

RESULTS AT A GLANCE



Evaluation of Parks Canada's General Class Contribution Program (GCCP)

Approved by the CEO on March 16, 2017

Evaluation Objective and Scope

Consistent with the requirements of the *Treasury Board Policy on Evaluation* (2009) and *Treasury Board Policy on Results* (2016), the evaluation addressed the GCCP's:

- **Relevance:** continued need and alignment with government priorities and federal roles and responsibilities.
- **Performance:** effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

This evaluation covers the period from fiscal year 2010-11 to 2014-15. Details on specific evaluation questions, expectations, methods and limitations are found in the full report.¹

What We Found

Relevance

- The GCCP is relevant and consistent with the priorities, roles and responsibilities of both the Parks Canada Agency and the Government of Canada.
- A continued need for the program is justified by the ongoing demand for funding support. This funding enables projects that otherwise may not have taken place.
- The relevance of the program could be increased by broadening the GCCP's Terms and Conditions to better reflect the Agency's ongoing and emerging corporate priorities.

Effectiveness

- The prescribed process for contribution agreements under the GCCP is being followed. Projects are being approved and funding dispersed.
- The GCCP has set performance monitoring and reporting expectations but required project performance reports are not being consistently produced. Where data is available, evidence suggests that funded projects are achieving their intended results.

Recommendations and Management Response

Recommendation 1: The Agency's Chief Financial Officer should review the GCCP's Terms and Conditions to ensure that stated requirements, particularly as they relate to expected results and outcomes, are aligned with Parks Canada's Departmental Results Framework (to be approved by November 2017).



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

- Parks Canada managers use the GCCP to assist recipients (e.g., voluntary and non-profit organizations, academic institutions, other levels of government) in delivering a broad range of activities and projects in support of Parks Canada's mandate. This contribution program accounts for about 1% of the Agency's direct program spending.
- Parks Canada's 'Centre of Expertise' for the GCCP provides centralized oversight to ensure the program's strategic functioning.

- The Centre of Expertise has yet to consistently fulfil its oversight role. Limitations with the GCCP's records management and performance information impede the Centre's ability to effectively monitor compliance and track results at the project-level or assess and report on the GCCP's performance at the program-level.

Efficiency and Economy

- Overall, GCCP expenditures were aligned with approved allocations and approved funding has been dispersed as planned.
- Parks Canada has made efforts to improve the efficiency of the GCCP (e.g., continuous clarifications made to requirements and templates).
- The GCCP lacks a standardized risk-based approach for assessing and approving projects to ensure that administrative requirements are aligned with the level of risk and materiality of individual projects. As a result, key components of the process continue to be cumbersome and ill-suited to lower value agreements.

Management Response: Agreed. The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will review the GCCP's Terms and Conditions to ensure alignment with Parks Canada's Departmental Results Framework. Should changes be deemed pertinent, revised Terms and Conditions will be submitted to Treasury Board for approval. Target: 2017-18.



The full version of the evaluation report is available on Parks Canada's website - visit http://www.pc.gc.ca/docs/pc/rpts/rve-par/index_e.asp. For more information, contact oiac.bvie@pc.gc.ca.

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Recommendation 2: The Chief Financial Officer should implement a risk-based approach to the GCCP, putting measures in place to ensure that program requirements are aligned with the level of risk of the project being funded. This includes:



- Developing and applying a standardized risk assessment tool for proposals, with clearly documented rating criteria; and
- Reviewing the GCCP's contribution agreement process to streamline processes (e.g., approvals, monitoring and reporting requirements) where risk is low.

Management Response: Agreed. The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will implement a risk-based approach to the GCCP, including a standardized risk assessment tool and streamlined processes for low-risk projects. Target: 2017-18.

Recommendation 3: The Chief Financial Officer should review program-level performance monitoring and reporting needs and processes to ensure that: 1) they are aligned with the Centre of Expertise's roles and responsibilities as they relate to ensuring the strategic and centralized functioning of the program; 2) they support a risk-based approach; and 3) that effective mechanisms to collect the required data are in place. As part of this review, the Chief Financial Officer should:



- Consider the development and delivery of training courses/materials to ensure all programs users and recipients are made aware of GCCP requirements.
- Develop mechanisms to ensure consistent recipient reporting (e.g., standardized templates).
- Review the structure of current post-project evaluations and ensure that requirements to complete these evaluations are consistently met by program users.
- Implement further quality assurance and quality control mechanisms to ensure that reliable program information is collected and monitored through the GCCP's centralized administrative database and records.

Management Response: Agreed. The Chief Financial Officer Directorate will conduct a review of program-level performance monitoring and reporting needs and processes to identify necessary changes.

Targets: Review completed, 2016-17; changes implemented, 2017-18.

¹ Evaluation report also includes results of an evaluation of the Grant to the International Peace Garden and the Grant to support the Trans Canada Trail Foundation's Fundraising Campaign. There were no recommendations made related to these grant programs.

