

# Results at a Glance

## Evaluation of the General Class Contribution Program



### Objective and Scope

Consistent with the requirements of the Treasury Board *Policy on Results* (2016) and the associated Directive on Results and Standard on Evaluation, the evaluation focused on effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and coherence guided by the following questions:

#### Effectiveness

- Are effective management practices in place at the program and agreement levels?
- Do contribution agreements meet expected outcomes?
- Does the GCCP meet expected program-level outcomes?

#### Efficiency

- To what extent does the GCCP deliver results in an efficient and timely way?

#### Relevance

- Is the GCCP responsive to the Agency's needs?

#### Coherence

- To what extent does the GCCP fit with Parks Canada priorities?
- To what extent does the use of the GCCP fit with Parks Canada commitments to inclusion and equity norms?

The scope of the evaluation included GCCP activities and results generated between 2015-16 and 2019-20<sup>1</sup>. The primary focus of the evaluation was the management of contribution agreements across the project cycle, i.e. development, delivery, monitoring, and reporting. Excluded from the evaluation were grants and assessed contributions.

### Key Findings

#### Relevance

A document review indicated that the GCCP Terms and Conditions were broadly aligned with PCA's mandate and results framework, while rising demand for contribution agreements over the evaluation period provided evidence of ongoing need for the GCCP.

Evidence collected from program users pointed to opportunities for the GCCP to improve training as well as better address the needs of program users working with Indigenous partners. These findings were also supported by analyses of GCCP data and reports.

#### Coherence

The GCCP enables the Agency to work with diverse partners, including Indigenous governments and organizations, who accounted for nearly half of all contributions signed during the evaluation period.

A review of GCCP reports found that the Program does not apply Gender Bases Analysis Plus to its decision-making and does not actively assess if outcomes differ across recipient groups. A case study on the use of the GCCP to support the Agency's Reconciliation priorities noted limitations in the Program's capacity to offer flexible funding terms, which impacted the relationship with Indigenous partners.

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Parks Canada's General Class Contribution Program (GCCP) is funding instrument established to provide transfer payments to eligible recipients who, due to their expertise or jurisdiction, are better placed to deliver specific activities or results.

As the GCCP is a general and shared funding authority without a budget, a source of funds must be identified for each contribution. Program users typically convert portions of their existing budgets to a contribution fund.

Recipient groups addressed by the GCCP include Indigenous governments and organizations, non-profit groups, universities and research-based organizations, international organizations, and for-profit organizations.

#### Effectiveness

A file review indicated that GCCP projects were consistent with the Program's expected results, and that risk assessments, project monitoring, and post-project reports were generally completed. The review also determined that individual projects largely achieved the aims outlined in contribution agreements.

While significant improvements in data collection and reporting were noted over the past five years, opportunities for improvement we identified in the information gathered on Agency priorities as well as in the reporting of GCCP outcomes and results.

#### Efficiency

Analyses of data collected from GCCP users found that the streamlining of GCCP processes over the previous five years were viewed as having improved the Program's efficiency.

User and program data identified opportunities to clarify monitoring and reporting processes as well as enhance program efficiency by providing more flexible mechanisms to key recipient groups, including Indigenous organizations.

<sup>1</sup> Evaluation report also includes results of a review of the contribution agreement to support the Trans Canada Trail. There were no recommendations made related to the agreement.



# Results at a Glance

## Evaluation of the General Class Contribution Program



### Recommendations and Management Response

#### Recommendation 1: Supporting Reconciliation

The Vice-President, Finance, should ensure that the management framework for the GCCP clearly articulates how its funding processes and related activities address and support Parks Canada's Reconciliation commitments, with particular consideration to:

- Collecting feedback from Indigenous recipients in order to monitor the impacts of the GCCP's new flexibilities;
- Training program users on the GCCP's funding mechanisms and reporting requirements for Indigenous recipients;
- Reporting on GCCP outcomes by recipient group types, with particular attention to outcomes relating to Indigenous governments and organizations.



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will conduct a review of its management framework, program-level reporting, training and feedback collection to identify necessary changes to better support Park Canada's Reconciliation commitments.

#### Recommendation 2: Training

The Vice-President, Finance, should ensure the provision of training for GCCP program users. To minimize the impacts of higher program usage as well as staff turnover, consideration should be given to supplementing in-person training with additional resources such as guidance documents, videos, or tutorials.



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will ensure the provision of training for program users and consider supplementing in-person training with additional resources.

#### Recommendation 3: Guidance

The Vice-President, Finance, should review the guidance provided to Parks Canada program users with particular attention to clarifying monitoring and reporting requirements as well as assisting program users in aligning these with the GCCP risk-based management framework.

Consideration should be given to providing program users with examples of reporting tools and templates that have been adapted by the Centre of Expertise or GCCP program users to suit the needs of particular recipient groups.



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will conduct a review of the guidance provided to Parks Canada program users including guidance on monitoring and reporting requirements to identify necessary changes. The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will consider providing program users with examples of reporting tools and templates that have been adapted to suit the needs of particular recipient groups.

#### Recommendation 4: Reporting and Data Integrity

The Vice-President, Finance, should review the data collected and reported on by the Centre of Expertise on Grants and Contributions with consideration to:

- Collecting feedback on the GCCP from program users and recipients via standardised post-project questionnaires;
- Reporting on GCCP outcomes and results in the GCCP Annual Report; and,
- Reporting on GCCP outcomes (such as the proportion of agreements requiring amendments) by recipient groups to enhance transparency.



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will conduct a review of the GCCP program data collected and reported on by the Centre of Expertise on Grants and Contributions with regards to GCCP outcomes and results, explore additional reporting against recipient group types, and consider collecting feedback on the GCCP from program users and recipients via post-project questionnaires.

#### Recommendation 5: Data Integrity

The Vice-President, Finance, should revise the GCCP Approval Form's section on Parks Canada Agency priorities to ensure consistency and enhance the integrity of program data.



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will conduct a review of the GCCP Approval Form's section on Parks Canada Agency priorities.

#### Recommendation 6: Reporting

The Vice-President, Finance, should ensure the Centre of Expertise staff receive training in Gender-Based Analysis Plus in order to enhance reporting,



#### Management Response: Agreed.

The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will ensure that the Centre of Expertise staff receive training in Gender-Based Analysis Plus in order to enhance reporting.

