



Evaluation of the Grants and Contributions Program of Accessibility Standards Canada

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Executive Summary

Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC) is a federal departmental corporation created in 2019 under the *Accessible Canada Act* (the Act). Its mandate is to contribute to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers for people with disabilities through:

- the development of accessibility standards and recommending these standards to the Minister for regulatory adoption;
- the promotion, support, and conduct of research into the identification, removal, and prevention of new barriers; and,
- the dissemination of information, including best practices and tools related to accessibility barriers and standards.

In 2019, ASC launched its Grants and Contributions (Gs and Cs) funding program, [Advancing Accessibility Standards Research](https://accessible.canada.ca/advancing-accessibility-standards-research) (<https://accessible.canada.ca/advancing-accessibility-standards-research>). This program funds research that directly supports the development of accessibility standards. The research incorporates the lived experience of people with disabilities and aims to break down barriers to accessibility, share best practices on accessibility and contribute to a barrier-free Canada.

Funded research projects must align with the program's purpose and help identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility in at least one of the seven priority areas set out in the Act: employment; the built environment; information and communication technologies (ICT); communication other than ICT; the procurement of goods, services and facilities; the design and delivery of programs and services; and transportation.

The main objectives of the Gs and Cs program are to:

- support diverse research into the identification and removal of barriers to accessibility; and
- inform future accessibility standards.

The program's sub-objectives include:

- supporting the establishment of a national network of accessibility expertise;
- engaging with people with disabilities, technical experts, and disability and other interested parties to inform the research agenda; and
- identifying and sharing research, information, best practices, and tools related to accessibility barriers and standards.

This evaluation of the Gs and Cs program was carried out over the period November 2024 through March 2025 as a formative (implementation-related) evaluation. The evaluation found that ASC is on track and has made significant progress toward meeting its objectives. Key findings include, but are not limited to, evidence demonstrating:

- There is a clear and ongoing need for ASC’s research program that supports the development of innovative standards focused on removing and preventing barriers to accessibility.
- The research program directly supports the intent of the *Accessible Canada Act* by funding projects that address one or more of its identified priority areas.
- ASC supports the principle of “Nothing without us” by ensuring accessible processes and requiring meaningful involvement of people with disabilities in projects. All funded projects involve persons with disabilities, with a total of 22,779 people with disabilities engaged in 91 projects.
- The program’s processes are fully accessible for both applicants and team members with documentation in different accessible formats including plain language and American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) videos.
- ASC streamlined its processes to make them more accessible and reduce the initial burden for applicants.
- ASC’s research program has been a catalyst to building a national network of accessibility expertise, enabling 460 partnerships through funded projects and engaging hundreds of partners, contributors, and users across Canada.
- ASC funded research projects are actively informing accessibility standards with 84 percent of completed research reports referenced in ASC standards currently in development.
- ASC has established a globally recognized and trusted Centre of Expertise (CoE) that disseminates information regarding its research and standards, which are being used nationally and internationally.
- ASC is meeting its predefined key performance measures as defined by the Government of Canada.
- The program is being delivered in a cost-effective manner, provides value for money, and leverages \$13 million of additional funding and in-kind contributions, which has significantly expanded the program’s impact.
- Considering the objectives of the program and targeted community, the quality, usefulness and impact of the funded research is a strong sign of quality.
- Consultation with ASC management has identified that:
 - Gs and Cs research is supporting a culture change across standards development organizations throughout Canada and internationally.
 - Prior to ASC and the Gs and Cs program, research was highly focused on disabilities and what people need rather than focusing on accessibility barriers and what organizations have to do to be more inclusive. This has been a significant shift in the research field.

- The national network of researchers continues to grow, partly due to the program providing unique opportunities to focus on accessibility barriers and standards development.

As a relatively new program, there are areas where ASC is continuously learning and improving. The evaluation provided recommendations to help ASC continue to build on its successes. ASC is encouraged to:

- Adopt a management system for its funding program to streamline the management of the projects throughout their lifecycle;
- Further strengthen the program's delivery and performance measurements;
- Stimulate new research partnerships to help expand the network of accessible research expertise; and
- Simplify the program's research priority areas by only including the seven priority areas identified in the *Accessible Canada Act*.

In summary, the evaluation findings demonstrate that ASC's Grants and Contributions program is highly relevant, unique in its mandate, and effective in its implementation.

1.0 Background

Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC), a federal departmental corporation, was created by the *Accessible Canada Act* (the Act) in 2019. One of the goals of the Act is to achieve a barrier-free Canada by 2040 and the Act outlines the removal of barriers in the following seven priority areas:

- Employment;
- The built environment;
- Information and communication technologies (ICT),
- Communication other than ICT;
- The procurement of goods, services and facilities;
- The design and delivery of programs and services; and
- Transportation.

The Act also identifies ASC's mandate to contribute to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers for people with disabilities through:

- the development of accessibility standards and recommending these standards to the Minister for regulatory adoption;
- the promotion, support, and conduct of research into the identification, removal, and

prevention of new barriers; and

- the dissemination of information, including best practices, to help identify, remove, and prevent barriers.

One of ASC's first major initiatives was to establish its Grants and Contributions (Gs and Cs) funding program, Advancing Accessibility Standards Research (<https://accessible.canada.ca/advancing-accessibility-standards-research>). This program directly addresses the research component of ASC's mandate. Its purpose is to fund research projects that will inform the next generation of model accessibility standards. By investing in research, ASC ensures that new standards are grounded in evidence, respond to real barriers faced by people with disabilities and incorporate the latest innovations. The main objectives of the Gs and Cs program are:

- Supporting diverse research into the identification and removal of barriers to accessibility and the prevention of new barriers to inform future accessibility standards; and
- Informing the next generation of model accessibility standards.

Its sub-objectives include:

- Supporting the establishment of a national network of accessibility expertise;
- Engaging with people with disabilities, technical experts, and disability organizations and other interested parties, to inform the research agenda; and
- Identifying and sharing research, information, best practices, and tools related to accessibility barriers and standards.

The program also has a number of predefined performance measures such as:

- Percentage of funded research projects in priority areas;
- Ratio of financial contributions leveraged (cash and/or in kind) by other sources of funding for every dollar invested for research in priority areas by ASC;
- Level of satisfaction among technical committees in relation to the increase of knowledge and expertise in the areas of new standards;
- Percentage of research or knowledge materials related to accessibility led or supported by ASC that are available online to Canadian and international publics; and
- Percentage of scientific research and other publications (e.g., technical papers, reports) generated by ASC partners that are quoted in its standard development processes.

To address its objectives, ASC's Gs and Cs program provides funding to eligible organizations to deliver research projects. Eligible recipients include, but are not limited to, not-for-profit organizations, research and educational institutions and Indigenous organizations. To be eligible for funding, projects must align with at least one of the seven priority areas in the Act and contribute to identifying, removing or preventing barriers.

Also, each project proposal and funding agreement must demonstrate how people with disabilities will be involved in meaningful ways throughout the research project. Additionally, ASC requires that all mandatory funded project outputs be submitted in accessible formats. These requirements ensure that the research funded adheres to the “Nothing without us” principle.

Another funding requirement is the need for partnerships. Applicants are required to form partnerships and collaborations across different sectors and disciplines. A key purpose of requiring partnerships is to support the creation and expansion of a national network of accessibility research expertise.

In line with these requirements and its commitment to the “Nothing without us” principle, ASC ensures its funding program processes are accessible. The program provides information and documentation in multiple formats, including American Sign Language (ASL) and Langue des signes québécoise (LSQ) videos and plain language documents. In addition, ASC actively offers accommodations to help ensure no one is excluded due to accessibility barriers.

To further enhance accessibility, ASC streamlined the application process for research funding. In more recent calls for proposals, the process begins with an expression of interest. Selected applicants are then invited to submit a more detailed research proposal, which is assessed before a funding decision is made. This new two-stage approach reduces the initial burden on applicants. It also makes applying for research funding more accessible.

2.0 This Evaluation Study

This report presents the results of an evaluation of ASC's Grants and Contributions program. The evaluation was undertaken from November 2024 to March 2025.

As a formative evaluation, the focus was on the program processes for delivery and the extent to which the program is on track to achieve its intended outcomes rather than long-term impacts, which would be the subject of a summative evaluation at a later stage. Given that the Gs and Cs program is relatively new and started in 2019, this formative approach is appropriate to provide timely feedback and guide ongoing program refinement.

The evaluation was conducted by independent evaluators on behalf of ASC, with the cooperation and input of ASC management, staff and some funded recipients. It adhered to the Treasury Board Policy on Results and associated guidance for program evaluation from the Government of Canada.

As part of the Evaluation, a set of Evaluation Questions (EQs) was developed to structure the study. These questions served as a basis for data collection and analysis.

The questions were determined through a collaborative process: the evaluators drafted potential questions based on their knowledge of ASC and its Gs and Cs program, the program's logic model and relevant documents (including the Act and the Program's Terms and Conditions). The drafted questions were then reviewed with ASC staff to ensure their relevance.

The final Evaluation Questions covered:

- **Relevance/Need:** Is there a need for an organization like ASC to support research on barriers to accessibility and support practices for removing barriers - specifically, the Gs and Cs program? (Evaluation Question (EQ) 1)
- **Alignment with Priorities identified in the Act:** How much of the research is carried out in priority areas? (EQ2)
- **Priority-Setting Process:** Is there a process for selecting research topics that fill important information gaps in the disability literature, and if so, how effective is it? (EQ3)
- **Inclusion of People with Disabilities:** What methods have been used in the Gs and Cs program to involve people with disabilities in the research projects, and how effective have these been? (EQ4)
- **Partnerships and Network Development:** What methods have been used in the Gs and Cs program to establish a network of accessibility research expertise, and how effective have

these been? (EQ5)

- Knowledge Dissemination: What methods have been used by the Gs and Cs program for promoting and disseminating new knowledge and best practices, and how effective have these been? (EQ6)
- Performance Measurement: How effective is the performance measurement strategy for the Gs and Cs program? (EQ7)
- Efficiency/Cost-Effectiveness: Is the Gs and Cs program being delivered cost-effectively? (EQ8) and To what extent has funding from other sources (including in-kind contributions that can be valued) been leveraged in the Gs and Cs program? (EQ11)
- Support to Standards Development: Is there a process for selecting research topics that support the technical committees in their development of standards, and, if so, how effective is it? (EQ9) And is the research that is carried out in the Gs and Cs program used by technical committees in the development of standards? (EQ12)
- Quality and Impact: What is the quality and likely impact of the Gs and Cs research? (EQ10)

These questions align with the core issues of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency, and they pay special attention to the unique features of ASC's Gs and Cs program (inclusion of people with disabilities, network creation, and linkages to standards development).

To answer the evaluation questions, the main study methods were:

- Review and analysis of program administrative data;
- Review of documents related to the Gs and Cs program; key documents reviewed included:
 - Gs and Cs Terms and Conditions;
 - *Accessible Canada Act* Summary (ESDC, 2022);
 - About an Accessible Canada (ESDC, 2023);
 - Departmental Results Framework;
 - Performance Information Profile;
 - Management Accountability Framework;
 - Application forms (EOI and full application);
 - Interim and final activity report forms;
 - Funded research projects related data submitted by funded recipients;
 - Close-out form; and
 - Success stories.
- Conduct of interviews:

- Gs and Cs staff (3 interviews and follow-ups);
- ASC staff managing the Centre of Expertise;
- Senior ASC officials (2 interviews and follow-ups); and
- Funded researchers (4 interviews).

In the following sections, we present an overview of ASC's Gs and Cs program output to date (Section 3.0), followed by detailed findings for each evaluation question (Section 4.0). Finally, Section 5.0 provides recommendations for ASC's consideration, aimed at refining the program's effectiveness and its measurement of results.

3.0 Overview of ASC's Gs and Cs Funding Research Program

Since its launch in 2019, ASC's Gs and Cs program Advancing Accessibility Standards Research has completed six calls for proposals (one each fiscal year from 2019 to 2020 through 2024 to 2025) and funded a wide range of research projects across Canada. This section provides a high-level summary of what the program has achieved in terms of funded projects which cover various research topics.

Over the period 2019 to 2020 through 2024 to 2025, ASC has funded 91 research projects, with funding totaling \$48 M in multi-year agreements. Funded projects are typically multi-year (1 to 3 years in duration), and by January 2025, 39 projects have been completed with final research reports published.

All the funded projects have addressed one or more of the seven priority areas defined by the Act. About half of the funded projects focus on multiple priority areas. For example, a project on accessible service delivery might also look at barriers in the built environment (physical service location), information and communication (forms and documents in alternative formats), and employment (training service staff for accessible service delivery). The interdisciplinary nature of many projects reflects how accessibility barriers frequently span more than one priority area.

To better understand the type of research the Gs and Cs program supports, here are a few examples of funded research projects and their contributions:

- Risks and opportunities of artificial intelligence for people with disabilities. Research on identifying and addressing biases in machine learning models, as well as making AI inclusive in hiring and human resource activities. **Result:** The research helped to inform the best practices and technical requirements of ASC's AI standard.

- Wayfinding and signage design. Research on mounting height, placement, braille within signs, and legibility of print characters from a distance. **Result:** The research is helping to inform ASC's wayfinding and signage standard under development.
- A better version of 911 for people with disabilities. Research on identifying preferred methods for accessing emergency services for people with disabilities (e.g., phone call with video, text messaging, live video streaming). **Result:** The research is helping to inform the technical requirements for ASC's emergency measures standard under development.
- Built environment. Research on increasing accessibility and removing barriers for people with disabilities, including the production of an internationally recognized report. **Result:** The research is helping to inform several ASC built environment standards under development.
- Safety and accessibility of building evacuation routes. Research on methods for assessing the readiness of buildings to evacuate persons with disabilities – for use by existing buildings and by developers. **Result:** The research is helping to inform ASC's emergency egress standard under development.

These examples demonstrate how the Gs and Cs program funds research with tangible outputs that feed best practices directly into the development of current and future standards.

Each funded project not only produces a research report, but often additional materials like guidelines and datasets that ASC and others can use going forward.

ASC has also established processes to ensure a strong link between funded research and its standards development work. A high percentage (84%) of completed research reports have been referenced in current standards development documents. Standards are evergreen documents that are continuously reviewed allowing Gs and Cs research to provide additional information to strengthen future improvements to standards. All final research reports are shared with technical committee members that draft accessibility standards. Many committee members (85%) have reported that the research findings have broadened their knowledge of barriers to accessibility. This integration ensures that the standards ASC develops are evidence-based, incorporate best practices and remove as many barriers as possible. This is a key performance indicator for ASC, demonstrating that research is directly influencing standards development.

Across the 91 funded projects, people with disabilities have been meaningfully engaged in large numbers – whether as project leads, advisors, or participants contributing their experiences through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or user testing. This builds community engagement and helps to ensure that the research reflects the true barriers faced by people with disabilities.

Funded projects have also involved partner organizations (research or educational institutions, not-for-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations) reflecting the collaborative spirit ASC seeks to foster through the network of accessibility expertise. Shifting from a focus on disability to a focus on accessibility requires collaboration and partnerships to support research that identifies barriers for people with all types of disabilities.

The next section of this report (Section 4.0) will discuss in detail the findings of the evaluation for each of the evaluation questions, providing evidence of the program's performance and areas where it can be strengthened.

4.0 Findings Regarding Evaluation Questions (EQs)

4.1 EQ 1: Is there a need for an organization like ASC to support research on barriers to accessibility and support practices for removing barriers - specifically, the Gs and Cs program?

Findings

- 1.** Twenty seven percent of Canadians have disabilities and are faced with barriers to their full participation in society.
- 2.** There is a need for further proactive initiatives by the Government of Canada to address these barriers.
- 3.** Proactive initiatives will require research on the identification of barriers and best practices for removing and preventing barriers in order to provide up-to-date information and help ensure that the standards that are developed are forward-looking and evidence-based.

Supporting evidence

One out of every four Canadians have disabilities that result in barriers to their inclusion and full participation in society. This percentage will increase as Canada's population ages.

Up until 2019, the federal government's approach to accessibility for persons with disabilities was to rely on individual people with disabilities to address accessibility barriers through the existing human rights complaints process. This is inconsistent with Canada's ratification of the

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Moreover, in the absence of the Accessible Canada Act, people with disabilities have become increasingly outspoken, as evidenced in the Canadian Human Rights Commission (<https://chrcreport.ca/by-the-numbers.html>) (CHRC) report.

From 2018 to 2022, more than 50% of human rights complaints accepted by the CHRC were related to people with disabilities and the barriers they face.

The *Accessible Canada Act* (the Act) identifies ASC's mandate to contribute to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers for people with disabilities through:

- the development of accessibility standards and recommending these standards to the Minister for regulatory adoption;
- the promotion, support, and conduct of research into the identification, removal, and prevention of new barriers; and
- the dissemination of information, including best practices, to help identify, remove, and prevent barriers.

The second bullet (above) of the mandate identifies the need for a research program on accessibility. Research is also necessary to support the other parts of the mandate, and ASC frequently demonstrates the importance of research to support the development of standards.

In conclusion, the rationale for ASC's Gs and Cs program remains the same. To support the Act and a barrier-free Canada, and to support the development of standards there is a strong need for research to support the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to accessibility. The early years of the program have highlighted the depth of research required given the response and volume of project proposals received. The research findings generated through the Gs and Cs program are instrumental in helping ASC in the development of standards, as well as helping the federal public service, federally regulated entities, federally regulated private sectors, and national and international organizations advance accessibility in the seven priority areas of the Act.

4.2. EQ 2: How much of the research is carried out in priority areas specified in the *Accessible Canada Act*?

Findings

1. All of the Gs and Cs funded research is carried out in one or more priority areas specified in the *Accessible Canada Act* (the Act). This is a funding requirement, and ASC has ensured

strict alignment with the seven priority areas.

2. Almost half of the Gs and Cs research projects addressed more than one priority area.

Supporting evidence

It is a requirement of the Gs and Cs program that all funded projects address at least one of the seven priority areas identified in the Act. During the assessment of Expressions of Interest and project proposals, one of the screening criteria is whether the applicant has clearly identified which of the seven priority areas their project will address and how. This ensures that no project outside these priority areas is considered for funding. As a result, 100% of funded projects are aligned with at least one of the seven priority areas identified in the Act.

Over the period 2019 to 2020 through 2024 to 2025 the Gs and Cs program has funded 91 research projects, and almost half of them have addressed multiple priority areas, demonstrating the interconnectedness and multitude of barriers that people with disabilities face every day.

In conclusion, the Gs and Cs program has funded research that is fully aligned with the seven priority areas identified in the Act. This helps to ensure the program's relevance to legislative and societal priorities. Funded projects which address multiple priority areas reflect the reality that people with disabilities face multiple types of barriers, and understanding the interconnectedness of their experiences is important for a barrier-free Canada.

4.3 EQ 3: Is there a process for selecting research topics that fill important information gaps in the disability literature, and if so, how effective is it?

Findings

1. The seven priority areas set out in the Act are the core of ASC's Gs and Cs funding program.
2. Every year, ASC assesses emerging needs and adds annual priority areas to complement the seven core priorities. This helps ensure that its funding program addresses both the seven core priority areas set out in the Act and additional priorities that could help address emerging barriers.

To do this, ASCs put in place a comprehensive "environmental scan" process to identify emerging barriers to accessibility, followed by a presentation of the findings to the Board of Directors, for their approval.

The process for selecting research topics is effective, as evidenced by the high number of expressions of interest received and the high demand for completed Gs and Cs research reports.

However, the introduction of additional annual priority areas could cause confusion. These yearly priorities must fit within the Act's seven identified priority areas, meaning each call for proposals can list up to eleven priority areas (the seven identified in the Act plus up to four annual ones), which are overlapping and potentially unnecessary.

Supporting Evidence

The environmental scan

Every year, before issuing a call for Expressions of Interest for research projects, ASC staff does an environmental scan. This process is comprehensive and involves broad consultations with potential users of the research results and other interested parties in the Gs and Cs research program, as well as the review of relevant documents.

The consultations involve:

- Input from current technical committee members;
- Information gathered through on-going communications throughout the year with the provinces and territories;
- Consultations with government agencies regarding the impacts of their activities on accessibility;
- Information gathered during ASC's annual public meeting; and
- Consultations with major partners and interested parties – for example, research organizations that ASC works with regularly.

The documents reviewed include:

- The annual survey of technical committee members;
- Stories in the media;
- Review of the Gs and Cs program to assess project proposals received through previous calls and to summarize what projects have been previously funded; and
- The report from the consultation ASC conducted with people with disabilities in 2020.

This process ensures that ASC casts a wide net in understanding the emerging barriers that need to be better understood through the Gs and Cs research program. These collaborative efforts amplify the collective impact of the program and ensure that the Gs and Cs research compliments broader federal accessibility goals.

After the environmental scan is completed by ASC staff, the findings and suggested annual priority areas are summarized in a briefing note to ASC's Board of Directors.

Following the receipt of the briefing note, the Board meets to review and discuss ASC's staff suggestions. The Board can then provide additional ideas of annual priority areas.

Following discussions and based on consensus, the Board decides on the final set of annual priority areas for the next call for proposals.

One measure of effectiveness of this process is whether research funded produces needed evidence. Feedback from technical committee members (through surveys) has been that the research coming from the Gs and Cs program has been useful for their work in standards development and has increased their knowledge of accessibility barriers.

Another objective measure of the effectiveness is the high demand for completed Gs and Cs research reports from a wide variety of groups both nationally and internationally, as well as the positive feedback received by ASC from interested parties. This is discussed in section 4.6 (promotion and dissemination of research findings).

It is important to highlight that it was noted that adding annual priority areas can create some confusion, as the annual priority areas fall under one of the Act's seven priority areas. In practice, each call for proposals includes eleven priority areas (the seven core priorities plus up to four annual ones), which can appear redundant to applicants.

In conclusion, ASC's method for selecting annual research priority areas for funding is effective, but possibly unnecessarily complex. It combines data-driven analysis, consultation with partners and interested parties, and strategic oversight to ensure that funded projects align with emerging accessibility priorities and gaps in knowledge.

However, the introduction of the annual priority areas could cause confusion and may not be necessary.

4.4 EQ 4: What methods have been used in the Gs and Cs program to involve persons with disabilities in the research projects, and how effective have these been?

Findings

1. ASC's Gs and Cs program is the only research program in the federal government that promotes and tracks the meaningful involvement of people with disabilities. Applicants and funding recipients are asked to meaningfully involve people with disabilities throughout their projects, for example as members of the research team, advisory committee members, research participants, etc.

The importance of meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities is emphasized at multiple stages: in the call for expressions of interest, in the full proposal - where applicants must detail how involvement will occur – and throughout project delivery, where

guidance is provided on meaningful engagement and monitoring.

2. ASC's commitment to accessibility in its own processes contributes directly to the inclusion of people with disabilities in funded projects. To remove barriers to participation, ASC offers program documents in a variety of accessible formats.

The program also actively offers accommodations and requires that all mandatory funded projects outputs be delivered in accessible formats. Additionally, ASC has streamlined its application process to make applying for funding more accessible.

3. Operating under the principle of "Nothing without us", ASC ensures that accessibility and inclusion are embedded throughout its funding program. As a result, 100% of projects funded involved people with disabilities with a total of 22,779 people with disabilities engaged in 91 projects as research team members, advisors, participants in surveys or focus groups.
4. ASC assesses the appropriateness of the planned involvement of people with disabilities against the program objectives to ensure that people with disabilities are meaningfully involved in all areas of the project.
5. As part of its call for proposals, ASC also reminds interested applicants to consider compensating participants (this includes people with disabilities) who contribute to the project. Applicants are reminded to include honoraria in their project budget, and plan for any costs to remove barriers to participation, such as accommodations (ex. paying for sign language interpreters).
6. The involvement of people with disabilities is also monitored during the implementation of funded projects.

Supporting evidence

ASC is the only federal organization with a legislative mandate dedicated to creating accessibility standards, grounded in research and led by people with disabilities. As a result, ASC's Gs and Cs program is the only research program in the federal government which asks applicants and funded recipients to ensure the meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities in their funded research.

Importantly, ASC not only asks that funded projects involve people with disabilities, but also ensures that its own processes and the mandatory outputs of funded projects are accessible and usable by everyone. This reinforces the principle of "Nothing without us", reflecting ASC's commitment to inclusion and accessibility at every stage – from providing ASL and LSQ videos and plain language documents, to the active offering of accommodations, to requiring all funded projects outputs be submitted and made publicly available in accessible formats.

Over the entire six-year period of the program, 22,779 people with disabilities were involved in 91 funded projects.

The term “involved in the project” is defined in the project application form as including four categories: member of the research team; member of an advisory committee; other role in the project planning, design and delivery; and survey and focus group participants and similar roles. These categories include a wide range of participants from project researchers to those providing feedback to inform the research. The degree of involvement of people with disabilities is required in the project's progress report.

The four researchers interviewed had an average of 300 people with disabilities involved in their projects; which included one project that involved 1,500 individuals through their participation in a survey. In three of the four projects, people with disabilities had roles on the research team, demonstrating the value of including people with disabilities as experts and project leads.

One of the researchers interviewed reported experiencing difficulties recruiting people with disabilities because it was difficult for them to identify disability associations. The other three researchers did not experience significant problems.

The methods ASC has implemented to ensure the meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities – such as emphasizing their meaningful involvement in expressions of interest and detailed proposal stages and monitoring their participation throughout project delivery – have proven effective. ASC has also simplified its application process to make it more accessible. The processes in place help ensure that people with disabilities are not only beneficiaries of the funded projects, but also active contributors in the design, delivery and implementation. This has strengthened the relevance of funded research and upholds the principle of “Nothing without us” throughout the program.

4.5 EQ 5: What methods have been used in the Gs and Cs program to establish a network of accessibility research expertise, and how effective have these been?

Findings

- 1.** Prior to the Act and ASC’s Gs and Cs funding program there were few researchers doing research on the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to accessibility in relation to the development of accessibility standards.
- 2.** The Gs and Cs program actively promotes the formation of partnerships and collaborations for each funded project as a means to build a national network of accessibility research expertise. Over the six-year history of the program, 460 partnerships have been established through the funded research projects bringing together academic researchers,

disability organizations, industry, and public sector bodies. This has effectively connected a wide range of interested parties through the program.

3. There is an effective process for requiring and monitoring partnerships, based on the expression of interest, application requirements and reporting requirements.
4. While quantitatively measuring the growth of “the network” is challenging, it is evident that ASC has provided opportunities for new collaborations. Researchers confirmed that the program required them to reach out to collaborators and that new relationships have formed.

Supporting evidence

Over the six years from 2019 to 2020 through 2024 to 2025, 460 partnerships have been established in research projects funded by the Gs and Cs program, for an average of five partners per project. These partners include research institutions or universities, disability advocacy or service organizations, private sector companies, government entities and international organizations or experts.

The proposal application form requires applicants to state how they have “developed partnerships, created collaborations, and engaged interested parties across sectors and/or disciplines.” The form indicates that “the purpose of partnerships and collaborations is to create a national network of accessibility expertise,” and applicants must describe how their project will encourage the establishment of such a network. This sets an expectation from the start that projects should not be done in silos.

In the proposal assessment process, even though the number and roles of partners and other attributes of the partnerships are not score-weighted; the Gs and Cs team consider whether the number and roles of partners are reasonable based on the project objectives. If an applicant lists a partner, they must provide letters of support, which ensures that claimed partners are committed.

Funded recipients also have to report on the work and involvement of partners as part of the progress reporting.

The evaluation has attempted to assess whether it has become easier to find collaborators or if the “network” feels more connected as a result of the funding program. From the four researchers who were interviewed:

- All of them had previously carried out research dealing with disabilities, and it has been a major focus of their research.
- Two of the researchers said it was easy to find collaborators; suggesting that they were able to quickly tap into a pool of interested partners.
- The other two researchers said this was easy in some cases, but difficult in others.

- When asked if over the time of their involvement with ASC (some researchers had multiples projects funded over the years) the breadth of their research network improved, one researcher felt that the breadth of the research network had improved.

The program has enabled many connections (as seen in partners counts), and the “network” has made collaboration easier and will evolve over time as the network connections solidify.

It is not unexpected that researchers deep in the field of disability already had networks, and the program likely reinforced those and perhaps added new links. For newer researchers or smaller organizations, ASC funding has changed their work in only a few years.

During the interviews with ASC staff, it was also noted that before the Gs and Cs program, few researchers were doing accessibility research related to standards development. Although some accessibility research existed, linking it to the development of accessibility standards was nonexistent. ASC funding provided an opportunity for researchers to work together, while focusing research to inform standards development.

In conclusion, the Gs and Cs program’s requirement for partnerships has been an effective strategy to encourage collaboration and the building of the network of researchers and experts across the country.

4.6 EQ 6: What methods have been used by the Gs and Cs program for promoting and disseminating new knowledge and best practices, and how effective have these been?

Findings

1. ASC has implemented a globally recognized and trusted Centre of Expertise as a proactive approach to promoting and disseminating the research findings and best practices generated by the Gs and Cs program.
2. Key methods in place include:
 - The creation of a Centre of Expertise (CoE) as an accessible portal for information on funded research projects.
 - To date, the Centre of Expertise was visited by more than 30,000 unique visitors with over 80,000 pageviews. It is being used by organizations both in Canada and internationally. For example, information from the Centre of Expertise was shared with participants from over 80 countries at a recent ISO conference meeting, featured in an ISO newsletter, and requested by organizations such as the European Union, Standards Council of Canada, various federal departments, and provincial/territorial governments.

- ASC has a requirement that all funded organizations make their research report and executive summary in plain language publicly available online and in accessible formats, and to also share their research with their networks.

ASC has also developed a broad national and international reach for Gs and Cs funded research outputs. This includes standards development organizations across Canada and internationally, provinces and territories, as well as other international organizations.

Supporting evidence

All final research reports and executive summaries in plain language are required to be made publicly available online by the funded organizations. The dissemination plans of research findings that are put forward in proposals are not score-weighted, but they are taken into consideration in the evaluation of proposals to ensure they are appropriate.

Additionally, the program emphasizes making research outputs accessible. Applicants and funding recipients are reminded to produce their project outputs in accessible formats — for example, by providing plain-language executive summaries to ensure the findings reach a broad and diverse audience.

As seen in the following table, there are a considerable number of publications in addition to the final research reports and executive summaries.

The breakdown of additional publications is as follows. (Note: There may be some double counting in the table below.)

Type of publication	2019 to 2020 through 2021 to 2022 (actual publications)	2022 to 2023 through 2024 to 2025 (Planned publications)
Peer-reviewed articles	28	100
Non-peer-reviewed articles	25	85
Technical papers	13	47
Presentations at conferences or workshops	174	241

ASC set up the Centre of Expertise (COE) in May 2023 to support requests for information on accessibility barriers and mitigation strategies. The COE is intended to be a “one-stop-shop” for this information, and ease of access has been an especially important design feature to facilitate the use and impact of Gs and Cs funded research. For each funded project, the website lists the funded project title, the lead organization, the goal of the project, why the research matters (context), and status of project delivery and actual key findings for completed projects (for which a copy of the research is available upon request).

In summary, ASC’s dissemination efforts for the Gs and Cs program are proven to be effective with both national and international audiences. The combination of a centralized hub (COE) and active promotion and dissemination through various channels means that research findings are reaching a broad audience.

Included below is a table presenting some highlights of ASC’s funded research dissemination.

Some highlights of ASC's research dissemination
ASC hosted an International Standards Organization meeting in April 2024. Over 60 countries participated. There were reportedly many positive statements regarding the potential usefulness of Gs and Cs funded research in their standards development activities.
Gs and Cs reports were used to support the Canadian participants at the G7 Ministers meeting on inclusion and disability in Assisi and Solfagnano in October 2024.
Gs and Cs reports were presented at the 2023 and 2024 Rick Hanson Foundation conference.
Information on Gs and Cs funded research has been requested by (as examples): Standards Council of Canada International Code Council (an American standards organization) European Telecommunications Standards Institute European Committee for Standardization International Organization for Standardization. Provincial and Territorial governments Other federal organizations – House of Commons, Treasury Board Secretariat, etc.

4.7 EQ 7: How effective is the performance measurement strategy for the Gs and Cs program?

Findings

1. ASC has made a good start on a performance measurement system. The current set of predetermined key performance measures (KPMs) covers key activities and immediate outputs of the program.
2. The KPMs that currently comprise the system are useful to Gs and Cs management and to ASC's senior management for management and reporting purposes.

Supporting evidence

The Gs and Cs performance measurement (PM) system currently contains the following predetermined KPMs:

1. Percentage of funding invested in research projects in priority areas – This ensures all funds go to the seven priority areas identified in the Act;
2. Percentage of funded research projects in priority areas – This assesses whether funded projects are aligned with the seven priority areas identified in the Act;
3. Ratio of contributions leveraged (cash and/or in-kind) from other sources of funding for every dollar invested in research in priority areas – This measures cash and in-kind contributions from funded recipients and their project partners versus ASC funding to demonstrate the leveraging effect;
4. Percentage of funded research projects that produce publications – This KPM reflects knowledge production and translation from funded projects;
5. Level of satisfaction among technical committees in relation to their increase in knowledge and expertise in the areas of new standards – This is gathered via an annual survey, indicating if committees' members feel more informed;
6. Percentage of research or knowledge materials related to accessibility which is led or supported by ASC that are available on-line to the Canadian and international publics – This is a measure of open access to generated knowledge from funded projects;
7. Percentage of funded research results communicated through peer-reviewed and published journals – This KPM focuses on scholarly dissemination of research outputs;
8. Percentage of scientific research and other publications (e.g., technical papers, reports) generated by ASC partners that are quoted in its standard development processes - This demonstrates the inclusion of funded research in the development of standards;

- 9. Percentage of completed research project reports used by technical committees to inform new standards or revise existing standards – This KPM also demonstrates the use of funded research in the standards development;

These KPMs cover important aspects: relevance (1 and 2), leveraging resources (3), knowledge production and dissemination (4, 6 and 7), user satisfaction (5) and use of research in standards development (8 and 9).

Through interviews, the Gs and Cs program manager and ASC senior managers indicated that the PM system is useful for:

Reporting on the accomplishments of the Gs and Cs program:

- Reporting to Parliament annually; and
- Presenting information to interested parties (including other government departments).

Managing the Gs and Cs program:

- Structuring the calls for proposals – for example, it informs the Gs and Cs staff of the extent to which requirements are being met and whether changes should be made to the requirements or clarifications, or additional information should be provided; and
- Modifying the reporting tools to improve program delivery.

As shown in the table below, to date ASC has surpassed its targets set for key performance measures.

Key performance measure	Target	Total for all years, of % average
1 Percentage of funding invested in research projects in priority areas	75% to 85%	100%
2 Percentage of funded research projects in priority areas	50%	100%
3 Ratio of financial contributions leveraged (cash and/or in kind) by other sources of funding for every dollar invested for research in priority areas by ASC	5%	27%

Key performance measure	Target	Total for all years, of % average
4 Percentage of funded research projects that produce publications (e.g., technical papers, reports, presentations, speeches, peer-reviewed articles)	80%	100%
5 Level of satisfaction among technical committees in relation to the increase of knowledge and expertise in the areas of new standards	Expect good to very good among 80% of technical committee participants	85%
6 Percentage of research or knowledge materials related to accessibility led or supported by ASC that are available online to the Canadian and international publics	80%	100%
7 Percentage of funded research results communicated through peer-reviewed and published journals	5%	58%
8 Percentage of scientific research and other publications (e.g., technical papers, reports) generated by ASC partners that are quoted in its standard development processes.	50%	84%
9 Percentage of completed research project reports used by technical committees to inform new standards or revise existing standards	75%	84%

In conclusion, the performance measurement strategy in place has been effective for monitoring the program's outputs and outcomes, and for informing management decisions. It ensures the program remains aligned with its objectives and provides evidence of its success.

4.8 EQ 8: Is the Gs and Cs program being delivered cost-effectively?

Findings

1. The evaluation concluded that the Gs and Cs program is being delivered in a cost-effective manner as the program operates with a relatively small team.
2. Comparing the program to other research programs is challenging because ASC has a mandate in the *Accessible Canada Act* that supports the Gs and Cs program's unique requirements and activities which other programs do not include. These unique requirements include: meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities, extensive performance data collection, broad dissemination efforts, inclusion of partnerships and detailed tracking of partnerships and project monitoring (including sites visits) – each of which is mandated by the program's logic model, risk assessment and mitigation policy.
3. A question that is often asked in the absence of comparable models is: Are there elements of the delivery process that could be reduced or eliminated because they are not necessary? Based on a review of the unique features and requirements of the Gs and Cs program, the answer to this question is “no.”

Supporting evidence

In the most recent two years, the Gs and Cs program staff of 4 full-time employees and one part-time employee (plus one employee on maternity leave) administered a research program budget of \$8.5 M per year. The team handled all aspects of delivering the program: managing calls for proposals, reviewing and assessing proposals, putting in place funding agreements and monitoring them, departmental reporting and coordination with the CoE for updates and dissemination.

Cost-effectiveness of research programs is most commonly measured by comparing the resources used in the program to comparable research programs. It was not possible to do so in this case as there are no other applied research programs that are sufficiently comparable to ASC's Gs and Cs program. The unique nature of ASC's mandate and the Gs and Cs program make it a one of a kind research program supporting a culture shift nationally and internationally. Other applied research programs are generally less involved when compared to ASC (see table below).

- The Gs and Cs program carries out a number of activities that are requirements straight from the *Accessible Canada Act* and not part of typical applied research programs. We understand from ASC Management that these requirements create important opportunities for people with disabilities and inform the development of nationally and

internationally recognized accessibility standards. In this study we examined these “distinctive activities” to determine if they are necessary.

The following table shows that all the activities examined are necessary.

Distinctive activity	Need for the activity
Activities to promote Gs and Cs research widely in Canada and internationally and to ensure seamless dissemination	Required by the <i>Accessibility Canada Act</i> .
Activities to require involvement of persons with disabilities in all research projects and to monitor this requirement.	Required by the Program’s Terms and Conditions and the Act’s principle of “Nothing without us.”
Extensive data collection on the outputs and outcomes of research projects – e.g., number of papers referenced in the standards development process, number of papers by publication type (e.g., number published in peer reviewed journals), etc.	Required by Program’s Terms and Conditions, section 2.4
Detailed project monitoring – requirement for interim reports and site visits for a sample of projects	Required by the Management Accountability Framework, section 7.1.
Collection of detailed data on partnerships	Required to analyze ASC’s success fulfilling the Program’s Terms and Conditions, section 2.2: Development of a national network of accessibility research expertise.
Data collection from technical committee members regarding their level of satisfaction with knowledge and expertise gained	Required by the Management Accountability Framework, section 7.9.

In conclusion, the extensive processes and activities involved in the administration and delivery of the Gs and Cs program – including detailed funding requirements and reporting requirements as well as data collection and documentation on key elements such as the involvement of people with disabilities (aligning with the “Nothing without us” principle), collaboration with partners, and the development of outputs and publication plans - are essential to achieving the Gs and Cs’s program objectives.

4.9 EQ 9: Is there a process for selecting research topics that support the technical committees in their development of standards, and, if so, how effective is it.

Findings

- 1.** Based on the available data, over 80 percent of completed Gs and Cs reports have been referenced in current standards development documents.
- 2.** The evaluation noted four factors are taken into consideration in selecting research topics in calls for proposals:
 - Recommendations from ASC staff following an environmental scan done annually;
 - The Board of Directors’ annual priorities;
 - The potential future information needs of the technical committees; and
 - Important information gaps.
- 3.** In annual survey reports, technical committee members have reported a high level of satisfaction with their increase in knowledge and expertise as a result of their standards development activities.

Supporting evidence

According to the Gs and Cs program administrative database:

- Data on finding 1 above is available for the first three years of the program, 2019 to 2020 through 2021 to 2022. Thirty-three research projects generated by Gs and Cs funded research completed during this period have been referenced in standards, development papers produced by the technical committees; and
- Over this same period 39 funded research projects have been completed.

Therefore, the average number of projects completed during this period that have been referenced is $33/39 = 84\%$.

The role of the environmental scan and the Board’s suggested annual research areas in setting priorities for research proposals is described in section 4.3. Other factors are also taken into consideration, and one of these is the future information needs for the standards that are going to be developed by the technical committees. In the interviews two examples were provided for this factor – “elections” and “the built environment in heritage buildings.” Another factor is important information gaps.

Tying together sections 4.3 and 4.9, it appears that there are four factors that determine the priority research areas in calls for proposals:

- ASC’s recommendations based on the environmental scan;
- The Board of Director’s annual priorities;
- The potential future information needs of the technical committees; and
- Important information gaps.

All reports from Gs and Cs completed funded projects are provided to the technical committees. There is an indirect indicator of the effectiveness of the research topic selection process from the survey of technical committee members in which they are asked about the increase in their knowledge and expertise as a result of the standards development process.

In the most recent survey of technical committee members (2023 to 2024) 89% of the respondents expressed a good, very good, or excellent level of satisfaction regarding their increase in knowledge and expertise in their standard development area. This is an indirect indicator of the effectiveness of the process for selecting research topics that support the needs of technical committees.

In conclusion, ASC has effectively built its research funding process around the needs for the development of accessibility standards. By funding projects that fill knowledge gaps and providing the results to standards development experts, ASC ensures that model standards are grounded in evidenced based research.

4.10 EQ 10: What is the quality and likely impact of the Gs and Cs research?

Findings

- 1.** For 50 out of the 73 projects for which the data is available, the funded organizations have submitted or plan to submit one or more papers to peer reviewed journals (68%).
- 2.** The selection of Gs and Cs research projects for funding is both reasonable and comprehensive and helps ensure high quality and impactful research overall.

Supporting Evidence

Out of 73 projects over the six-year period of 2019 to 2020 through 2024 to 2025 for which publication data is available (note, one year's data was not collected), 50 projects (approximately 68%) have either submitted or plan to submit one or more articles to peer reviewed journals. Achieving roughly two-thirds of projects aiming for scholarly publication is good given that many recipients are community organizations, which do not typically publish in journals.

Also, many projects have produced technical reports, guidelines and conference presentations (detailed under EQ6). The program's target for this was 80%. The large number of presentations at conferences (174 actual, 241 planned) confirms that the research is being discussed in various professional settings, which is another mark of quality and relevance.

Also, the quality of funded projects is considered through ASC's two-stage application process: At the initial stage for assessing expressions of interest submitted by applicants, ASC assesses the research idea and the applicant's capacity. Only successful applicants are invited to submit a detailed application.

Proposal assessments are based on the following factors as a minimum:

- The degree to which the proposed activities support the Gs and Cs program objectives and priorities;
- The need for the proposed activities; this is the most important factor – the importance of the proposed subject and the extent to which there is significant value added to the available knowledge on the subject;
- The qualifications and track record of the applicants;
- The capacity of the organization – i.e., demonstration of the available support required for success; and
- Value for money – i.e., the reasonableness of the budget.

During the proposal assessment stage, ASC staff sometimes consult with other government departments and agencies – e.g., when considering research on air travel, they consulted with the Canadian Transportation Agency regarding the need and value added from the project proposals. In addition, they often go back to the applicants and ask for additional information or clarifications when needed. These are reasonable and comprehensive criteria, which, overall, contribute to high quality and impactful research.

The researchers interviewed as part of the evaluation were asked how many times their report was accessed directly – i.e., by interested parties without going to the Centre of Expertise. Two researchers said they don't track this information, one response was ambiguous, and one

researcher said their report had been provided directly to 113 people who requested it. Three of the four researchers said they had submitted three papers to peer reviewed journals.

In conclusion, the Gs and Cs program is funding good quality and relevant research. The impact of funded research is implemented in standards, there is increased awareness and knowledge among interested parties, and there is enhanced capacity for organizations to address accessibility through evidence.

4.11 EQ 11: To what extent has funding from other sources (including in-kind contributions that can be valued) been leveraged in the Gs and Cs program?

Findings

- 1.** Over the six-year history of the program \$13M of funding and in-kind contributions has been contributed to Gs and Cs funded research projects by funded recipients and partners. This is up to 27% of the total costs of Gs and Cs funded research projects. (Exceeding the program's target of 5%).
- 2.** Contributions of partners is not a limiting factor in the evaluation of research funding applications, since, although contributions from partners are important, the main goal is to fund excellent research.

Supporting evidence

Over the six-year history of the program a total of \$13,009,054 in funding and in-kind contributions has been contributed to funded Gs and Cs projects from funded recipients and partners. This represents 27% ($\$13,009,054/47,867,684$) of the Gs and Cs funding for these projects.

Although contributions from funded recipients and partners is asked about in project applications, this is not a limiting factor in the decision to fund a project. Other factors, such as the need for the proposed research and the involvement of people with disabilities, are more critical.

Consideration has been given to requiring partner contributions, but program management does not want to limit Gs and Cs funding based on this factor as they want to be able to support all excellent projects.

4.12 EQ 12: Is the research that is carried out In the Gs and Cs program used by technical committees in the development of standards?

Findings

- 1.** As noted under EQ 9:
 - Over 80 percent of completed Gs and Cs reports are referenced in standards development documents.
 - Technical committee members are positive about their increase in knowledge and expertise as a result of the standards development process.
- 2.** One of the main objectives of ASC is to ensure that the technical committees are well supported by relevant Gs and Cs research.

Supporting evidence

For evidence supporting Finding 1, see above section 4.9.

ASC staff play a major role in ensuring that the technical committees are well informed regarding relevant Gs and Cs research. ASC staff also ensures that relevant Gs and Cs research is taken into consideration in standards development. This involves:

- Preparing a “seed document” at the beginning of the standards development process which summarizes relevant research;
- Later in the process, providing all Gs and Cs completed reports to the technical committees.

Also, as noted in section 4.9 the future information needs for the standards that are going to be developed by the technical committees is one of the factors taken into consideration by Gs and Cs staff in setting priorities for research areas in calls for proposals. Three of the four researchers interviewed stated that their research had resulted in improvements to the application of standards, and one researcher said the research resulted in a new standard on outdoor spaces.

5.0 Recommendations

The evaluation identified some areas where improvements could further strengthen the Grants and Contributions program’s effectiveness and efficiency. The following possible recommendations are provided for ASC’s consideration.

Recommendation 1: Funding Management System:

ASC should consider acquiring or developing a funding management system for the Gs and Cs program to streamline the management of the projects throughout their lifecycle. The system would capture the process from initial expression of interest, application submission, final reporting, and compliance checks. The system could also include application management (submission, eligibility checks, automated notifications to applicants, reviewing and scoring of applications, funding management, reporting and compliance, data management and analytics, etc.). A funding management system would hold all Gs and Cs related information and reduce the risk of errors related to a manual process through better accuracy and stronger compliance.

Rationale: Currently Excel spreadsheets are used to track Gs and Cs information, and most of this information is transferred from reports and applications into Excel sheets resulting in a potential for errors and missing data fields. A system would allow for greater efficiency and allow for staff to focus on tasks that are more strategic in nature.

Management Response:

Recommendation accepted.

The program agrees with this recommendation. ASC acknowledges the need to simplify the application process for funding applicants by providing a user-friendly platform for submitting their information; and second, to reduce the administrative burden on staff by implementing a centralized solution capable of automatically gathering, collating, and tracking the status of applications and funded projects.

Action Plan Item	Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
Evaluate potential technology solutions	Summary of assessment and recommendation for solution to adopt and next steps	March 2026	Chief Financial Officer and DG Corporate Services

Action Plan Item	Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
Select and Procure solution	Select technology system and put in place contract or service level contracts (SLA)	March 2027	Chief Financial Officer and DG Corporate Services
Implementation	Have a system in place that is being used for administrating the program	March 2028	Chief Operating Officer and Director General of Standards and Research

Recommendation 2: Performance Measures:

ASC should simplify its tracking of involvement of persons with disabilities. For data collection related to this KPM, two categories of “involvement” should be used:

- a. Project Delivery – involvement in project design, management, data collection, data analysis, or report writing.
- b. Data Provision – involvement through providing expert advice or participation in focus groups, surveys, or interviews.

In addition, ASC should clearly articulate the meaningful involvement of people with disabilities as an eligibility requirement in its funding calls. Doing so would strengthen alignment with program objectives and expectations.

Rationale: The involvement of people with disabilities is required by the Gs and Cs program’s terms and conditions and reflects ASC’s broader mandate. Clearly articulating this requirement and systematically collecting data will improve accountability and strengthen program outcomes. In addition, adopting a two-category system will simplify performance measurement compared to the current four-category approach.

Management Response:

Recommendation accepted.

ASC agrees with this recommendation and affirms the importance of continuing to make the involvement of people with disabilities a requirement in funded research projects. ASC also supports the proposed simplification of involvement categories and improved reporting

practices. These changes will help identify trends, gaps and opportunities for improvement in how people with disabilities are engaged in funded projects.

Action Plan Item	Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
Clarify the involvement of people with disabilities as a funding requirement	Updated documentation for call for proposals (for both the Call for Expression of Interest and Call for detailed project proposals)	March 2026	Chief Operating Officer and Director General of Standards and Research
Implement simplified engagement categories for people with disabilities	Updated program documentation (including but not limited to Call for proposals, Funding agreement template and Reporting documentation)	March 2026	Chief Operating Officer and Director General of Standards and Research
Monitoring and future refinement of engagement of people with disabilities	A baseline is set for level of engagement that will be required	March 2028	Chief Operating Officer and Director General of Standards and Research

Recommendation 3: Applicant Research Partner Requirements:

In order to expand the network of accessibility research expertise, ASC should consider encouraging applicants and funding recipients to include one partner in their project with whom they may have not worked with on a previously funded ASC project.

Rationale: Encouraging new partnerships would help broaden and deepen Canada’s national network of accessibility research expertise.

Management Response:

Recommendation accepted.

The program agrees with this recommendation. ASC recognizes the value of encouraging new research partnerships as a means to broaden accessibility research expertise.

Action Plan Item	Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
Revise Program Call for proposals guidelines and application to encourage applicants and funded recipients to include one partner in their project with whom they may have not worked with on a previously funded ASC project	Updated program documentation (including but not limited to Call for proposals, Funding agreement template and Reporting documentation)	March 2026	Chief Operating Officer and Director General of Standards and Research

Recommendation 4: Simplify funding priority areas

The requirements for the ASC research program prescribe that each funded project needs to be aligned to the seven priority areas of the ACA. Adding annual priorities creates confusion and unnecessary complexity. It is recommended that ASC only use the 7 priority areas outlined in the Act to simplify the process and to reduce any potential confusion for applicants. This will also help avoid duplication of work.

Rationale

Simplify research priority areas for applicants and avoid duplication.

Management Response:

ASC acknowledges this recommendation. ASC agrees it is important to simplify research priorities for program applicants and clarify internal procedures.

Action Plan Item	Deliverable	Timeline	Lead
Use only the 7 priority areas identified in the Act for ASC's research program and avoid adding additional annual priority areas.	Change documentation to reflect only the 7 priority areas in the ACA and eliminate any internal processes for selecting additional annual priority areas.	September 2025	Chief Operating Officer and Director General of Standards and Research