-16	Number of hours 2016-17	Number of hours 2017-18	Number of hours 2018-19
Radio content in Indigenous languages	13,264	18,936	20,135	35,980	44,416
Radio content in non-Indigenous languages	23,171	25,516	42,473	47,656	41,399
TV content in Indigenous languages	67	80	61	61	76
TV content in non-Indigenous languages	0	0	9	292	0
Totals	36,502	44,532	62,678	83,989	85,891

Source: Program Administrative Data

The TLA successfully supported several language initiatives

Through annual reports provided by the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and each of the three non-self-governing nations in the Yukon, there is evidence that the TLA supported the revitalization of Indigenous languages. The TLA had a specific immediate outcome measuring whether the public sector organizations developed the capacity to preserve, promote and revitalize Indigenous languages and were able to offer services in Indigenous languages.⁹ This capacity is defined as having personnel and developing resources capable of supporting communities in their efforts.

As shown in Table 10, targets for the TLA were surpassed for the number of additional employees hired to support language preservation and revitalization. The target for doubling the number of culturally appropriate educational resources to revitalize, preserve and promote Indigenous languages and offer services in Indigenous languages was not measured prior to 2017-18. It was noted by key informants, however, that additional resources were created in support of this outcome.

⁹ Prior to the 2017-18, the TLA did not have results indicators to demonstrate achievement of outcome.

Table 10: TLA achievement of outcomes, 2014-15 to 2018-19

TLA achievement of outcomes	Target 2017-18	Actual 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Actual 2018-19
Number of additional employees hired to support the preservation and revitalization of Indigenous languages.	65	133	65	103
Number of resources created to preserve, promote and revitalize Indigenous languages and offer services in Indigenous languages*	Annual increase of resources up to 450-500 in 2019-20	n/a	Annual increase of resources up to 450-500 in 2019-20	490

Source: Program Administrative Data

*This number represents the number of copies and not the number of resources.

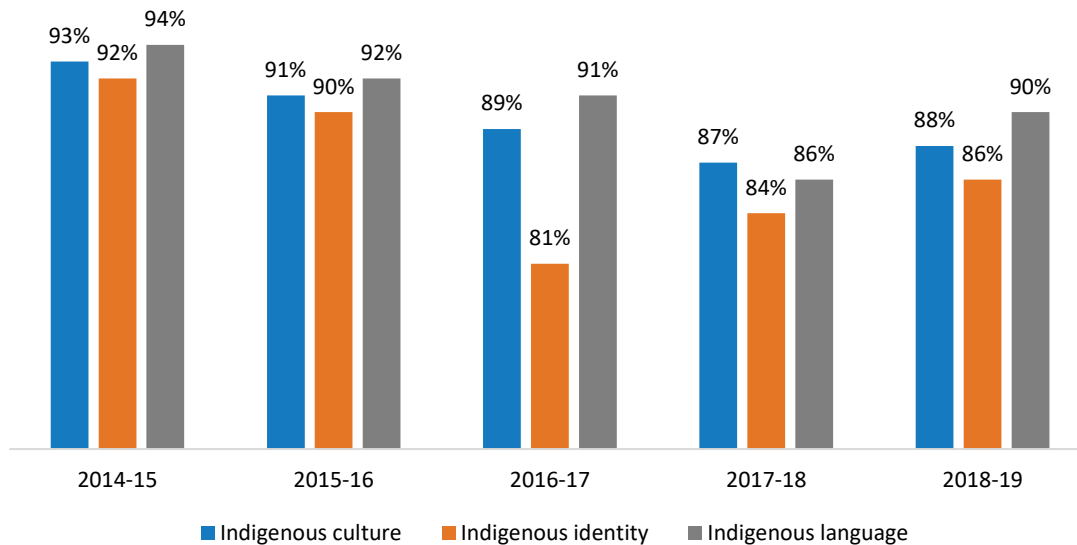
4.2.2 Extent to which projects have mobilized communities to use and share Indigenous languages and culture within their domains and cultural context

Evaluation question: Have APP funded projects mobilized communities to use and share Indigenous language and culture within their domains and cultural context?
APP projects have mobilized communities to use and share Indigenous languages and culture. Most ALI participants reported that the projects helped them share their Indigenous cultures (90%), identity (87%) and/or languages (91%). The evaluation found that ALI projects were particularly impactful in the context of engaging Elders in language and culture initiatives, youth using and sharing their Indigenous languages and cultures, and women developing and delivering language and culture nests to better support language fluency.

Program helped communities share their Indigenous culture, identity and language

As noted previously in Figure 2, ALI participants numbered between 4,131 in 2016-17 and 12,223 in 2018-19. ALI participants were surveyed by funding recipients before and after their activities with an average response rate of over 90%. The majority reported over the evaluation period that projects supported them in sharing their Indigenous culture, identity, and language over the five years. As shown in Figure 5, ALI participants highly agreed that the programming increased their ability to share their Indigenous culture, identity and/or language, from a low of 81% in response to Indigenous identity in 2016-17 to a high of 94% for Indigenous language in 2015-16.

Figure 5: Proportion of ALI participants that agreed that the APP increased their ability to share Indigenous culture, identity, and language



Source: Program Administrative Data

Most key informants agreed that the APP effectively supported language exposure and learning

Most internal and external stakeholder interviewees, all focus group participants, and the expert panel reported that APP projects increased language exposure and learning. For example, the programming provided opportunities for listening and viewing content in multiple Indigenous languages, and increased presence of Indigenous languages in homes through television and radio. Additionally, many commented that projects enhanced youth connection to their Indigenous culture.

Elders and language and culture camps

The ALI element of programming supported Indigenous languages and culture camps which incorporated both life-on-the land skills and language immersion. These camps provided opportunities for Indigenous Elders and fluent speakers to engage with participants. ALI supported a total of 285 projects related to Indigenous languages and culture camps over the five-year evaluation period, an average of 57 per year. There was a large increase from 28 projects in 2014-15 to 116 in 2018-19 as a result of the additional funding allocated.

Reports by the AFN and Employment and Social Development Canada highlighted the important contributions made by Elders in Indigenous communities, particularly when fluent speakers are sought out as teachers and resources.^{x xi} Some key interview informants reported positive socioemotional impacts of the language and culture projects, such as enhanced pride and connection to Indigenous culture and identity. Some noted that the projects contributed to reduced social isolation for participating Elders.

Youth and training participation

Indigenous language acquisition is associated with many positive impacts for youth, including “a connection to community and culture, generates self-esteem, and fosters a sense of identity.”^{xii} A survey conducted with Indigenous youth on reserve found that, of those that reported excellent First Nations language skills, 70% also reported high levels of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, compared to 45% of those who said they had ‘poor’ First Nations language skills.^{xiii}

Given that 40% of the total ALI projects participants over the five-year period were under 24 years of age, the evaluation inferred that Indigenous language training projects did contribute to youth using and sharing their Indigenous languages and culture.

Women and language and culture nests

ALI funding supported a total of 96 language nest projects, an average of 19 per year, over the five-year evaluation period. There was an increase in these projects over the period. Research has demonstrated that language nests are successful in helping to create fluent speakers.^{xiv}

Indigenous women are the primary language transmitters to their children and, therefore, are important mobilizers of language use and cultural knowledge for future generations.^{xv} In particular, Indigenous women have historically planned and implemented Indigenous language nests in their communities, which are defined as language acquisition activities directed at preschoolers and their parents.^{xvi xvii}

4.2.3 Extent to which the mobilization of communities had a positive impact on the preservation, promotion, and revitalization of the Indigenous languages and cultures

Evaluation question: To what extent has the mobilization of Indigenous communities had a positive impact on the preservation, promotion and revitalization of the Indigenous languages and culture?

APP contributed to some extent to the preservation, promotion, and revitalization of Indigenous languages and culture. APP recipients and expert panellists reported that initiatives such as ALI support the revitalization of Indigenous languages and cultures. The evaluation recognizes that the achievement of long-term results will require coordination of efforts across many groups and initiatives over many years, given the complexities associated with preserving, promoting and revitalizing Indigenous languages and culture.

Changes to language use and fluency

There were no significant changes to Indigenous language use and fluency over the period of evaluation. Statistics Canada census data from 2016, indicated that the number of Indigenous people who could

speak an Indigenous language was slightly greater than the number who reported an Indigenous mother tongue, suggesting an increase in second language learning of Indigenous languages.¹⁰

In focus groups, most recipients indicated that the APP was well-positioned to increase the fluency of Indigenous languages. Given the size of the issue, many suggested that impacts of the APP on fluency would be enhanced through more robust funding, including longer-term funding models. They indicated that while progress had been made toward full immersion, it has been slower than anticipated due to funding constraints.

Most external interviewees agreed that, in the long-term, the APP fostered learning for children and youth and increased access to language and cultural resources. They noted that the program increased access to language resources which facilitated a higher likelihood to create speakers. However, in addition to funding limitations, it was noted that it takes years to become proficient in a language even when comprehensive learning resources are readily available.

4.3. Efficiency: Program Delivery

4.3.1 Extent to which the program is delivered efficiently

Evaluation question: To what extent is the APP delivered in the most efficient way?

While the evaluation found some strengths in the funding model, it identified key challenges that impacted efficient program delivery for the achievement of results. The Gs&Cs funding model that was in place for most of the evaluation period did not reflect the needs and preferences of Indigenous peoples and impeded the achievement of results due to one-year funding limits and funding delays. The model was viewed as discouraging intercommunity collaboration and imposing administrative burdens on applicants and recipients. Also, while NAB funding was opened to new applicants in 2015-16 with positive results on reach and on the number of hours of broadcasting of Indigenous content, it also led to reduced funding per recipient and instability for some organizations.

However, despite these challenges, there was clear evidence that the program was aware and responded to some extent to limitations to the model. Most notable was the introduction of multi-year funding agreements in 2018-19. Areas for further attention to strengthen client service and to better reflect principles of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples include examining options for flexibilities and easing of administrative burdens as well as improving the timeliness of funding decisions.

¹⁰ There has been criticism by Indigenous representatives of the 2016 census. Not all on reserve Indigenous peoples were enumerated in 2016 and the formulation of the question on mother tongue required a fill-in-the-blank answer; specificity of Indigenous language may have been omitted.

Strengths and weaknesses of funding model

The evaluation identified strengths and weaknesses of the Gs&Cs model through analysis of program administrative data, key informant interviews, focus groups and the expert panel. Table 11 provides a summary.

Table 11: Strengths and Limits of APP Funding model

Strengths
Record-keeping requirements (e.g. on expenditures) ensured compliance-based reporting for programs ^{xviii}
Program capacity provisions ensured that recipients had the organizational and financial capacity to successfully carry out the terms of the funding agreements ^{xix}
Grant money provided recipients (e.g., radio stations) short-term funding to support ongoing operations ^{xx}
Performance data collected generated evidence on which programs work and under which conditions ^{xxi}
PCH-driven process and guidelines could help to address government priorities in achieving results for Canadians ^{xxii}
Limits
Onerous funding guidelines and accountability requirements were burdensome for recipients with limited administrative capacity
Limited flexibility to allocate, manage and use funds to accommodate Indigenous language needs and local priorities over multiple years ^{xxiii}
Short-term funding lead to a lack of predictability and continuity to foster innovation and support long-term initiatives ^{xxiv}
Competitive process to obtain funding created inequities and limited information sharing and relationship building amongst recipients
Time-consuming internal processing and reporting could hinder service delivery ^{xxv}

Source: Key Informant Interviews and referenced documents

The application and project reporting process whereby recipients submitted reports and information on their projects and activities allowed for the availability of data. APP staff tracked and analyzed project information, contributing to the ongoing assessment of the program against results and to the ability to adjust as needed.

The model presented challenges to efficient delivery

The primary issue effecting efficient delivery of the program was the annual funding approach which was in place. This issue was recognized by the program; the 2017-18 annual program report noted that multi-year funding options were more conducive to long-term strategic planning and ultimately to

language revitalization while stand-alone projects, funded on an annual basis, created uncertainty regarding the continuity of funded activities.^{xxvi}

Funding recipients and applicants noted that it was difficult to conduct long-term planning because funding was often received after planned project start dates and too late in the fiscal year. Many recipients accessed APP funds on an annual basis for the continuation of previous initiatives. Expert panellists highlighted that language revitalization should not be considered a short-term project.

These findings are supported by the results of coast-to-coast-to-coast engagement sessions with Indigenous peoples held prior to the Assent of the *Indigenous Languages Act*. Participants reported that programs to preserve and/or revitalize Indigenous languages had been underfunded and were largely project-based and inflexible, resulting in a lack of continuity. They stated that they preferred block or multi-year funding for immersion programs to preserve and revitalize Indigenous languages and cultures.

Furthermore, one of a series of co-development principles developed and agreed upon by all three National Indigenous Organizations (NIOs) and the Government of Canada stated that funding for language revitalization must be “adequate, predictable, sustainable, long-term and reach the appropriate recipients.”^{xxvii} It also noted that “funding to recipients for ongoing support purposes must be on a core basis (not annual project-based) and funding mechanisms should facilitate this intent.”^{xxviii} Participants agreed they were best placed to determine their own needs and to manage any initiatives for strengthening their languages.

In these consultations, Inuit, Métis and First Nations communities, peoples and leadership also emphasized that they should not have to compete against each other for funding.^{xxix} Related, key informants interviewed for this evaluation reported that the Gs&Cs competitive process discouraged collaboration amongst communities and that there was no opportunity for leveraging or sharing of knowledge amongst recipients.

Recipient capacity and administrative burden were identified as issues affecting delivery and the achievement of results. Key informants, focus group recipients and expert panellists stated that application and reporting processes such as completing forms, providing baseline information year over year, and collecting information and reporting against outcomes created an administrative burden on applicants and recipients. Many applicants reported managing funding applications and agreements across multiple funders. Not all communities or organizations have capacity to manage the application process or complete the required reporting.

ALI and NAB did not consistently achieve described service standards

Service standards are in place to ensure the timely delivery of funding programs and apply to Gs&Cs transactions. Standards are established for acknowledging the receipt of an application, notification of a funding decision and issuance of payments to recipients.

For ALI, the two-week standard for acknowledging receipt of applications was met on average annually in 90% of the cases. The 30-week standard for notification of decisions varied over the five years from a high of 97% 2018-2019 to a low of 37% in 2017-18. Table 12 below illustrates the service standards achieved for the ALI between 2014-15 and 2018-19.

Table 12: ALI notification of decision service standards and attainment, 2014-15 to 2018-19

Fiscal Year	Applications (Volume)	Standard (Weeks)	% Met
2014-15	216	30	87%
2015-16	199	30	71%
2016-17	207	30	96%
2017-18	186	30	37%
2018-19	145	30	97%

Source: GCIMS

NAB's two-week standard for acknowledging receipt of application was met on average 95% of the time or greater. The service standard for notification of decision was adjusted twice during the evaluation period, in 2015-16 and again in 2017-18. However, the standard for notification of decisions was achieved just once in 2015-16, with the standard being met less than 50% in all other years. Table 13 below illustrates the service standards achieved for NAB between 2014-15 and 2018-19.

Table 13: NAB notification of decision service standards and attainment, 2014-15 to 2018-19

Fiscal Year	Application (Volume)	Standard (Weeks)	% Met
2014-15	13	30	26%
2015-16	15	22	100%
2016-17	18	22	11%
2017-18	37	26	46%
2018-19	25	26	28%

Source: GCIMS

NAB application deadlines varied

Annual changes in application deadlines led to uncertainty among recipients. As illustrated in Table 14 below, a review of the application deadlines over the evaluation period indicated that ALI's deadlines were consistently at the beginning of December, while NAB deadlines were inconsistent between the months of October and December. Even within the same month the date varied between the beginning of the month in 2017-18 to middle of the month in 2018-19.

Table 14: Application deadlines, ALI and NAB, 2014-15 to 2018-19

Fiscal Year	Application Deadline—ALI	Application Deadline—NAB
2014-15	December 5, 2014	November 14, 2014
2015-16	December 4, 2015	October 9, 2015
2016-17	December 5, 2016	December 9, 2016
2017-18	December 5, 2017	November 3, 2017
2018-19	December 5, 2018	November 19, 2018

Source: GCIMS

Annual funding and internal delays led to funding not being spent on projects

Internal delays in issuing funding negatively affected efficient delivery of the programming. According to key informants, ALI projects could begin as late as 10 months into the year, from receipt of application in January, to issuance of project funding. If the projects were planned for summer, the funding could be received late into the fall. Given that projects were required to be finalized within a fiscal year timeline, some projects could not be completed.

Internal key informants indicated that staffing and processes related to Gs&Cs contributed to funding delays. For example, APP staffing capacity decreases in 2015-16 and 2016-17 contributed to delays in notifying recipients of funding decisions.

According to program administrative data, 144 ALI projects had to return funding to PCH, termed subject to recovery, or had to have approved funding de-committed, meaning that it was not issued to the recipient. Table 15 illustrates the total funding that was subject to recovery or de-committed across fiscal years. In total, 3% of ALI funding was recovered and 3% de-committed from 2014-15 to 2018-19. During the same period, a small amount of NAB funding was recovered and 2% de-committed.

Table 15: ALI Projects with funds recovered or de-committed funds, 2014-15 to 2018-19

ALI	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
Projects approved	100	92	83	186	185	
Funding approved (per contribution agreements)	\$4.70M	\$4.20M	\$4.80M	\$12.80M	\$15.80M	\$42.30M
Number of projects with funds recovered or decommitted	42	23	15	46	18	144
Recovered Funds	\$0.26M	\$0.11M	\$0.09M	\$0.56M	\$0.11M	\$1.14M
De-committed Funds	\$0.35M	\$0.12M	\$0.04M	\$0.21M	\$0.10M	\$0.82M
Total recovered/ decommitted	\$0.61M	\$0.23M	\$0.13M	\$0.77M	\$0.21M	\$1.96M
% Total recovered/ decommitted	13%	5.3%	2.8%	6%	1.4%	4.6%

Source: GCIMS

Inability to complete project activities and deliverables within the fiscal year, was the primary cause of funding recovery and de-commitment. As shown in Table 16, which presents ALI project processing times over the five-year period, the average time between application and payment was almost 40 weeks. There were decreases in processing times over the period due to programming administration improvements.

Table 16: ALI processing times in weeks, 2014-15 to 2018-19

Average weeks	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	5-year average
Application receipt to approval	32.9	29.6	28.8	30.8	19.5	28.3
Approval to submission of payment request	11.8	10.7	9.2	9.5	11.4 ¹¹	10.5
Application receipt to submission of payment request	44.7	40.2	38.0	40.3	35.9 ¹²	39.8

Source: GCIMS

NAB experienced unique challenges resulting from changes to funding approach

The number of eligible recipients for NAB was expanded in 2015-16 from 13 core recipients which had been funded since 1983, to 24 by 2018-19 (Table 17). While the total program funding increased over the period to some extent, it did not match demand and individual project funding envelopes became smaller. The original 13 recipients saw their funding drop from an annual average of \$607,000 to approximately \$329,000.

Table 17: NAB funding (\$millions) and number of recipients, 2014-15 to 2018-19

NAB Funding	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	Total
Requested	\$10.7	\$11.4	\$8	\$13.2	\$14.3	\$57.6
Approved	\$6.7	\$7.9	\$7.7	\$9.6 ¹³	\$8.5 ¹⁴	\$40.4
Recipients	13	15	17	21	24	90 ¹⁵

Source: Program Administrative Data

¹¹ Ibid

¹² The exact date the request for payments were sent to finance was only available for 5/18 project.

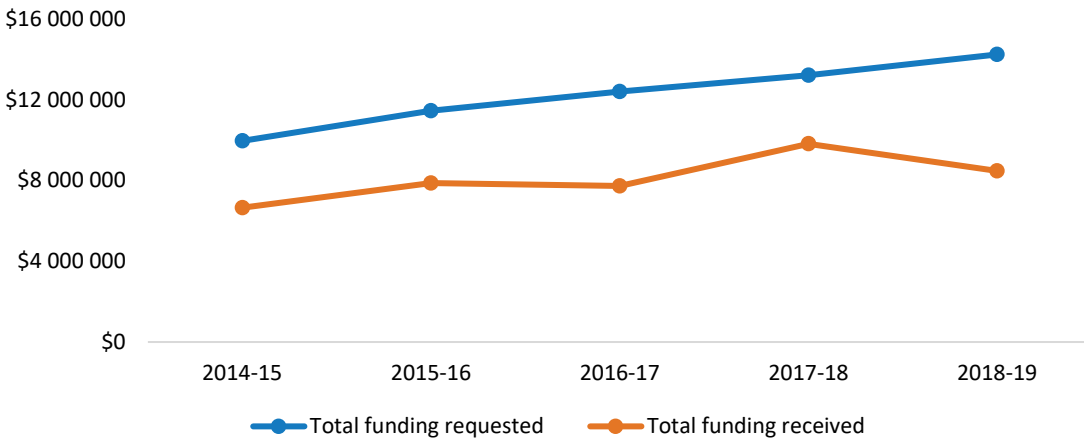
¹³ The additional funding was transferred from ALI in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 90 distinct contribution agreements were entered into with the up to 24 funding recipients that were successful every year to obtain funding under NAB.

Demand for funding continued to outpace the available funding over the period. Figure 6 illustrates the gap between funding requested and received for NAB recipients between 2014-15 and 2018-19.

Figure 6: Total project funding requested and received, NAB, 2014-15 to 2018-19



Source: Program Administrative Data

Internal interviewees noted that the formula developed to distribute NAB funding from 13 to 24 recipients attempted to apply weights in the distribution of funds. The funding formula provided a degree of core base funding for radio and television broadcasters, a northern allowance for production offices operating north of the 55th parallel, supported capacity and financial viability to meet deliverables, and allocated the remaining funding for use of Indigenous languages and total number of hours of content.^{xxx}

Focus group recipients agreed that the broadened eligibility for NAB created significant organizational instability, and some had to reduce staff and cut programming. Recipients also experienced additional project funding delays following changes to the NAB element, due to the negotiation processes with PCH. Initiated by recipients wishing to reinstate previous funding levels or seeking increases due to inflationary pressures, recipient files were either reviewed for opportunities to redistribute the available funds or lapsed funds were reallocated from ALI.

NAB funding constraints had operational implications for recipients

A study conducted of 61 Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications (CRTC) 'Native Radio' license decisions found that 21 were fully in-compliance with the conditions in their licenses and 40 were found to be in non-compliance.^{xxxi} Most licensees who gave reasoning for non-compliance cited instability due to high employee turnover and limited financial resources. The evaluation reviewed two years of the study data and found that in 2017, half (3/6) of those who were non-compliant were NAB recipients and in 2016, nearly one-third (2/7) were NAB recipients. These findings support the integral

role of stable, predictable funding in supporting the continuity of Indigenous language and culture initiatives.

Federal funding provisions for Indigenous recipients relative to funding recovery

Over the period of the evaluation, specific flexibilities allowed in administering Gs&Cs to Indigenous peoples were not fully applied to the programming.¹⁶ The Treasury Board of Canada Directive on Transfer Payments sets out requirements for government departments in distributing funds through Gs&Cs. Found in Appendix K of the directive, there are different contribution options for Indigenous recipients such as fixed, flexible or block contribution funding and provisions for advance payments.^{xxxii}

Additionally, PCH guidance documents on Gs&Cs clarified that exceptions could be made to the basic principle of funding allocated and spent in a fiscal year. In the context of the APP, these options would allow funding to remain within Indigenous communities so that projects could be completed beyond the fiscal year timeline.

4.3.2 Improvement initiatives to address gaps in program delivery

Evaluation question: Were there any improvement initiatives to address gaps in program delivery?

Multiple program improvement initiatives were implemented during the five-year evaluation period, including multi-year funding and simplified application forms and reporting requirements for ALI, and improved PCH application support.

Program improvements were implemented

There is evidence of program improvements undertaken to enhance efficiency and client service over the period of evaluation. A key program change was related to the introduction of multi-year funding, implemented in 2017-18. Most internal key informants noted both the multi-year funding as well as a shorter application form as important improvements to facilitate access and the full spending of allocated funds.

ALI began offering multi-year project funding in 2018-19 after the budget was increased from \$5 million to \$19.1 million annually. During that fiscal year and for the first time, 87 multi-year projects were funded.¹⁷ Some internal key informants stated that the implementation of multi-year project funding in the final year included in the scope of this evaluation was a program improvement.¹⁸

Some funding recipients who took part in focus groups reported improvements in the support they received from APP staff with the ALI application process. They stated that APP staff were taking

¹⁶ In the revised 2020-21 APP Terms and Conditions, Appendix K will be implemented.

¹⁷ Multi-year projects were funded and conducted from 2018-19 and 2019-20. Therefore, results were outside of the scope of this five-year evaluation period.

¹⁸ Most interview and focus group participants had not received multi-year funding so were not able to comment on its effectiveness.

additional time to understand the projects and communities, leading to improved access to funding and streamlined project delivery.

5. Conclusions

The evaluation found that there is an ongoing relevance of the programming. It contributed to addressing the continued needs of Indigenous communities related to revitalizing, preserving and promoting Indigenous languages and culture. The program directly supported the delivery of many valuable language projects and initiatives and demand for APP funding increased over the 5-year period.

It is complementary to other programming, offering unique features including national scope, focus on Indigenous languages and culture, larger funding amounts to recipients and more flexible project eligibility criteria. The APP played a role in supporting government priorities leading to the Assent of the *Indigenous Languages Act* to support the revitalization of Indigenous languages in Canada and the implementation of the OCIL.

The evaluation found that the APP achieved or contributed to its expected results by supporting Indigenous communities to deliver numerous projects and initiatives focused on Indigenous languages and cultures. ALI delivered an average of 129 projects and 189 participatory activities per year, which reached, on average, over 7,000 participants annually. The NAB element supported the delivery of over 300,000 broadcast hours of Indigenous content over the 5-year evaluation period, with a marked increase year over year. Of these total hours, the number of hours broadcast in Indigenous languages increased from 36% in 2014-15 to 51% in 2018-19.

APP was largely successful in meeting its intermediate outcomes, as evidenced by the increased opportunities cited by recipients to share their Indigenous cultures, identity and languages. The engagement of youth and Elders in language and culture initiatives was particularly notable, as well as the development and delivery of women-driven language nests and language and culture camps, which were effective opportunities for language and culture transmission.

It is not possible to fully assess the contribution of the programming to the achievement of long-term outcomes on the reversal of the downward trend in the use of Indigenous languages. The challenge is great and there is a complex number of influencing factors and actors involved in preserving, promoting and revitalizing languages and cultures. However, the evaluation found evidence that the types of activities funded through the Program reflect many best practices in second language transmission.

The evaluation identified some strengths to the current funding model and that PCH has made efforts to strengthen the efficiency of program delivery. The APP recognized that multi-year funding options are more conducive to long-term strategic planning and ultimately to language revitalization. ALI began offering multi-year project funding in 2018-19 after the budget was increased from \$5 million to \$19.1

million annually leading to an increased number of projects being funded. The programming also improved support to applicants and simplified application forms.

However, there remain opportunities to further address challenges in areas of program delivery such as the timing of application deadlines for submissions, service standards not being met and delays in funding decisions. These issues led to some funds being recovered from recipients and some projects not being undertaken. The evaluation identifies delivery options that could enhance efficiency by offering more flexibility and continuity, including offering micro-grants, predictable core funding and implementation of self-determined outcomes.

Although a new formula was developed to distribute NAB funding to a greater number of recipients, the resulting reductions in funding to the original 13 recipients had operational implications for those community organizations. Given that the demand for NAB funding continued to increase over the evaluation period, there are opportunities to further explore options and mitigations to ensure fair distribution of available resources for the achievement of results.

6. Recommendations, management response and action plan

Based on the findings and conclusions presented in this report, the evaluation makes three recommendations related to the program delivery model, service standards, and the NAB component of the programming.

There was a delay in finalizing this report due in part to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Changes occurred to the program after the evaluation period. In July 2019, the *Indigenous Languages Act* was enacted. The Commissioner and first directors of the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages were appointed in June 2021, in collaboration and consultation with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and the Métis National Council (MNC).

The Aboriginal Peoples' Program was renamed Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program in 2019-20. The new program is grounded in the *Indigenous Languages Act* with a focus on the co-development of an Indigenous Languages Funding Model to facilitate the provision of adequate sustainable and long-term funding.

The evaluation acknowledges that the program has already taken actions to address the recommendations in this report. In 2019, the program commenced work with Indigenous partners to examine program delivery approaches and implemented some new approaches to better meet the needs of Indigenous communities. Further, it is understood that an exercise was launched in Fall 2021 by the sector in partnership with the Chief Financial Officer's office to review program delivery processes and establish new standards for service delivery.

Recommendation 1

The evaluation recommends that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Community and Identity, with Indigenous partners, build upon the findings of this evaluation and the programming changes already implemented since 2019, and continue examining and implementing delivery approaches that support the evolving needs of Indigenous communities and maximize opportunities for flexibility.

Management response

The Indigenous Languages Branch (ILB) agrees with the evaluation's recommendation.

The evaluation was focussed on the former program, which has been significantly modernized since 2019 through the *Indigenous Languages Act* and the creation of the new Indigenous Languages and Cultures Program (ILCP). Since that time, the Branch has engaged and consulted extensively on funding models, established processes to increase Indigenous control over funding decisions, revised the terms and conditions of the Indigenous Languages Component (which replaced the Aboriginal

Language Initiative in 2019-20) to increase funding flexibility, and launched processes with partners to develop new distinctions-based funding models for Indigenous languages.

Starting in 2020-21, distinction-based Indigenous Review Committees were set up in collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Métis National Council to review applications and make funding recommendations to PCH for the Indigenous Languages Component. The Committees established their own funding priorities, which helped increase the program’s responsiveness to the specific needs of First Nation, Inuit and Métis Nation communities. During this same period a number of changes were introduced to increase the flexibility of funding. In 2020-21, the fixed contribution agreement was introduced, which provides under certain conditions, the ability for recipients to retain any unexpended funding remaining at the expiry of the agreement. Grant agreements were also introduced, and the maximum grant amount was increased from \$60,000 in 2020-21 to \$150,000 in 2021-22.

A broader examination of delivery approaches and funding mechanism is under way in the context of the implementation of the *Indigenous Languages Act (Act)*, which received Royal Assent in 2019. One of the purposes of the Act is to “establish measures to facilitate the provision of adequate, sustainable, and long-term funding for the reclamation, revitalization, maintenance and strengthening of Indigenous languages”. The ILB is committed to continuing to develop its funding structures, in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, to meet this purpose of the Act. During consultations held from September to December 2020, participants raised the importance of ensuring that funding approaches are responsive to communities needs and are flexible enough to support a wide range of activities with a focus on the most effective ones.

In this context, new distinction-based funding models are being developed in collaboration with First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation to better respond to the specific needs and priorities of each distinction and ensure Indigenous-led delivery approaches.

Table 18: Recommendation 1 – action plan

Action Plan Item	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsible
1.1. Development of distinction-based funding models with Indigenous partners	1.1.1. Articulation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation Funding Models	October 2022	ILB Operations Directorate
1.2. Implementation of a new funding approach	1.2.1. Program documentation	April 2023	ILB Operations Directorate

Action Plan Item	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsible
Full implementation date: April 2023			

Recommendation 2
<p>The evaluation recommends that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Community and Identity, complete the review of its program grants and contribution processes launched in Fall 2021 with the Chief Financial Officer Branch, to establish and implement consistent standards for service delivery and timely funding decisions.</p>
Management response
<p>The Indigenous Languages Branch (ILB) agrees with the recommendation.</p> <p>Since the period of the evaluation, over the past two years a number of steps have been undertaken to review and improve the efficiency of the grants and contribution processes. For example, ILB introduced a simplified application form, improved support to funding applicants during the application process and offered two-year agreements in 2017-19, 2018-20 and 2021-23 so that recipients could avoid delays associated with seeking a new funding decision for the second year. Efforts were made to launch earlier calls for proposals, when possible, and to conclude funding agreements more quickly.</p> <p>Recognizing that more improvements were necessary in meeting service delivery standards and communicating funding decisions in a timely manner, the ILB proactively engaged outside assistance to examine their policies and processes and identify further opportunities to gain efficiencies. In 2020, the Office of the Chief Audit Executive led an advisory engagement, supported by Orbis Risk Consulting, and in 2021, the Community and Identity Sector retained the services of a consulting firm, Systemscope. Both exercises sought to recommend improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of ILC's grants and contributions (Gs&Cs) processes. The consulting firms identified similar opportunities for improvement, and expressed that the ILB was well positioned to undertake these changes. The branch will work with internal stakeholders, including the Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Gs&Cs, to undertake a modernization lab which will review the recommendations from these two initiatives and identify opportunities to reduce the service standard and flow funding to recipients faster.</p>

Table 19: Recommendation 2 – action plan

Action Plan Item	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsible
<p>2.1. ILB will work with CoE- Grants and Contributions and other implicated areas within PCH through a modernization lab process to further improve the program grants and contributions processes.</p>	<p>2.1.1. Recommendation for improvements to the delegation</p>	<p>May 2022</p>	<p>ILB Operations Directorate in collaboration with Centre of Excellence</p>
	<p>2.1.2. Completion of analysis of FTE blueprint</p>	<p>August 2022</p>	<p>ILB Operations Directorate in collaboration with Centre of Excellence</p>
	<p>2.1.3. Action plan to incorporate findings of the blueprint into the ILB</p>	<p>October 2022</p>	<p>ILB Operations Directorate</p>
<p>Full implementation date: October 2022</p>			

Recommendation 3

The evaluation recommends that the Assistant Deputy Minister, Community and Identity, with Indigenous partners, continue measures to review the needs and priorities of Indigenous broadcasters in the North, with the goal of making changes to the Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting program element as needed.

Management response

The Indigenous Languages Branch (ILB) agrees with this recommendation.

The communications landscape has substantially evolved since the Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting (NAB) program element was created in 1983, and the ILB acknowledges that the program has not kept pace with the broadcasting sector and with the clientele it serves. A better understanding of current issues with the program and how they may best be addressed is required. Additionally, there is a need to ensure the NAB program element is aligned to current government priorities including the modernization of the *Broadcasting Act* and the implementation of the *Indigenous Languages Act*, the United Nation Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People.

Representatives from various areas of PCH, including the ILB, the Broadcasting, Copyright and Creative Marketplace Branch as well as the Prairies and Northern Region – Regional Office are working together to conduct a review of NAB and to propose options for program design and delivery. Measures are currently being taken to gain a better understanding of the needs and priorities of Indigenous broadcasters, including engagement with organizations that receive funding from NAB. The Joint Implementation Steering Committee, comprised of representatives of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the Métis National Council (MNC) and Canadian Heritage (PCH), will be leveraged as a mechanism to engage Indigenous peoples on the options that are developed. It is anticipated that recommendations, informed by Indigenous broadcasters and other Indigenous partners, will be made to senior management by September 2022.

Table 20: Recommendation 3 – action plan

Action Plan Item	Deliverables	Timeline	Responsible
3.1. NAB working group to develop options and recommendations for program design and delivery	3.1.1. Completion of a NAB Options Paper for senior management consideration	September 2022	ILB Policy in collaboration with Prairies and Northern Region – Regional Office, and Broadcasting, Copyright and Creative Marketplace Branch
Full implementation date: September 2022			

Annex A: Logic Model



Annex B: Bibliography

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