



# Federal Evaluation of the St. Lawrence Action Plan

Final Report

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## List of acronyms and abbreviations

Agreement	Canada-Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence 2011–2026
CCC	Climate Change Committee
CWA	Canada Water Agency
CIP	Community Interaction Program
CMM	Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal [Montreal Metropolitan Community]
ECCC	Environment and Climate Change Canada
ERAP	Ecological Rehabilitation Action Plan
JAP	Joint Action Program
MELCCFP	Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec [Quebec Department of Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks]
PIP	Performance Information Profile
RIMP	Regional Integrated Management Plan
RRT	Regional Round Table
SLAP	St. Lawrence Action Plan
SLGO	St. Lawrence Global Observatory
ZIP	Zone d'intervention prioritaire [area of prime concern]

## Introduction

This document presents the findings of the federal evaluation of the St. Lawrence Action Plan (SLAP), a partnership involving Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs du Québec [Quebec Department of Environment, the Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks] (MELCCFP) and other participating departments and agencies of the governments of Canada and Quebec.

The federal evaluation of the SLAP focuses on issues relating to design and implementation, as well as effectiveness and alignment with government priorities over the 2016–2017 to 2021–2022 period. This evaluation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Treasury Board of Canada (TB) [Policy on Results](#) (2016) and outlines recommendations on seizing opportunities for improvement.

This federal evaluation complements the parallel joint evaluation of SLAP, which is being carried by an evaluation team consisting of ECCC and MELCCFP staff. The joint evaluation focuses on issues of governance, accountability, and external communications.

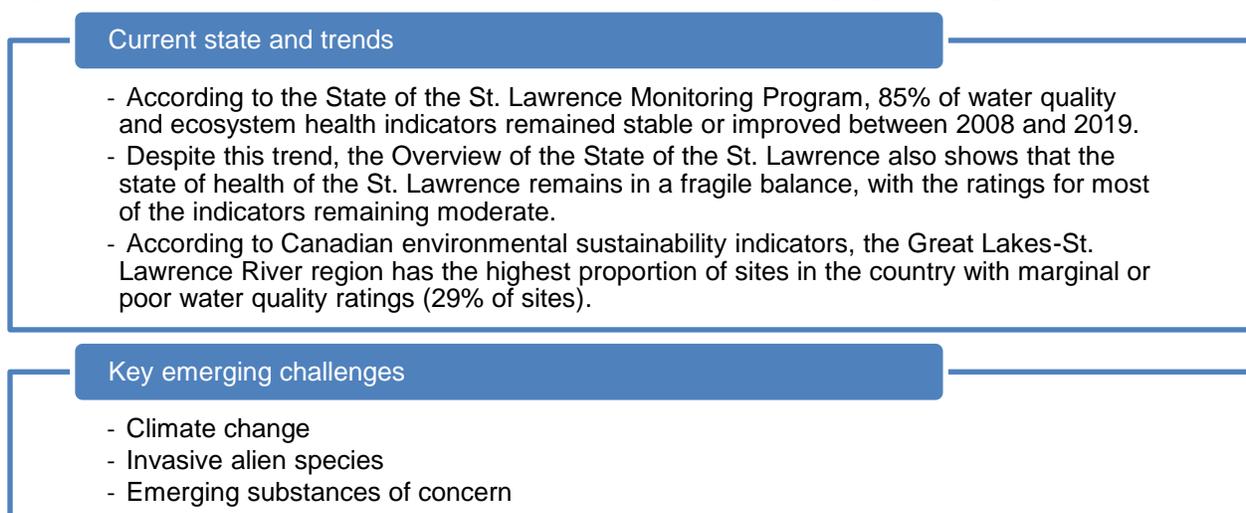
### 1. Background

ECCC's mandate centres on the protection of nature and the management of freshwater. In 2017, the Government of Canada rolled out a Freshwater Action Plan to protect threatened lakes, rivers, and streams that human communities—along with plants and wildlife, including some species at risk—rely on. The [Minister of Environment and Climate Change Mandate Letter](#) (2021) reiterates the importance of protecting and restoring priority freshwater ecosystems, including the St. Lawrence.

Constitutionally, the protection of nature and the management of freshwater are shared responsibilities. In 1988, the governments of Canada and Quebec signed the first Canada-Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence, also referred to as the St. Lawrence Action Plan (SLAP). SLAP formalizes the commitment of the governments of Canada and Quebec to work in partnership to protect and enhance the St. Lawrence River ecosystem. The Agreement has been renewed each time it has expired. In 2011, the [Agreement](#) was renewed for a 15-year period to provide a stable framework for collaboration and long-term orientations for joint actions by the two governments.

The latest environmental quality indicators show that the St. Lawrence continues to require ongoing protection. The St. Lawrence also faces emerging challenges (see Figure 1).

## Figure 1. The St. Lawrence: current state, trends and key emerging challenges



Sources: [State of the St. Lawrence Monitoring Program](#); [Overview of the State of the St. Lawrence \(2019\)](#); [Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators – Water quality in Canadian rivers](#)

## 2. Program overview

SLAP 2011–2026 is an intergovernmental partnership aimed at developing a greater understanding and enabling the integrated management of the St. Lawrence. The program supports the efforts of the parties to work together and concert their long-term efforts in conserving and enhancing the St. Lawrence in a sustainable development perspective. To achieve this, SLAP partners (see Appendix C – SLAP Partners for a list) are involved in the following activities:

- Coordination of the Agreement and communications;
- Integrated management of the St. Lawrence;
- Joint Action Program (JAP);
- Community Interaction Program (CIP);
- State of the St. Lawrence Monitoring Program;
- Numerical Environmental Prediction Program.

Additional information on the program can be found on the [SLAP](#) website.

### Objectives

The Joint Action Program (JAP) is renewed every five years, and supports knowledge development projects related to the following priority issues:

- Biodiversity conservation;
- Sustainable use;
- Improved water quality.

SLAP partners draw up and review work orientations and objectives for each issue. Projects aimed at contributing to the work orientations are carried out by government partners. While some projects

focus on research, others are geared towards developing decision support tools, raising awareness and restoring environments.

## Resources

The Government of Canada's financial resources allocated to SLAP activities are regular budget resources (A-base) supporting national program responsibilities. Table 1 lists the resources allocated to SLAP by ECCC, its federal partners and the Quebec government for the 2016–2017 to 2020–2021 period.

**Table 1. Budget estimates by activity, 2016–2017 to 2021–2022**

	ECCC*	Federal Partners	Quebec Government	Total
Appendix A - Management of the Agreement (Coordination, Climate Change Committee [CCC]** and communications)	\$3,921,800	\$0	\$1,174,000	\$5,095,800
Appendix B - Integrated management of the St. Lawrence	\$7,270,300	\$0	\$8,780,700	\$16,051,000
Appendix C - State of the St. Lawrence Monitoring Program	\$6,102,700	\$13,735,500	\$6,108,800	\$25,947,000
Appendix D - Numerical Environmental Prediction Program for the St. Lawrence	\$425,000	\$155,000	\$609,000	\$1,189,000
Appendix E - JAP – Water Quality Improvement	\$3,944,300	\$1,560,400	\$1,287,400	\$5,910,200
Appendix E - JAP – Biodiversity Conservation	\$1,718,000	\$191,500	\$3,116,800	\$5,026,300
Appendix E - JAP – Sustainable Use	\$450,500	\$4,107,100	\$3,979,400	\$5,083,900
Appendix E - Community Interaction Program	\$3,815,300	\$0	\$1,980,000	\$5,795,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$27,647,900</b>	<b>\$19,749,500</b>	<b>\$27,036,100</b>	<b>\$70,098,500</b>
<i>Source: Supplementary Agreement #1 of the Canada-Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence 2011–2026 and information provided by the program</i>				
* ECCC planned expenditures include transfers to the Quebec government (Appendix G of the Agreement).				
** Prior to 2021, the CCC's budget was included under Sustainable Use.				

## 3. About this evaluation

The federal evaluation of the SLAP is one component of the [ECCC Audit and Evaluation Plan 2022 to 2027](#). The evaluation addresses ECCC's role for the six-year period of 2016–2017 to 2021–2022 and focuses on issues of design and implementation, as well as effectiveness and alignment.

The evaluation involved reviewing information from a variety of sources to produce observations and conclusions:

- **Review of documents and analysis of program data** including work plans, reports, and administrative and financial data.
- **Interviews with ECCC staff** who played specific key roles within SLAP during the 2016–2017 to 2021–2022 period.
- **Survey** of government participants (59 respondents) and external partners (64 respondents).
- **Comparison of major freshwater management agreements:** SLAP, Great Lakes Agreement and Lake Winnipeg Memorandum of Understanding.



## Conclusions and observations

### 4. Achievements

#### 4.1 Effective co-management of the Agreement

##### Summary of observations

The program ensures effective co-management of the Agreement, resulting in the timely delivery of projects, the ongoing management of contribution programs and the use of a large proportion of available resources. The program also demonstrated its ability to adapt in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SLAP has effectively completed the activities set out in the Agreement and delivered the intended outputs, particularly with respect to the activities and projects associated with the JAP and CIP. Through them, SLAP generates knowledge about water quality, biodiversity and the uses of the St. Lawrence ecosystem, and supports projects that help achieve positive local environmental impacts.

##### Report on the 2016–2021 phase

SLAP oversees the implementation of a variety of projects and delivery of a number of outputs to fulfill its mandate. Its programming includes projects relating to various SLAP priority issues; the integrated management of the St. Lawrence; State of the St. Lawrence Monitoring Program and numerical environmental prediction activities; and the Community Interaction Program. Outputs include:

- 43 interdepartmental projects aligned with the priority issues;
- 35 external projects funded by ECCC through the CIP;
- 12 ZIP (areas of prime concern) committees and Stratégies Saint-Laurent (SSL) committees funded by ECCC to support the integrated management of the St. Lawrence;
- 4 key reports, including the following:
  - o [Update of the Sustainable Navigation Strategy for the St. Lawrence \(2021\)](#)
  - o [Atlas of Sites of Interest for Conservation along the Estuary and Gulf of St. Lawrence Coastline \(2019\)](#)
  - o [Atlas of Sites of Conservation Interest in the St. Lawrence Lowlands – Methodology Report version 2, including the Outaouais region \(2019\)](#)
  - o [Overview of the State of the St. Lawrence \(2019\)](#)
- 43 additional publications made available on the [SLAP website](#).

A number of JAP projects faced delays during the evaluation period, owing largely to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these delays, 38 projects were completed (88%), while five were cancelled due to a lack of resources or because they ended up being outside the SLAP framework or scope.

##### Resource usage

The program used 86% of the resources available to deliver on its commitments under the Agreement. The St. Lawrence State Monitoring Program reported the largest discrepancy between planned and actual expenditures: \$1.6M in planned expenditures (26%) were not spent, mainly as a result of COVID-19. The public health measures implemented to address the pandemic prevented field monitoring activities from taking place for nearly two years. Table 2 provides an overview of the ECCC resources allocated to SLAP and those used.

**Table 2. Difference between ECCC planned and actual expenditures, 2016–2017 to 2021–2022**

	Planned Expenditures *	Actual Expenditures *	Difference	
			(Absolute)	(Relative)
Appendix A – Management of the Agreement (Coordination, Climate Change Committee** and communications)	\$3,921,800	\$3,634,700	-\$287,100	-7%
Appendix B – Integrated management of the St. Lawrence	\$7,270,300	\$7,128,700	-\$141,600	-2%
Appendix C – State of the St. Lawrence Monitoring Program	\$6,102,700	\$4,498,300	-\$1,604,400	-26%
Appendix D – Numerical Environmental Prediction Program for the St. Lawrence	\$425,000	\$237,500	-\$187,500	-44%
Appendix E – Joint Action Program – Water Quality Improvement	\$3,944,300	\$2,983,700	-\$960,600	-24%
Appendix E – Joint Action Program – Biodiversity Conservation	\$1,718,000	\$1,842,400	\$124,400	7%
Appendix E – Joint Action Program – Sustainable Use	\$450,500	\$253,600	-\$196,900	-44%
Appendix E – Community Interaction Program	\$3,815,300	\$3,151,200	-\$664,100	-17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$27,647,900</b>	<b>\$23,729,900</b>	<b>-\$3,918,000</b>	<b>-14%</b>
<i>Source: Supplementary Agreement #1 (planned) and Five-Year Report 2016–2021 (actual)</i>				
* ECCC planned and actual expenditures include transfers to the Quebec government (Appendix G).				
** Prior to 2021, the CCC'S budget was included under Sustainable Use.				

The Numerical Environmental Prediction Program used 44% fewer resources than anticipated, a discrepancy attributable to the fact that all activities and products were delivered more than a year ahead of schedule. The allocation of resources to the CIP was revised downwards year after year over the 2016–2021 period. As a result, actual expenditures were nearly \$1M less than the five-year expenditures planned in 2016 (not included in the table) and close to \$700K less than expenditures budgeted annually, resulting in fewer projects being funded. The CIP spent all the actual resources allocated to it over the 2016–2017 to 2021–2022 period.

### Availability of information on the performance of SLAP and the state of the St. Lawrence

Performance information is available for SLAP's main activities: programs such as the JAP and CIP, published scientific information, matching funding from the federal partners and the Quebec government, and the description of the state of the St. Lawrence.

Performance information is also available for SLAP's main outputs: knowledge of the state of the St. Lawrence and predictive information that makes it possible to forecast certain physical, biological and chemical parameters of the St. Lawrence. Information on the state of the St. Lawrence is available and easily accessible in the Overview of the State of the St. Lawrence reports. The 2019 version of the [Overview of the State of the St. Lawrence](#) includes information generated from 2013 to 2017.

Information gathered between 2018 and 2022 will be available in the next version of the report, scheduled to be published in 2024. SLAP monitors a larger number of status indicators (21) than the Great Lakes Program (9) and the Lake Winnipeg Program (indicators under development).

Additionally, predictive information on the St. Lawrence is available to organizations participating in SLAP through the Working Group on Numerical Environmental Prediction. During the evaluation period, this working group produced numerical models that simulate changes in physical, biological and chemical processes in the St. Lawrence and its watershed, in order to predict the state of the terrestrial and aquatic environment. This predictive information is mainly intended to support decision-making and planning for the management of St. Lawrence ecosystems.

### Adjustments as a result of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had a minimal negative impact on SLAP, which was able to continue delivering its activities and products with only a few adjustments. Specifically, no JAP projects were cancelled as a result of COVID-19, and the 10 projects that were delayed because of public health measures were eventually completed. Some field monitoring activities for the St. Lawrence State Monitoring Program were suspended, causing delays in data acquisition. Despite COVID-19, 90% of the State of the St. Lawrence indicators and JAP projects were delivered on time.

With respect to Agreement coordination activities, the SLAP Secretariat changed the format of the Agreement Steering Committee's biannual meetings, improved the coordination of online activities and enhanced the support for project proponents and CIP recipients (Indicator 5.4). In particular, the Agreement Steering Committee's virtual meetings are shorter than those previously held in person. While this facilitates participation, a number of long-standing SLAP participants feel that virtual meetings are not as conducive to the productive conversations and co-operative efforts that have underpinned SLAP's success in the past. Note that a gradual return to in-person meetings has been under way since 2022–2023.

## 4.2 The St. Lawrence Action Plan is a valuable collaborative platform

### Summary of observations

The program was successful in maintaining SLAP's relevance and effectiveness as a platform for Canada-Quebec collaboration, securing financial and operational commitments from government partners, and building new partnerships with external contributors.

### Matching funding

SLAP participants mobilize their respective resources to support the achievement of common objectives. As a result of ECCC's investment of \$17.2M (including the transfer to MELCCFP), an additional \$33.3M was leveraged by SLAP partners (CIP expenditures are excluded from these totals). In relative terms, for every dollar invested by ECCC, federal and Quebec government partners collectively invested \$1.93 for the 2016–2017 to 2020–2021 period (excluding CIP expenditures, which have an average leverage effect of \$0.78). Table 3 shows three alternative calculations of the financial contribution ratio.

**Table 3. Ratio of actual expenditures by St. Lawrence Action Plan partners, 2016–2017 to 2020–2021**

Activities included in the calculation	ECCC	Federal Partners	Quebec Government	Federal and Quebec Government Partners
Appendix C – State of the St. Lawrence Monitoring Program	\$1	\$1.64	\$1.52	\$3.16
Appendix D – Numerical Environmental Prediction Program for the St. Lawrence				
Appendix E – Joint Action Program – Water Quality Improvement				
Appendix E – Joint Action Program – Biodiversity Conservation				
Appendix E – Joint Action Program – Sustainable Use				
Appendix E – Community Interaction Program				
+ Appendix A – Management of the Agreement (Coordination and communications)	\$1	\$1.18	\$1.17	\$2.35
+ Appendix B – Integrated management of the St. Lawrence	\$1	\$0.78	\$1.16	\$1.93
<i>Source: Five-Year Report 2016–2021 (actual)</i>				
Note: Actual expenditures for the 2021–2022 fiscal year are unavailable.				
Note: ECCC's actual expenditures include transfers to the Quebec government (Appendix G).				
Note: Expenditures for the CIP are excluded.				

### Useful relationships and collaboration beyond the St. Lawrence Action Plan

SLAP fosters the development and maintenance of useful relationships and collaboration in areas other than the implementation of the Agreement. The majority of government participants (82%, N=34) feel that the collaborative relationships established through SLAP are very useful (56%) or moderately useful (26%) in their regular work outside of SLAP activities. Many of them (n=18) report that SLAP strengthens their professional network and fosters collaboration with their counterparts in other federal departments and the Quebec government. In some instances, SLAP has played a facilitative role in maintaining Canada-Quebec collaboration on the St. Lawrence beyond the implementation of the Agreement:

- SLAP has made it possible for the International Joint Commission (IJC) to draw not only on the expertise of ECCC scientists, but also on that of scientists from MELCCFP and the Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts [Quebec Department of Natural Resources and Forests] as part of research aimed at exploring the causes, impacts and risks of, and solutions to, flooding in the Lake Champlain-Richelieu River Basin;
- SLAP partnered with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Living Laboratories Initiative (2020–2023), securing additional financial support and building partnerships with agricultural users and the Waban-Aki Nation through two JAP projects;

- Transport Canada rolled out an initiative to assess the cumulative effects of marine shipping as part of the Oceans Protection Plan. SLAP is helping to develop a common framework for assessing the cumulative effects of marine activities on the St. Lawrence.

### Data and information available to the public on the St. Lawrence Global Observatory (SLGO) platform

SLAP has worked with the [St. Lawrence Global Observatory](#) to make some data and information collected through SLAP activities available to the public. Of the 223 datasets listed in the Observatory's catalogue, six include data collected in the context of SLAP activities:

- [Directory of private protected areas in southern Quebec \(1924–2013\)](#);
- [Inventory of projects to identify natural environments of interest in southern Quebec \(2013–2017 data\)](#);
- [Atlas of Bank Restoration Sites of the St. Lawrence River \(2003–2006 data\)](#);
- [Atlas of coastal environments of interest for conservation in the estuary and gulf of St. Lawrence \(2000–2017 data\)](#);
- [Directory of public access to the St. Lawrence River \(1989–2009 data\)](#);
- [Atlas of territories of conservation interest in the St. Lawrence Lowlands \(2014–2019 data\)](#).

Three of these datasets have not been updated for 10 years or more.

### 4.3 Positive impacts beyond the St. Lawrence Action Plan

#### Summary of observations

The program has had two significant positive impacts beyond its activities and products, contributing to the identification of a priority area for the protection of species at risk, and to the protection of wetlands in the Montreal Metropolitan Community (CMM).

The program does not provide for the follow-up of external actions made possible or facilitated by the Agreement's implementation activities. However, the [Atlas of territories of conservation interest in the St. Lawrence Lowlands](#) has enabled SLAP to have at least two significant positive impacts beyond its activities and products. The Atlas was developed as part of SLAP's Joint Action Program, and over the years has become a tool that meets the needs of organizations involved in the conservation of natural environments.

The first significant impact of the Atlas is the identification of the St. Lawrence Lowlands as a priority place under the [pan-Canadian approach to transforming species at risk conservation](#). Determining important habitats for species at risk is a key step in identifying the most relevant conservation actions and drawing up action plans. ECCC's Canadian Wildlife Service has worked with various partners to develop conservation strategies for the habitats of species at risk identified in the Atlas. These conservation strategies have resulted in a number of projects being financed by the [Canada Nature Fund](#).

The second significant impact of the Atlas is the CMM's adoption of an [interim control by-law \(ICB\) to protect natural environments](#) (available in French only). The by-law has the effect of prohibiting any construction, work or activity in terrestrial and wetland environments of interest defined by the CMM,

and specifically in Western Chorus Frog habitat, with certain exceptions. The by-law defines an additional 12,367 hectares (5.2%) in the Greater Montreal area, which are now subject to conservation measures. The Atlas work also informed the [Rapport sur l'état de situation de huit espèces en situation précaire sur le territoire du Grand Montréal](#) [Report on the Status of Eight Species of Concern in the Greater Montreal Area], which served as the basis for the CMM by-law.

## 5. Main challenges

### 5.1 The St. Lawrence Action Plan does not contribute significantly to the improvement of the state of the St. Lawrence

#### Summary of observations

In the absence of a clear mandate and sufficient resources to transform knowledge into action, SLAP is not making a significant contribution to departmental results on water quality and ecosystem health.

The St. Lawrence faces many threats and requires action to improve water quality; protect, conserve and restore biodiversity; mitigate the impacts of climate change on river users and ecosystems; and promote the health and well-being of human populations.

The St. Lawrence State Monitoring Program shows that 85% of water quality and ecosystem health indicators have remained stable or have improved between 2008 and 2019. Despite this trend, the program also indicates that the state of health of the St. Lawrence is in a delicate balance, with most indicators remaining moderate. According to the [Canadian environmental sustainability indicators](#), the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River region is home to the highest proportion of sites in the country with marginal or poor water quality (29% of sites). The St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes and Lake Winnipeg are subject to similar environmental and anthropogenic pressures that affect the health of their ecosystems, such as the presence of high concentrations of nutrients ([phosphorus and nitrogen](#)) in water and the presence of substances of concern in water, fish and sediments ([polybrominated diphenyl ethers](#), [bisphenol A](#) and [perfluorooctane sulfonate](#)) at concentrations that exceed recommended levels.

Under the Government of Canada's Policy on Results (2016) and the previous Policy on Management, Resources and Results Structures (2010), all program expenditures are expected to contribute directly or indirectly to the achievement of departmental results. These contributions must be measured regularly to ensure accountability towards Canadians and to support decision-making by senior government officials and headquarters organizations.

#### Weak alignment with departmental results

There is a significant gap between SLAP's expected outcomes and those of the departmental Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships inventory program. Under its current mandate, SLAP is not making a significant contribution to improving the water quality and health of the St. Lawrence ecosystem.

In the Performance Information Profile (PIP) for the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships program, there are no intermediate outcome indicators associated with SLAP in terms of water quality improvement, biodiversity conservation or sustainable use. Four water quality indicators are linked to the Great Lakes Program and two are linked to the Lake Winnipeg Program—two freshwater management programs whose contribution to departmental results has been proven. No outcome

indicators for contributing to climate change adaptation have been developed for these three programs. Appendix A – SLAP and the Expected Outcomes of the Performance Information Profile contains additional information on the poor alignment between SLAP and departmental results as outlined in the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships program.

### **Lack of a clear mandate to improve the state of the St. Lawrence**

Federal freshwater management programs have similar mandates in that they all require collaboration and knowledge development. However, SLAP is the only program that does not have a clear mandate to improve water quality and ecosystem health, dedicated resources to achieve these goals, nor targets for improving water quality and ecosystem health. Table 4 on the next page summarizes the mandates of the main freshwater management programs at ECCC and identifies if they are supported by targets.

SLAP plays a key role in establishing the reference levels for various environmental indicators of the state of the St. Lawrence. For each of these reference levels, SLAP sets suitable or optimal levels for ecosystem health in the St. Lawrence. However, unlike the Canada-Ontario Great Lakes Agreement, SLAP does not establish quantitative targets for improving water quality and ecosystem health. The lack of targets was identified in the [previous evaluation](#) of SLAP (2018). Although the knowledge required to make recommendations for improving the state of the St. Lawrence is available, formulating recommendations for decision-makers currently falls outside SLAP's mandate. Recommendations of this nature could transform knowledge into action and guide the efforts of the various players involved in the integrated management of the St. Lawrence.

**Table 4. Mandates and targets for key federal-provincial freshwater management agreements**

Canada-Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence (2011–2026)	Canada-Ontario Great Lakes Agreement (2021–2026)	Canada-Manitoba Memorandum of Understanding Respecting Lake Winnipeg and the Lake Winnipeg Basin (2021–2026)
Mandate		
<p>Work together and concert their long-term efforts to conserve and enhance the St. Lawrence in a sustainable development perspective</p> <p>Translate efforts into action by implementing joint actions aimed at biodiversity conservation, sustainable use, and improved water quality</p> <p>Provide informed governance based on relevant, reliable knowledge</p>	<p>Work together to deliver outcomes in five priority areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Protecting waters;</li> <li>2. Improving coastal areas;</li> <li>3. Protecting habitat and species;</li> <li>4. Enhancing understanding and adaptation; and</li> <li>5. Engaging communities – from awareness to action.</li> </ol>	<p>Work together to understand and protect the water quality and ecological health of Lake Winnipeg and its basin.</p> <p>Work together to reduce nutrient loading.</p>
Targets for improving water quality and ecosystem health		
No target	Each annex of the Agreement includes targets	Phosphorus loading reduction target
<p>Sources: <a href="#">Canada-Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence (2011–2026)</a>, <a href="#">Canada-Ontario Great Lakes agreement (2021–2026)</a>, <a href="#">Canada-Manitoba Memorandum of Understanding Respecting Lake Winnipeg and the Lake Winnipeg Basin (2021–2026)</a></p>		

### Insufficient information on performance

SLAP develops and implements a joint action program structured around priority issues, orientations and project-specific objectives. While the orientations indicate a contribution to the remediation of the St. Lawrence through water quality improvement and biodiversity conservation, no indicators have been developed to measure the individual and aggregate contribution of joint actions. Additionally, the orientations are not supported by quantitative targets for assessing the achievement of outcomes.

The evaluation is also unable to conclude that information on the state of the St. Lawrence is being used to support decision-making, whether within ECCC, by SLAP government partners or by local water stakeholders. This lack of evidence is a cause for concern given that a significant proportion of SLAP resources are devoted to the development and promotion of two decision-making tools, i.e. the monitoring of the state of the St. Lawrence and numerical environmental predictions.

The Agreement, project sheets and ZIP program terms and conditions set out a number of expectations with respect to activities and deliverables (outputs) and 10 expected outcomes (excluding the expected outcomes of the regional round tables [RRTs], which are the sole responsibility of MELCCFP). Among these, only four expected outcomes are supported by indicators that can be used to monitor their status and measure progress. Table 5 lists SLAP's expected outcomes and indicators.



**Table 5. Expected St. Lawrence Action Plan outcomes and indicators**

Agreement	Activities	Expected Outcomes*	Indicators and Targets
Appendix A	Management and coordination	<i>No expected outcomes **</i>	N/A
	Communications	<i>No expected outcomes</i>	
Appendix B	Regional round tables ***	Concertation among users of the St. Lawrence***	Regional integrated management plans (RIMPs) are available (one RIMP for each RRT) ***
		Harmonization of actions by users of the St. Lawrence***	RIMP monitoring plans include many indicators (no targets) ***
	ZIP Program	Concertation among users of the St. Lawrence	Strategic ecological rehabilitation action plans (ERAPs) are available (no target)
	Forum on the St. Lawrence	Information is provided to users of the St. Lawrence	No known indicators (no targets)
Appendix C	State of the St. Lawrence Monitoring Program	Knowledge of the state and evolution of the St. Lawrence	21 indicators monitored in 2016–2021 (no targets) 24 indicators monitored in 2021–2026 (no targets)
		Knowledge of the state and evolution of the St. Lawrence among users	No known indicators (no targets)
Appendix D	Numerical Environmental Prediction Program for the St. Lawrence	Better understanding of the St. Lawrence ecosystem as a whole	No known indicators (no targets)
		Availability of decision support tools	Modelling tools and observation products
Appendix E	Joint Action Program	Water quality improvement	No known indicators for each JAP issue (no targets) JAP projects have no outcome indicators (no targets)
		Biodiversity conservation	
		Maintenance of uses	
Appendix E	Community Interaction Program	Improvement and protection of St. Lawrence ecosystems	No known indicators for the CIP as a whole (no targets) CIP-funded projects have outcome indicators (targets set in some contribution agreements)

Source: [Canada-Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence 2011–2026](#); information provided by the program

\* Expected outcomes from the Agreement text are rephrased to employ the passive voice, which is better suited to expressing factual statements. Activities and outputs are not outcomes.

\*\* The management and coordination of the Agreement make a general contribution to the achievement of all expected outcomes.

\*\*\* The RRTs are the sole responsibility of MELCCFP.

## 5.2 Declining funding, delays and missed opportunities

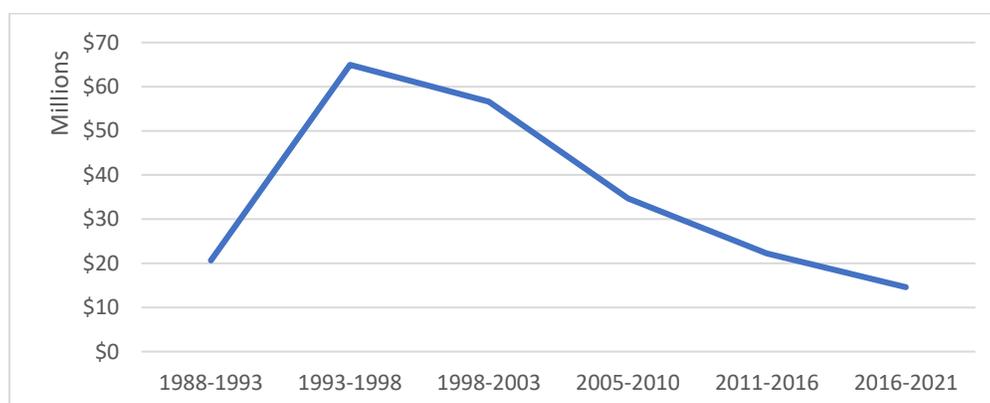
### Summary of observations

SLAP has missed out on several opportunities to strengthen activities and outcomes, mainly due to the lack of financial resources, a shortage of qualified staff, and delays in decision-making.

### Declining funding for the St. Lawrence Action Plan

Unlike the Great Lakes Program and the Lake Winnipeg Program, SLAP did not receive additional temporary funding under the Freshwater Action Plan from 2017–2018 to 2021–2022. The resources available to SLAP have declined substantially over the past 25 years. After peaking in Phase II (1993–1998), ECCC’s actual expenditures for SLAP decreased by \$50.4M in 2002 dollars (accounting for inflation) between Phase III (1998–2003) and Phase VI (2016–2021). This represents a 74% decrease in expenditures. Since 2005, SLAP has not secured dedicated resources to contribute to its water quality improvement and ecosystem health objectives. Graph 1 reflects allocated resources and shows the evolution of ECCC’s actual expenditures for SLAP in 2002 dollars, from 1988 to 2021.

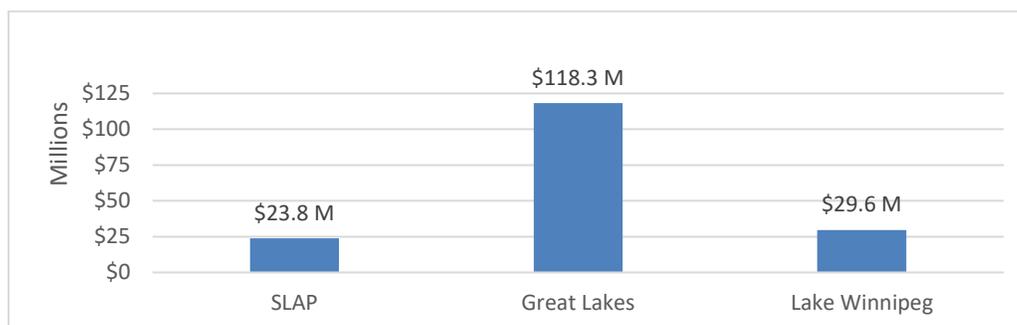
### Graph 1. Evolution of ECCC’s actual expenditures for the St. Lawrence Action Plan



Sources: SLAP reports, Phases I to VI; [Bank of Canada](#) price index

In comparison, and as shown in Graph 2, ECCC invested \$118.3M in the Great Lakes Program, \$29.6M in the Lake Winnipeg Program and \$23.8M in SLAP over the 2015–2016 to 2021–2022 period (permanent and temporary funding). Actual SLAP reported expenditures include CIP expenditures and the transfer to the Government of Quebec.

## Graph 2. ECCC's investment in freshwater programs from 2016–2017 to 2021–2022



Source: Information provided by Corporate Services and Finance Branch, ECCC

### Delays, staff shortages, and missed opportunities

Many JAP projects were delayed during the period covered by the evaluation. Of a total of 49 project delays, 20 are attributable to the impacts of COVID-19. Of the remaining 29, 28 project delays were caused by a lack of resources, either in terms of funding not being available on time or staff shortages. With respect to the projects that were cancelled during the five-year program period, SLAP participants said that these cancellations were attributable to a change in departmental priorities and a lack of resources, both financial and in terms of staff with the necessary expertise. COVID-19 has exacerbated the issue of the availability of scientific research staff equipped with the expertise to contribute to SLAP's scientific activities.

The Working Group on Numerical Environmental Prediction completed its work plan two years ahead of schedule. The integration of water quality and biodiversity activities and data was identified as the next step in developing the predictive tool. However, the working group's efforts could not progress beyond the original plan, as it was impossible to secure financial resources beyond those initially planned. For this reason, the 2021–2026 phase of the Agreement does not include new work objectives in numerical environmental prediction. According to program participants, it would be useful to continue developing predictive modeling capabilities, especially to support adaptation to climate change impacts on the St. Lawrence ecosystem.

During the evaluation period, six project proposals eligible for the CIP that were recommended for funding by the committee were not selected due to lack of funding. The total ECCC funding requested by these projects was \$385,146. These projects could have had beneficial local impacts on the state of the St. Lawrence.

Many SLAP participants (55%, N=29) pointed out ways to improve the program. These included suggestions for enhancing exchanges between monitoring committees, creating suitable tools for documenting and mitigating the impacts of climate change on the St. Lawrence, and strengthening citizen science by involving communities in the St. Lawrence State Monitoring Program. Although the vast majority (81%, N=16) of participants who identified opportunities for improvement communicated them to the members of the Agreement Steering Committee, most (69%, N=13) noted that their suggestions remained unaddressed. Some participants noted that they did not know what came of their suggestions, as there had been no follow-up. Among the reasons given to explain this situation, participants highlighted the lack of financial resources, the difficulty in obtaining the necessary

authorizations in a timely manner for staffing and procurement, and the lack of leadership shown by the Agreement Steering Committee, including long delays in decision-making and follow-up.

### 5.3 Outcomes expected from the integrated management of the St. Lawrence are not clearly defined

#### Summary of observations

While the integrated management of the St. Lawrence (IMSL) is the most significant expenditure for ECCC and one of the main expenditures for SLAP as a whole, the contribution of IMSL implementation to departmental results is neither defined nor measured. It should be noted that ECCC supports the implementation of the IMSL. ECCC lacks clear roles and responsibilities within the water stakeholder community, which restricts the opportunities for the Department to contribute.

The governments of Canada and Québec each have jurisdiction allowing them to act regarding the St. Lawrence. They carry out several activities within the framework of programs under various departments and government agencies. In addition to these activities are those of users of the St. Lawrence. This situation calls for the implementation of an integrated management approach, which aims to reconcile these activities and ensure their coherence. Since the coming into force of the Quebec [\*Act to Affirm the Collective Nature of Water Resources and To Promote Better Governance of Water and Associated Environments\*](#) (*Water Act*) in 2009, the implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM) has redefined the roles and responsibilities of St. Lawrence water stakeholders. In this context, SLAP partners contribute to the implementation of IMSL through financial support for ZIP committees (ECCC) and regional round tables (RRTs, MELCCFP), financial support for the overall implementation of IMSL (MELCCFP), and the Forum on the St. Lawrence (MELCCFP and ECCC).

Initially launched in 2011, the implementation of the integrated management of the St. Lawrence is still not complete more than 10 years later. The establishment of RRTs, under the responsibility of the Quebec government, is not complete, with only six of the 12 planned RRTs in place. Of these, only four RRTs have developed a regional integrated management plan (RIMP), the RRTs' main tool for integrated water resource management. Additionally, since their creation between 1993 and 1998, the 12 ZIP committees have developed ERAPs in consultation with local stakeholders. The ERAPs are updated regularly based on changes to the issue sheets (which are either reviewed, withdrawn or added) as a result of the ZIP committees' concertation activities. All strategic ERAPs are expected to be reviewed by 2026. Together, these findings show that the integrated management is not fully implemented.

### Resources allocated to the integrated management of the St. Lawrence

The integrated management of the St. Lawrence is one of ECCC's most significant expenditures (30%) under SLAP for the 2016–2021 period, as it is for the Quebec government (32%). Most of these expenditures take the form of contributions (ECCC) and grants (MELCCFP) to predetermined recipients, i.e. not-for-profit organizations mandated to form ZIP committees under the ZIP Program (ECCC) and organizations mandated to operate RRTs established under the Quebec *Water Act* (MELCCFP). Table 6 shows the actual expenditures supporting the integrated management of the St. Lawrence from 2016 to 2021.

**Table 6. Actual expenditures supporting the integrated management of the St. Lawrence, 2016–2017 to 2020–2021**

	ECCC	Federal Partners	Quebec Government	Total
Integrated management of the St. Lawrence	\$5,949,300	\$ 0	\$6,792,000	<b>\$12,741,300</b>
<b>Total expenditures</b>	\$19,877,500	\$13,262,230	\$21,175,500	<b>\$54,315,230</b>
<b>Total expenditure ratio</b>	30%	0%	32%	<b>23%</b>
<b>Expenditure item rank *</b>	1st	-	2nd	<b>3rd</b>
<i>Source: <a href="#">Five-Year Report 2016–2021: SLAP Achievements and Overview</a></i>				
* For the purposes of this calculation, program expenditures for joint actions have been considered as a whole, rather than disaggregated by priority issue.				

### Expected outcomes of the integrated management of the St. Lawrence

In terms of expected outcomes relating to the implementation of the integrated management of the St. Lawrence, there are no indicators for measuring these effects beyond the activities and deliverables (see Table 5. Expected SLAP Outcomes and Indicators). Therefore, it is impossible to know what concrete impacts the ZIP Program (ECCC) achieved by consensus-building, nor is it possible to know how the ZIP Program contributes to the intervention logic that supports departmental results. SLAP does not specify how integrated management contributes indirectly—including to what extent and over what timeframe—to improving water quality and the ecosystem health of the St. Lawrence.

The program would benefit from identifying the contribution of the ZIP Program (ECCC) to departmental results. In co-operation with Quebec government partners, the program would also benefit from defining the main outcomes expected from the integrated management of the St. Lawrence under SLAP. An action-oriented approach to consensus-building should be considered in identifying these outcomes. Future work should strive to empower water stakeholders to carry out environmental actions with well-defined targets for improving the state of the St. Lawrence.

Given the lack of tangible outcomes delivered by water stakeholders, the question arises as to whether the current form of IMSL can contribute to improving water quality and the health of the St. Lawrence ecosystem.

### Insufficient information on performance

The integrated management of the St. Lawrence is a key aspect of SLAP, and the PIP indicator table confirms its relevance to SLAP. However, the Logic Model of the Performance Information Profile (PIP) for the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships Program does not recognize SLAP as one of the ECCC programs contributing to the integrated management of priority ecosystems (ultimate outcome 4b) (for additional context, consult Appendix A – SLAP and the Expected Outcomes of the Performance Information Profile, and Appendix B – Logic Model of the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships Program).

Despite the availability of an indicator allegedly related to the integrated management of the St. Lawrence ecosystem, it does not accurately reflect the integrated management approach adopted by SLAP participants and reflected in the Agreement. In its current wording, the indicator reports whether activities completion and products delivery are carried out in accordance with the work plan set out in

the appendices to the Agreement. This does not enable program leaders to determine whether the integrated management of the St. Lawrence is delivering the expected outcomes. The indicator should be reviewed and adjusted to (1) specifically target the outcomes of the integrated management of the St. Lawrence and (2) reflect clearly defined measures of success, as suggested in the previous subsection.

#### 5.4 Integrated management support programs are not effectively integrated

**Summary of observations:** The respective contributions of the ZIP Program (ECCC) and the RRTs (MELCCFP) to the integrated management of the St. Lawrence have significant similarities, creating a risk of duplication and inefficient use of resources. The ZIP Program will not be extended beyond the 2011–2026 Agreement.

The ZIP Program (ECCC), established in 1993, was the main support for the integrated management of the St. Lawrence for 20 years. In 2009, the adoption of the *Water Act* confirmed the Quebec government's interest in the ongoing implementation of the integrated management of the St. Lawrence initiated by the ZIP Program. The *Water Act* also introduced a [new approach to the governance of water resources in Quebec](#) (available in French only) and established the St. Lawrence RRTs. Two years later, the 2011–2026 Agreement was negotiated and signed. The ZIP Program remains in effect, and the RRTs have been added as key elements of the program to ensure the integrated management of the St. Lawrence.

Program representatives (ECCC) acknowledge that the relationship between the ZIP committees and RRTs has not been formally defined. The Quebec model of integrated water resource management has therefore been added to the federal consultation model established by the ZIP Program, without any steps being taken to ensure complementarity. In appreciation of their extensive networks and expertise, a number of ZIP committees have been mandated to support the establishment of RRTs.

#### Significant overlap between ZIP committees and RRTs

ZIP committees and RRTs have the same mandate. They have similar objectives, activities, and products and their areas of intervention overlap. Table 7 provides a comparison of these factors. Following reflection on the future of the ZIP Program, ECCC has decided not to renew the program beyond the 2011–2026 Agreement. This decision could ultimately be beneficial to the alignment of resource allocation with departmental results.

**Table 7. Comparison of support from the ZIP committees and RRTs for the integrated management of the St. Lawrence**

	<b>ZIP Committees</b>	<b>RRTs</b>
Mandate	Support the implementation of the integrated management of the Saint Lawrence	Support the implementation of the integrated management of the Saint Lawrence
Objective	Encourage the engagement and concerted action of stakeholders working along the St. Lawrence in taking action to resolve local and regional problems affecting St. Lawrence ecosystems and their uses	Coordinate the regional planning of water resources and associated uses through the joint action of stakeholders involved in St. Lawrence issues in the target region
Area of intervention	Local (with overlap)	Regional (with overlap)
Key activities	Raise awareness and promote consensus on priority actions. Share information and expertise.	Promote and raise awareness of relevant actions and issues among water stakeholders
	Set up and participate in concertation activities with St. Lawrence stakeholders that address the priority issues identified in the Agreement. Develop a common vision for the remediation and protection of the St. Lawrence.	Ensure the development, adoption, monitoring, and implementation of a Regional Integrated Management Plan (RIMP) that reflects the priorities and willingness to act of the regional stakeholders involved in the management of resources and uses of the Saint Lawrence
	Monitor the state of the St. Lawrence	Facilitate concerted monitoring of the state of the St-Lawrence
Main product	Ecological Rehabilitation Action Plan	Regional Integrated Management Plan
Link to departmental results	None	<i>Does not apply *</i>
Contribution to the state of the St. Lawrence	Unknown	Unknown
Sources: <a href="#">Canada-Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence 2011–2026</a> , <a href="#">Cadre de référence de la gestion intégrée des ressources en eau</a> [Terms of Reference for Integrated Water Resource Management], information provided by the program		
* RRTs are the exclusive responsibility of MELCCFP.		

## 6. Opportunities

Given that the SLAP mandate was negotiated for the 2011–2026 period and future activities were negotiated for the 2021–2026 period, the opportunities for improvement described in this section are mainly to be pursued during reflections and discussions on the renewal of SLAP beyond 2026.

### 6.1 Building on the integrated management framework to improve the state of the St. Lawrence

#### Summary of observations

In the context of the integrated management of the St. Lawrence (IMSL), the responsibility for generating positive outcomes for water quality and ecosystem health falls under the purview of regional and local water stakeholders. Redefining the role of ECCC and SLAP in integrated management may provide IMSL with significant leverage to improve the state of the St. Lawrence.

In the current context of integrated management, the responsibility for acting to improve the water quality and ecosystem health of the St. Lawrence is delegated by the Government of Quebec to regional and local water stakeholders. They are responsible for developing and implementing regional integrated management plans (RIMPs) through the RRTs. During RRTs, communities and water stakeholders define priority issues and develop action plans. The impact of water stakeholders' actions on the water quality and ecosystem health of the St. Lawrence is neither known nor measured.

#### What role should ECCC and SLAP play in integrated management?

To the extent that actions related to the water and ecosystem of the St. Lawrence continue to be taken primarily by local stakeholders, ECCC and its SLAP government partners have no assurance that the water quality and ecosystem health of the St. Lawrence will be improved.

Implementing RIMP and ERAP action plans are the shared responsibility of many water stakeholders spanning the municipal, business and community sectors. The actions taken by water stakeholders are expected to have a variable impact and are most often conditional on receiving funding. These actions are not universally subject to aggregate performance measurements, either in the regions or the St. Lawrence as a whole, which has led to a set of interventions that are somewhat inadequately coordinated and funded, and whose overall impact on the water quality and ecosystem health of the St. Lawrence is neither known nor measured.

In the context of reflecting on and discussing SLAP renewal after 2026, ECCC and its government partners might consider the possibility of building on integrated management to generate positive outcomes for the St. Lawrence. For example, technical, scientific, administrative and financial support could be offered for the implementation of RIMP and ERAP action plans. ECCC and its SLAP partners could also take part in defining objectives and targets, prioritizing actions, and measuring performance from a broad perspective.

#### The uncertain future of RRTs

In 2020, SLAP partners negotiated Phase VI of SLAP (2021–2026), the third and final five-year period of the 2011–2026 Agreement. In this document, the Government of Quebec committed to finalizing the establishment of 12 RRTs, although only six RRTs had been created since 2011, three in 2014 and three



in 2015. Eight years later, in December 2022, MELCC's integrated water management directorate, which was previously responsible for supervising the establishment and operation of RRTs, was abolished. This was part of the organizational realignment of MELCC embedded into its mandate expansion to include wildlife and parks (after which MELCC became MELCCFP).

These circumstances raise doubts about whether the RRT network will ever be established as initially planned in 2009. This is a key aspect to consider when reflecting on the possibility of improving the water quality and ecosystem health of the St. Lawrence by building on integrated management.

## 6.2 Strengthening the Community Interaction Program's contribution to improving the state of the St. Lawrence

### Summary of observations

The Community Interaction Program does not significantly contribute to departmental results. ECCC would benefit from strengthening the contribution of the Community Interaction Program to the improvement of the state of the St. Lawrence.

The Community Interaction Program (CIP) provides financial support to project proponents aiming to conserve biodiversity, encourage sustainable use, and improve the ecosystem and water quality of the St. Lawrence. Public awareness projects, study projects, study-action projects and restoration or protection projects are eligible for CIP funding. The maximum amount of financial support available ranges between \$25,000 and \$200,000, depending on the type of project. Projects must also have received community support and demonstrate matching funding to be eligible. ECCC and MELCCFP provide independent funding envelopes for this program and collaborate at the project review, selection, and recommendation phases. The other stages of the program—day-to-day program administration, the funding approval process, support of funded projects and reporting—are administered independently by the two levels of government.

### A local contribution with no known impact on departmental results

The CIP aims to improve and protect the ecosystems of the St. Lawrence, but no specific quantified targets or indicators are defined for the program. The expected outcomes of the CIP are determined by project using performance indicators set out in the contribution agreements. In addition to quantifying some activities and outputs, many of these indicators report on the outcomes generated by the projects. Although the results of the actions carried out by CIP beneficiaries are documented at the local scale, their collective impact on the quality of water and the health of the St. Lawrence ecosystem and their collective contribution to achieving departmental results are not known.

In the Performance Information Profile for the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships Program, CIP performance is reported in terms of the number of partners and leverage (for additional context, see Appendix B – Logic Model of the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships Program) rather than outcomes. For these reasons, it is not known whether and how CIP-funded projects contribute to achieving departmental results.

### Strengthening program administration

During the period covered by the evaluation, the CIP spent all available contribution funding (federal share). Administrative expenditures made up 15% of total expenditures during the period covered by the evaluation, which is in line with good practice. However, CIP administration could be strengthened in a number of ways:

- The CIP experiences significant approval delays following program administrators' funding recommendations. To date, however, all recommended projects have been funded in modest amounts. For seasonal field projects, late approval has caused significant delays in carrying out activities.
- The CIP does not have a centralized database for managing contributions. Information is compiled manually, and reporting on the CIP's overall outcomes is labour intensive.
- Current eligibility criteria exclude some project proposals that could have a positive impact on the state of the St. Lawrence, including those that fall within the applicant organization's mission, or involve government responsibilities or recurring activities.
- The CIP administration spends more time on selecting project proposals than on supporting the projects that are approved for funding. An opportunity exists to try out an agile approach based on an active partnership, which could enhance funded projects and improve outcomes. This opportunity could be seized if sufficient resources were available, in compliance with policies, guidelines and standards for making and managing transfer payments.
- Administering the CIP's joint components is difficult due to the imbalance in resources provided by ECCC and MELCCFP, which causes delays in day-to-day management. It may be beneficial to review roles and responsibilities to provide better service to recipients.
- The selection criterion related to community involvement is not clearly defined and has unexpected negative effects: to date, applying this criterion has disqualified a number of quality projects, in the opinion of proposal evaluators, while qualifying projects have not always led to long-lasting outcomes due to community support, contrary to expectations.

### Insufficient resources to contribute significantly to departmental results

SLAP does not have a clear mandate to improve the state of the St. Lawrence, nor does it have targets to that effect. The CIP is the only component of Agreement programming through which ECCC can contribute directly to its departmental results. However, the contribution funding envelope administered by the CIP is insufficient to make a significant contribution to the achievement of departmental results targeting the improvement of water quality and the health of the St. Lawrence ecosystem. CIP funding amounts are modest and are not clearly aligned with the environmental issues facing the St. Lawrence.

During the six-year period extending from 2016–2017 to 2021–2022, \$3.1 million in federal contribution funding (\$0.51 million a year on average) was disbursed under the CIP. In comparison, during the three-year period extending from 2017–2018 to 2019–2020, the funding programs of the Great Lakes Protection Initiative and the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program disbursed \$4.8 million each (\$1.6 million a year on average). Therefore, on an annual basis, SLAP had three times less funding available to support community projects than comparable federal water management programs.

During Phase VI of SLAP (2016–2021), annual departmental resource allocation decisions reduced the CIP allocation by \$984,261 over five years, a 30% reduction in the planned allocation. Pointing to a disconnect between the available funding and project proponents' interest in the CIP, a total of four out

of 13 calls for projects were cancelled because the available funding had already been directed towards multi-year projects. The CIP also received six eligible project proposals judged by the evaluators to be of satisfactory quality that were not recommended for funding because there was no more left in the envelope. The funding requested from ECCC for these six project proposals totalled \$385,146.

Missed opportunities for carrying out projects likely to improve the state of the St. Lawrence may also be underestimated. According to program representatives who are very familiar with the CIP, many potential recipients do not submit project proposals because the funding caps are too low. This is mainly why the CIP does not attract proposals for structuring projects, i.e. projects that involve multiple stakeholders, cover a wider geographical area and target meaningful outcomes.

### 6.3 Supporting the greater participation of federal partners

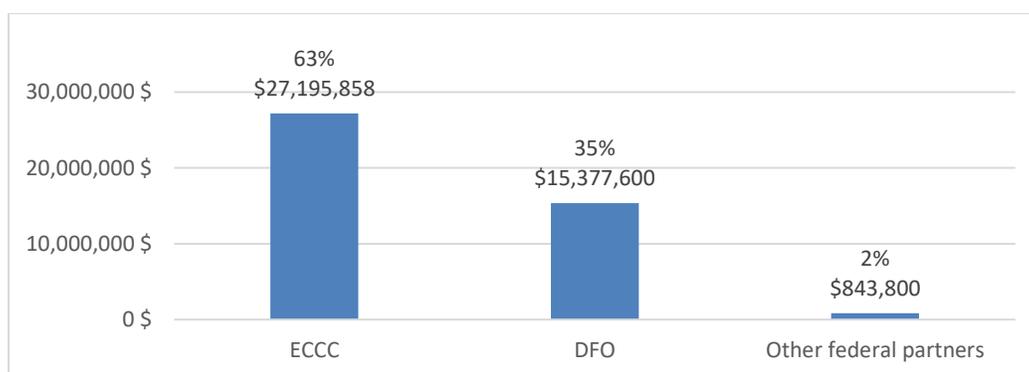
#### Summary of observations

ECCC would benefit from strengthening the participation of SLAP federal partners, for example, by making financial resources available to them with a matching requirement.

Under the 2011–2026 Agreement, government partners provide their own resources to support their participation in SLAP. These resources are most often drawn from the department’s or program’s operating envelope (permanent resources), which means that their allocation is decided annually based on situational priorities.

Aside from ECCC, ten other Government of Canada organizations contribute to SLAP as partners: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, the Parks Canada Agency, the Canadian Space Agency, the Public Health Agency of Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard (DFO), Health Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada, Shared Services Canada and Transport Canada. Except for ECCC and DFO, the resources made available by the other federal partners are very modest, averaging around \$17,800 annually per organization. Graph 3 shows the financial contribution of the SLAP federal partners.

**Graph 3. Financial contribution of St. Lawrence Action Plan federal partners, 2016–2017 to 2021–2022**



Source: Information provided by the program

Although these government partners’ mandates and expertise are aligned with SLAP priorities and, more broadly, with the governance issues associated with the St. Lawrence, a number of participants

feel that it is difficult to foster an interest in and a commitment to SLAP within these organizations. This is partly because organizations have numerous departmental and governmental priorities for which results must be achieved and for which they receive additional temporary financial resources in many cases. Under these circumstances, they do not see making an active and significant contribution to SLAP as a priority.

A recent experience of the Working Group on Numerical Environmental Prediction provides a path worth exploring in strengthening the participation of federal partners. As part of an interdepartmental collaboration on water modelling and ocean topography, the Canadian Space Agency transferred approximately \$150,000 to ECCC to support its participation. Receiving this interdepartmental funding along with the obligation to produce results led to the mobilization of nearly 10 times this amount in internal resources to support the project.

This example suggests that awarding funding for specific purposes can, in similar contexts, create considerable leverage, which allows internal resources to be reallocated to collaborative projects. ECCC could consider making financial resources available to federal partners with a matching requirement, to strengthen their participation in SLAP projects and governance.

#### 6.4 Supporting reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

##### Summary of observations

SLAP could support reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, given the interest of First Nations in participating in integrated management and improving the state of the St. Lawrence. ECCC would benefit from considering ways of strengthening the participation of First Nations communities in SLAP.

In 2018 the Government of Canada adopted [Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples](#). To the extent that the integrated management of the St. Lawrence ecosystem coordinates and supports the Government of Canada's and the Government of Quebec's collaborative effort in (public) decisions affecting the St. Lawrence, the rights, interests and aspirations of Indigenous Peoples and their governments must be recognized.

The 2011–2026 Agreement was negotiated prior to the adoption of the principles governing Crown–Indigenous relations. As SLAP continues, ECCC should create opportunities to strengthen the alignment of the Canada–Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence with the [principles](#) respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples, the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), and the [Action Plan](#).

#### The St. Lawrence Action Plan offers little support for First Nations' participation

Unlike the Great Lakes Agreement and the Lake Winnipeg Basin Memorandum of Understanding, SLAP does not formalize or encourage the participation of riverside Indigenous communities, including in the administration of the Agreement and in delivering JAP activities.

First Nations and their governments or communities are not represented in the SLAP governance structure. However, First Nations are represented on provincial RRTs and their representatives are invited to attend the Forum on the St. Lawrence.

The [National Issues Report](#) has pointed to the consideration and integration of Indigenous knowledge, including traditional knowledge, as an important component of adapting to climate change. Indigenous knowledge, including traditional knowledge, has not been considered or integrated in any of the JAP projects. Furthermore, none of these projects invites or encourages the participation of First Nations partners at any stage of the project.

Some First Nations communities have expressed an interest in taking a meaningful part in planning SLAP activities, in receiving funding to support this involvement and in sharing their traditional ecological knowledge.

### **Strengthening First Nations' participation through the ZIP Program**

ZIP (area of prime concern) committees are independent organizations with a charter and a Board of Directors appointed in accordance with not-for-profit organization standards. Although some ZIP committees acknowledge that they are active on First Nations' territory, Indigenous representation on ZIP committees is not required.

ZIP committees do not appear to consider the First Nations communities in the vicinity of their operating area as partners and collaborators with which they can work in remediating and enhancing the St. Lawrence, either regularly or in action projects. For example, the Haut Saint-Laurent ZIP committee has no First Nations communities among its over 70 collaborative partners. The ERAPs developed by ZIP committees make no systematic reference to Indigenous groups in the issues and cases they handle.

To the extent that the ZIP committees are funded by ECCC, continuation of their funding could be made conditional on establishing, maintaining and strengthening collaborative relationships with First Nations communities present in their operating area. Communities could also receive funding for regularly participating in activities related to the integrated management of the St. Lawrence.

### **Strengthening First Nations' participation through the Community Interaction Program**

Between 2016 and 2021, five projects proposed by representatives or members of Indigenous communities were funded by ECCC under the CIP, out of a total of 47 funded projects. Starting in 2022-23, the management of contributions with Indigenous communities has provided the flexibility to carryover unspent funds to the following fiscal year. The CIP also now participates in the Initiative on Strategic Partnerships with Indigenous Communities. The initiative is led by Indigenous Services Canada and aims to reduce barriers to Indigenous participation in economic development opportunities. Specific measures would strengthen the participation of First Nations communities in the CIP:

- Allowing for full funding of activities (100%) without a matching requirement;
- Providing long-term financial support for monitoring and maintaining restored sites;
- Simplifying the call for projects process and templates;
- Providing better adapted and more flexible support for designing and developing project proposals;
- Improving how the program is promoted among First Nations communities.

## 6.5 Supporting adaptation to climate change

### Summary of observations

Climate change affects the coastal areas, waters and ecosystem of the St. Lawrence, as well as the communities that live near them. ECCC would benefit from strengthening the alignment of SLAP with the priority of adapting to climate change.

Canada's climate is warming rapidly, two times faster than the global average and three times faster in Canada's North. Canadians are already experiencing the devastating impacts of climate change, including extreme weather, flooding, wildfires and coastal erosion. The science is clear: doing too little too late will be very costly. Even though we are already taking steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we need to make a greater effort to adapt to and prepare for the effects of climate change.

The St. Lawrence ecosystem is already being adversely affected by climate change: along with the clearly visible consequences of coastal erosion, the ecosystem is experiencing a steady decline in oxygen levels and an increase in temperatures, two long-term phenomena that have already had, and will continue to have, an impact on biodiversity.

### Role and capacity of the Climate Change Committee

Given the importance of climate change and its expected impacts on the St. Lawrence, it would be beneficial for SLAP to raise the importance of the issue in the text of the Agreement. One option worth considering would be to strengthen the role of the Climate Change Committee (CCC).

Although the Climate Change Committee collaborated specifically with the Sustainable Use Issue Committee during the 2016–2021 period, during the 2021–2026 period, it was transformed into an advisory committee that reports directly to the Agreement Steering Committee. The CCC advises the issue committees and working groups during project planning periods to ensure that climate change is considered across all SLAP projects. The CCC also coordinates events to share knowledge and best practices with its stakeholders on adaptation to climate change for the St. Lawrence. During the evaluation period ending on March 31, 2022, which was the first year of the committee's new mandate, it partially fulfilled its responsibilities. Table 8 presents the CCC's responsibilities and achievements.

**Table 8. Responsibilities and achievements of the Climate Change Committee**

Responsibilities	Achievements
1. Stay informed about issues related to climate change impacts on the St. Lawrence and the need for knowledge on these impacts and adaptation solutions	<i>none</i>
2. Inform and advise members of the Agreement Steering Committee	<i>none</i>
3. Inform and advise members of the working groups listed in Appendices C and D	<i>none</i>
4. Inform and advise project leaders from the Joint Action Program listed in Appendix E	22 projects (out of 40) from the 2021–2026 programming integrated a climate change aspect
5. Hold events to share knowledge about the impacts of climate change on the St. Lawrence and climate change adaptation	12 webinars were organized to facilitate knowledge transfer*
<i>Source: <a href="#">Canada–Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence 2011–2026</a>, information provided by the program</i>	
* The number of participants in these webinars and the knowledge they acquired are not known.	

As shown in the table above, the committee did not demonstrate that it stayed informed about issues related to the impacts of climate change on the St. Lawrence and the need to develop knowledge about its impacts and adaptation solutions. SLAP must develop options for building the committee's capacity, including improving the alignment of the committee co-chairs' expertise with the responsibilities of their position, so that the committee can fulfill all of its responsibilities. To be sure, the CCC has recognized that it does not have the knowledge or expertise required to carry out its duties. It may be useful to draw on complementary expertise, in particular that of the staff at the Canadian Centre for Climate Services (CCCS), to support the committee's work.

### Expected outcomes and responsibilities

Currently, the integration of climate change considerations in JAP projects is optional and the Climate Change Committee's role is limited to informing and advising. Therefore, successful integration depends on the project leaders' voluntary participation. It would be helpful to define other governance bodies' roles and responsibilities in order to strengthen the integration of climate issues in all SLAP activities and outputs.

In addition, the objective of integrating climate change considerations in projects is too broad. Without well-defined indicators of success, it is difficult to evaluate whether integration is achieving its objectives and creating benefits for the St. Lawrence ecosystem, its riverside communities and its users. Without these indicators, it is also difficult to communicate the successes of SLAP in this area and the appropriateness of allocating resources to the Committee's activities and to the climate change components of projects.

The CCC's responsibilities in supporting the integration of climate change considerations in SLAP projects are currently limited to JAP projects and do not extend to CIP projects. CIP projects have a direct local impact on the state of the St. Lawrence and thus represent an opportunity to encourage achieving the benefits of climate change adaptation.

### 6.6 Supporting better outcomes for disadvantaged groups

#### Summary of observations

All environmental programs have social impacts. ECCC would benefit from strengthening the alignment of SLAP with the priority of achieving better results for all Canadians, including marginalized groups.

Science plays a key role in the progress achieved in improving environmental justice. Environmental justice can be defined as a process that seeks to mitigate or eliminate the disproportionate health, environmental, economic and climate impacts on marginalized communities.

Since 2016, [Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA Plus\)](#) has applied to all Government of Canada policies, programs and initiatives, including scientific and environmental programs. This is because the impacts of environmental conditions differ not only by gender, but also by socio-economic status, racialized status, Indigenous status, place of residence or work, and other factors. The quality of the environment also has a direct impact on the [quality of life](#) for individuals and population groups. In a [recent interim report](#) (2023), the Senate of Canada's Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology emphasized that there is still much work to be done to fully implement GBA Plus system-wide.

Applying GBA Plus to environmental programs takes two main forms. First, environmental programs with a scientific research mandate can enhance their research agenda by adding a component that characterizes environmental risks and benefits. This generates disaggregated information to provide insight into different levels of exposure to risk and different abilities of population groups to access environmental benefits. Second, environmental programs with a mandate to take action to improve the quality of the environment must seek to mitigate or eliminate the disproportionate exposure of certain population groups to environmental risks, and to mitigate or eliminate the barriers that disproportionately limit the access of certain population groups to environmental benefits.

The Canada–Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence 2011–2026 was negotiated in 2010, a number of years before the adoption of GBA Plus and its requirements for disaggregated impact analysis based on identity factors. In 2010, gender-based analysis had already been required in all federal government departments and agencies for 15 years, under [The Federal Plan for Gender Equality](#) (1995), but its application to environmental programs seemed more limited. As a result, in current SLAP activities, the scientific information generated on water quality and ecosystem health is not systematically linked to environmental risks and benefits for the population groups concerned. Issues of access to natural environments, exposure to substances of concern, and inclusion and representation of diversity in ecosystem remedial actions and in the governance of freshwater resources—including First Nations communities—are not taken into account.

According to the Performance Information Profile (PIP), GBA Plus was considered for all programs grouped under the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships program, which is part of the Departmental Results Framework. While SLAP belongs to this group of programs, it would be inaccurate to state that GBA Plus has been fully applied to SLAP. The expected renewal of the Canada–Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence provides a good opportunity to integrate environmental justice considerations in SLAP, by specifically quantifying the intentional contribution required to the acquisition of information disaggregated by identity factors.



## Recommendations and management response

The following recommendations are intended for the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of the Canada Water Agency, as the senior departmental official responsible for the St. Lawrence Action Plan for ECCC.<sup>1</sup> Since the SLAP mandate for the 2011–2026 period and future activities for the 2021–2026 period have already been negotiated, the recommendations in this section aim to foster reflection and discussion on the renewal of SLAP after 2026.

### Recommendation 1

<b>Recommendation</b>
Work with government partners to strengthen the SLAP mandate; develop a performance measurement framework aligned with departmental results <sup>2</sup> ; support greater participation of federal partners and improve the Community Interaction Program in order to make a significant contribution to improving water quality and the health of the St. Lawrence ecosystem.
<b>Report findings that support the recommendation</b>
<p><b>Section 5.1.</b> In the absence of a clear mandate and sufficient resources to transform knowledge into action, SLAP does not substantially contribute to departmental results on water quality and ecosystem health.</p> <p><b>Section 5.2.</b> SLAP has missed several opportunities to strengthen activities and results, mainly due to the lack of financial resources, a shortage of qualified staff and delays in decision-making.</p> <p><b>Section 6.2.</b> The Community Interaction Program does not significantly contribute to departmental results. ECCC would benefit from strengthening the contribution of the Community Interaction Program to the improvement of the state of the St. Lawrence.</p> <p><b>Section 6.3.</b> ECCC would benefit from strengthening the participation of SLAP federal partners, for example, by making financial resources available to them with a matching requirement.</p>
<b>Statement of agreement or disagreement</b>
Agree
<b>Management response</b>
The negotiation of an upcoming Post 2026 Agreement will continue targeting the improvement of water quality and could allow for the integration of a logic model and measurable management tools, targets and performance indicators that are aligned with the Departmental Results Framework for ECCC, while the Canada Water Agency is within ECCC. If and when the Canada Water Agency is no

<sup>1</sup> The Government tabled legislation to establish the Canada Water Agency on November 30, 2023. Contingent upon the coming into force of the *Canada Water Agency Act*, this recommendation will apply to the future President of the Agency, who would become the senior federal official responsible for the St. Lawrence Action Plan.

<sup>2</sup> Upon the establishment of the Canada Water Agency by legislation, this will refer to departmental results for the Agency, which will have a Departmental Results Framework separate from that of ECCC.

longer within ECCC, it is anticipated that the upcoming Agreement would then align with the future Departmental Results Framework for the Canada Water Agency established by legislation.<sup>3</sup> Such improvements should reinforce the SLAP's mandate and lead to more structural projects that align on departmental results.

The negotiation with Quebec around the Post 2026 Agreement components will involve the reviewing of the SLAP's funding programs, including of the Community Interaction Program, pursuing funding programs geared towards more actions aimed at tangible improvements of the St. Lawrence's water quality and ecosystem, in alignment with the Departmental Results Frameworks for ECCC and the Canada Water Agency.

As part of the next Agreement, we will work to strengthen the partnership with federal and provincial partners to encourage them to become more involved in SLAP's collaborative activities and projects. This will allow combining efforts, aligning the various governmental initiatives, and achieving efficiency and better environmental results, while promoting synergies, complementarity of expertise and resources' combination in order to contribute significantly to improving the St. Lawrence's water quality and ecosystem health.

### Action 1

Develop a strategy to redesign funding programs dedicated to improving the St. Lawrence's water quality and ecosystem health, in line with the objectives and priorities of the Canada Water Agency, while considering possible partnerships and synergies with other federal and provincial departments.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsible party
Strategy to overhaul funding programs dedicated to improving the St. Lawrence's water quality and ecosystem health	31 March 2025	DG, Freshwater Management, Canadian Water Agency

### Action 2

Promote the priorities of the strategy for redesigning funding programs dedicated to improving the St. Lawrence's water quality and ecosystem health with the St. Lawrence Action Plan partners.

Deliverable	Timeline	Responsible party
List of priority issues for negotiating the Post 2026 Agreement	30 November 2025	DG, Freshwater Management, Canadian Water Agency

<sup>3</sup> Preparatory work is underway to develop a Departmental Results Framework (DRF) for the Canada Water Agency, contingent on the passage and coming into force of proposed legislation currently before Parliament. The established Agency's DRF is expected to be well-aligned with the portions of ECCC's current DRF that are applicable to Canada Water Agency programs.

## Recommendation 2

<b>Recommendation</b>
Define the expected contribution to departmental results of implementing the integrated management of the St. Lawrence. <sup>4</sup> In preparation for discussions with SLAP partners, define options for ECCC and the Canada Water Agency to participate in implementing the integrated management of the St. Lawrence.
<b>Report findings that support the recommendation</b>
<p><b>Section 5.2.</b> SLAP has missed several opportunities to strengthen activities and results, mainly due to the lack of financial resources, a shortage of qualified staff and delays in decision-making.</p> <p><b>Section 5.3.</b> While the integrated management of the St. Lawrence (IMSL) is the most significant expenditure for ECCC and one of the main expenditures for SLAP as a whole, the contribution of IMSL implementation to departmental results is neither defined nor measured. The lack of clear roles and responsibilities for ECCC within the water stakeholder community limits the opportunities for the Department to make a contribution.</p> <p><b>Section 6.1.</b> In the context of the integrated management of the St. Lawrence (IMSL), the responsibility for generating positive outcomes for water quality and ecosystem health falls under the purview of regional and local water stakeholders. Redefining the role of ECCC and SLAP in integrated management may provide IMSL with significant leverage in improving the state of the St. Lawrence.</p>
<b>Statement of agreement or disagreement</b>
Agree
<b>Management response</b>
The negotiation of an upcoming Post 2026 Agreement should allow for better coordination and synergy between Quebec and the federal approaches to Integrated Management of the St. Lawrence River, while ensuring alignment with ECCC's and Canada Water Agency's departmental priorities and results. Moreover, the overhaul of the SLAP's funding programs will allow a better alignment with the priorities and issues of the Post 2026 Agreement as part of the Integrated Management of the St. Lawrence River.

<sup>4</sup> Per previous notes, "departmental results" refers to the Departmental Results Framework (DRF) for ECCC while the Canada Water Agency is within ECCC, and, in future, will refer to the DRF of the Canada Water Agency established in legislation.

<b>Action 1</b>		
Negotiate with the province the terms and conditions for supporting the Canada Water Agency in implementing integrated management, while ensuring alignment with the department's priorities and performance framework, and defining specific targets, indicators, and measurable outcomes. <sup>5</sup>		
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible party</b>
Progress report on negotiations with the province	31 March 2025	DG, Freshwater Management, Canadian Water Agency
Appendix to the new Integrated Management Agreement, where clear terms and conditions for collaboration are defined and reflect Canadian Water Agency priorities.	31 March 2026	DG, Freshwater Management, Canadian Water Agency
Also see Action 1 deliverable under Recommendation 1.		

### Recommendation 3

<b>Recommendation</b>
Strengthen the alignment of SLAP with the following Government of Canada horizontal priorities: reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples; achieving better outcomes for all Canadians, including marginalized groups; and adapting to climate change.
<b>Report findings that support the recommendation</b>
<p><b>Section 5.2.</b> SLAP has missed out several opportunities to strengthen activities and outcomes, mainly due to the lack of financial resources, a shortage of qualified staff and delays in decision-making.</p> <p><b>Section 6.4.</b> SLAP could support reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, given the interest of First Nations in participating in integrated management and improving the state of the St. Lawrence. ECCC would benefit from considering ways of strengthening the participation of First Nations communities in SLAP.</p> <p><b>Section 6.5.</b> Climate change affects the coastal areas, waters, and ecosystem of the St. Lawrence, as well as the communities that live near them. ECCC would benefit from strengthening the alignment of SLAP with the priority of adapting to climate change.</p> <p><b>Section 6.6.</b> All environmental programs have a social impact. ECCC would benefit from strengthening the alignment of SLAP with the priority of achieving better outcomes for all Canadians, including marginalized groups.</p>

<sup>5</sup> Per previous notes, "departmental priorities and performance framework" refer to the Departmental Results Framework (DRF) for ECCC while the Canada Water Agency is within ECCC, and, in future, will refer to the DRF of the Canada Water Agency established in legislation.

<b>Statement of agreement or disagreement</b>		
Agree		
<b>Management response</b>		
<p>In preparation for a future Agreement, funding will be mobilized to support efforts to better align with government priorities in this regard. The Government of Canada's horizontal priorities will be considered further in the negotiation of the Post 2026 Agreement between the governments of Canada and Quebec, including with respect to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. The reinforced Freshwater Action Plan will allow the establishment of contribution funds dedicated to Indigenous Peoples. Contribution programs supporting the implementation of the Strategy under Recommendation 1 will be developed to include all Canadians, as well as disadvantaged groups. The SLAP continues recognizing the importance of climate change adaptation and will continue reinforcing the Climate Change Committee (CCC) and support its intersection with Issue Committees and Working Groups.</p>		
<b>Action 1</b>		
Implement a contribution fund dedicated to Indigenous communities.		
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible party</b>
Program dedicated to the involvement of Indigenous communities in the management of the St. Lawrence	March 31, 2026	DG, Freshwater Management, Canadian Water Agency
<b>Action 2</b>		
Work to benefit all Canadians and disadvantaged groups of SLAP Coordination Bureau funding programs.		
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible party</b>
Consultation and work report targeting SLAP programs that may include new recipients and the approach to engaging them and raising their interest in these programs	March 31, 2026	DG, Freshwater Management, Canadian Water Agency
<b>Action 3</b>		
Promote the redefinition of the role of the PASL 2011-26 Climate Change Committee to a committee that is more involved in implementing intergovernmental solutions to address climate change in the Post 2026 Agreement.		

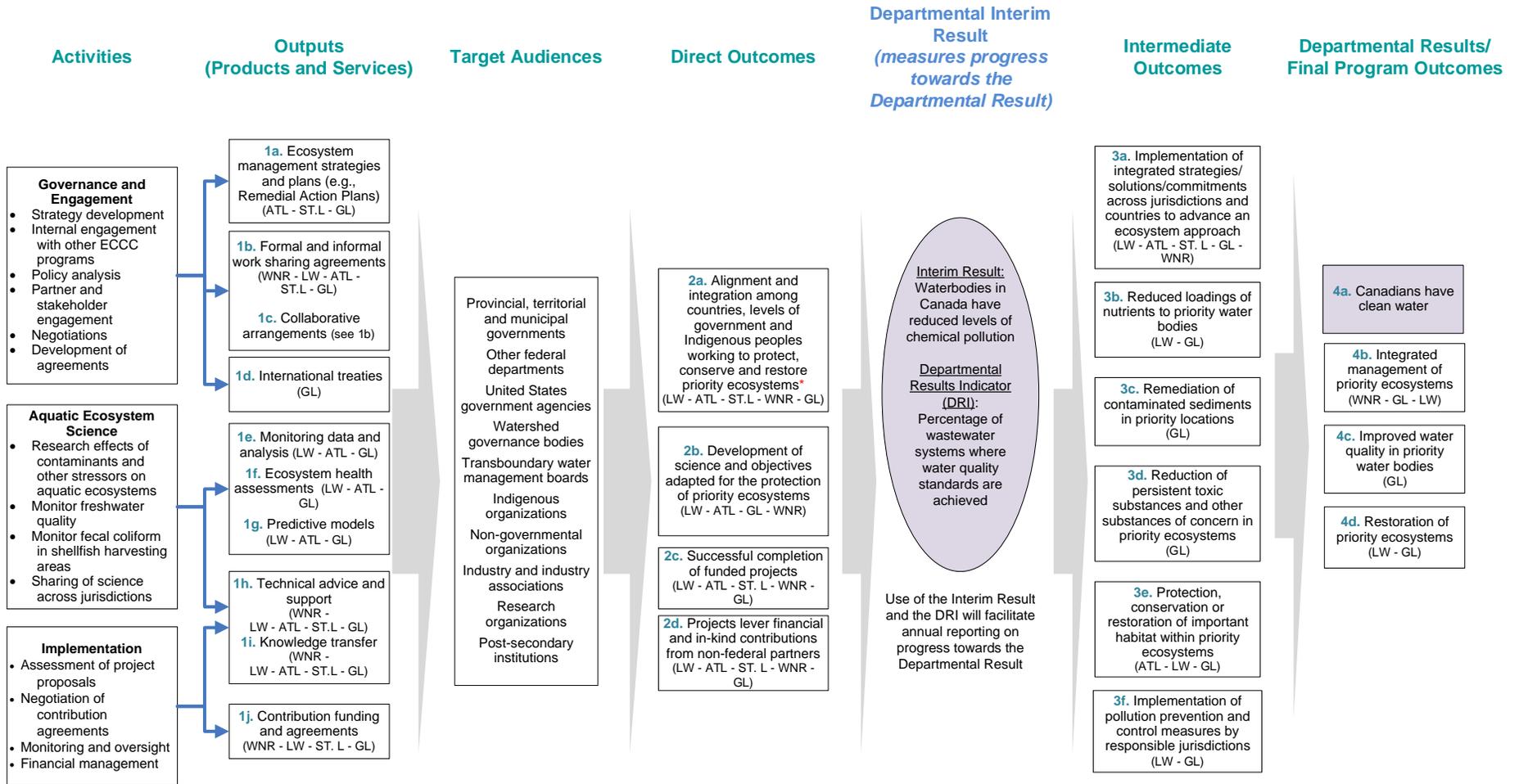
<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible party</b>
Report on the potential role of a Climate Change Committee for the Post 2026 Agreement	March 31, 2026	DG, Freshwater Management, Canadian Water Agency

## Appendix A – St. Lawrence Action Plan and the Expected Outcomes of the Performance Information Profile

Expected outcomes – Performance Information Profile of the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships Program	Applies to SLAP	Indicator of expected outcome	Notes
<b>Immediate Outcomes</b>			
<i>2a. Alignment and integration between countries, levels of government and Indigenous Peoples, working to protect, conserve and restore priority ecosystems</i>	Yes	Average number of non-federal partnerships established during the implementation of SLAP activities and projects (WQ-2)	Number of SLAP government partners
<i>2b. Development of science and objectives adapted to the protection of priority ecosystems</i>	Partially	Percentage of scientific information published per year (WQ-5)	Scientific knowledge is being developed, but protection objectives are not
<i>2c. Successful delivery of funded projects</i>	Yes	Percentage of funded projects that are on time, within scope and within budget (WQ-7)	CIP-funded projects
<i>2d. Financial and in-kind contributions for projects of non-federal partners</i>	Yes	Leveraging (WQ-8)	Calculated separately for CIP and for other SLAP activities
<b>Intermediate Outcomes</b>			
<i>3a. Implementation of integrated strategies/solutions/commitments across jurisdictions and countries to advance an ecosystem approach</i>	Yes	Percentage of SLAP projects on track or completed with few or no problems (WQ-10)	Five-year JAP projects
<i>3b. Reduction of loadings of nutrients to priority water bodies</i>	No	n/a	n/a
<i>3c. Remediation of contaminated sediments in priority locations</i>	No	n/a	n/a
<i>3d. Reduction of persistent toxic substances and other substances of concern in priority ecosystems</i>	No	n/a	n/a
<i>3e. Protection, conservation or restoration of important habitats in priority ecosystems</i>	No	n/a	n/a
<i>3f. Implementation of pollution prevention and control measures by responsible jurisdictions</i>	No	n/a	n/a
<b>Ultimate Outcomes</b>			
<i>4a. Canadians have clean water</i>	No	n/a *	No direct SLAP contribution between 2016 and 2022
<i>4b. Integrated management of priority ecosystems</i>	Yes	Implementing the five-year program (WQ-23) **	The integrated management of the St. Lawrence is a central component of SLAP
<i>4c. Improved water quality in priority water bodies</i>	No	n/a	No direct & significant SLAP contribution
<i>4d. Restoration of priority ecosystems</i>	No	State of the St. Lawrence indicators showing a stable or improving trend (WQ-27) ***	Five-year JAP projects
Sources: Performance Information Profile of the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships Program; <a href="#">Canada–Quebec Agreement on the St. Lawrence (2011–2026)</a>			
* The departmental result indicator is currently being redefined.			
** The PIP logic model does not identify SLAP as one of the ECCO programs contributing to the integrated management of priority ecosystems, yet the integrated management of the St. Lawrence is a central component of SLAP, as reflected in the PIP indicators table. The logic model should be revised to correct this factual error.			
*** This indicator is misleading since SLAP does not directly help to maintain or improve the state of the St. Lawrence; it is not a program outcome.			

## Appendix B – Logic Model of the Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships Program

### Water Quality and Ecosystems Partnerships



\* Priority ecosystems are: Great Lakes (GL), St. Lawrence River (ST.L), Atlantic (ATL), Lake Winnipeg (LW), West and North (WNR)



## Appendix C – St. Lawrence Action Plan Partners

The participating departments and agencies that have signed the SLAP are listed in the table below. ECCC and MELCCFP co-lead the Agreement and are responsible for its coordination.

Government of Canada	Government of Quebec*
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)	Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH) [Quebec Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing]
Canadian Space Agency (CSA)	Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) [Quebec Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food]
Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)	Ministère de l'Énergie et des Ressources naturelles (MERN) [Quebec Department of Energy and Natural Resources]
Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard (DFO)	Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques (MELCC) [Quebec Department of Environment and the Fight Against Climate Change]
Health Canada (HC)	Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs (MFFP) [Quebec Department of Forests, Wildlife and Parks]
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC)	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) [Quebec Department of Health and Social Services]
Parks Canada Agency (PCA)	Ministère de la Sécurité publique (MSP) [Quebec Department of Public Security]
Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)	Ministère du Tourisme du Québec (MTO) [Quebec Department of Tourism]
Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC)	Ministère des Transports du Québec (MTQ) [Quebec Department of Transport]
Shared Services Canada (SSC)	
Transport Canada (TC)	
<p><i>Source: information provided by the program</i></p> <p>* Department names in effect when the Agreement was signed and used on the Oproma reporting platform.</p>	

## Appendix D – References

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