Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

Affaires autochtones et du Nord Canada

Final Report

Evaluation of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy

Project Number: 1570-7/09083

January 2017

Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Branch
Audit and Evaluation Sector

Canada

Table of Contents

EPMRB – Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Branch

INAC – Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

NAFC – National Association of Friendship Centres

ASETS – Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy

EVALUATION OF THE
URBAN ABORIGINAL STRATEGY

In 2014, the Government of Canada consolidated its urban aboriginal programming, previously delivered by Canadian Heritage and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), into a single Urban Aboriginal Strategy. In order to determine whether the changes had been positive and achieved expected results, an evaluation was conducted in 2016 by INAC's Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Branch. It found that the need for urban Aboriginal programming continues to expand given changing demographics. The Strategy could be adjusted to better respond to these needs.

THE URBAN ABORIGINAL STRATEGY

PROJECT PROFILE

The goal of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy is to **increase the economic participation** of Aboriginal people living in cities across Canada. Starting in 2014-15, $43M per year was provided to the National Association of Friendship Centres to deliver an annual call for proposals for funding under two streams. INAC administered another $10M to support the development of regional and community strategic plans to guide funding provided by the National Association of Friendship Centres.

Two Key Streams

1. *Community Capacity Support Program ($23M/Year)* – Provides core-like funding to support the operations of Friendship Centres and other urban Aboriginal organizations.
2. *Urban Partnerships Program ($30M/Year)* – Provides funding to projects that leverage partnerships and additional stakeholder investments. This funding is available to support three key areas, including Youth, Innovation and Social Enterprise. $10M of this funding was retained by INAC for Regional Planning.

EVALUATION SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

An evaluation of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy was completed in 2016-17. It was undertaken by INAC's Evaluation, Performance Measurement, and Review Branch. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide a credible, reliable and timely evidence-based assessment of the Strategy. A specific focus was placed on whether the Strategy's delivery model, reformulated in 2014, had proven to represent a more streamlined and efficient approach to achieving the program's expected results.

Evaluation results are based on information collected through:
- Document and literature review;
- administrative and financial data analysis;
- a survey of applicant organizations;
- key informant interviews; and
- site visits.

Federal Roles and Responsibilities and Strategic Orientation

Federal government investments to support the socio-economic needs of Indigenous persons living in urban centres are viewed as essential.

Lack of accessibility to culturally appropriate services is seen as a barrier to urban Indigenous prosperity.

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy's focus on increasing participation in the economy is too narrow. This focus leads to the exclusion of other priority areas important for individual and community well-being in urban Indigenous communities

Effectiveness and Efficiency of Delivery

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy delivery approach limits the ability to respond to the respective needs of distinct Indigenous groups and the range of organizations eligible for funding.

The Terms and Conditions of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy are broad and open, leading to a lack of common interpretation by both the National Association of Friendship Centres and INAC of eligible expenditures.

The one-year funding model appears burdensome for funded service delivery organizations to administer, and limits Urban Aboriginal Strategy results to short-term assistance to individuals, rather than longer-term impacts for families and communities.

Early Impacts

Funding levels to Friendship Centres remained relatively similar to those that predated the consolidated Urban Aboriginal Strategy, thereby suggesting a comparative ability to impact urban initiatives and projects. Funding to organizations outside the network was about 10 percent.

The Urban Partnerships Program's focus on youth programming is aligned with the stated priorities of urban Indigenous people and organizations. However, evaluation participants called for an increased emphasis on culture in project delivery.

Urban Aboriginal Strategy Strategic Plans generally reflect common urban Indigenous priorities related to employment. However, they often did not reflect the top priorities of urban Indigenous populations, and some planning processes did not effectively engage with urban stakeholders.

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support efforts to enhance cultural sensitivity and culture-base programming among Indigenous service organizations and the wider social service delivery network, at all jurisdictional levels, in order to render services more accessible.

2. Support multi-jurisdictional networks, involving all levels of government and key organizations, in order to support more coordinated and culturally accessible services for Indigenous peoples.

3. Broaden the orientation of the urban Indigenous programming to include community priorities beyond the narrow focus of economic participation.

4. Widen the network of those able to access funding in support of urban Indigenous peoples, while ensuring that there is limited duplication of and coordinated use of available resources.

5. Employ multi-stream communications strategies to ensure a wide range of eligible organizations are aware of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in order to ensure application by these organizations.

6. Implement a funding model that includes strong monitoring practices and allows for the renewal of funding beyond a single year for projects that demonstrate achievement of results.

7. Ensure fairness and transparency of funding allocations by clarifying terms and conditions to include detailed definitions of eligible recipients and expenditures.

Management Response and Action Plan

Project Title: Evaluation of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy
Project #: 1570-7/09083

1. Management Response

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy was intended to address the socio-economic needs and priorities of Canada's urban Indigenous population. The Strategy, consolidated in 2014, was anticipated to enable the federal government to maintain a meaningful level of visibility on urban Indigenous issues while facilitating greater collaboration among partners and stakeholders.

The Evaluation of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy was undertaken in 2016 to determine whether the changes that had been implemented with the 2014 consolidation of urban Indigenous programming between Canadian Heritage and Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada had been positive and had achieved their intended results.

Budget 2016 renewed the Urban Aboriginal Strategy for one year with a commitment to work with key stakeholders to identify ways to strengthen the program to more effectively meet the needs of urban Indigenous people. Engagement sessions on the Urban Aboriginal Strategy were conducted throughout the summer 2016, at the same time as the Evaluation of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy was undertaken.

Results from the Engagement sessions supported the need to move forward with a program redesign to ensure a more holistic approach to the provision of culturally sensitive programs and services that focus on community based priorities. These findings were mirrored in the results of the Evaluation of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, in particular the importance of a federal role, community partnerships, and multi-year funding, as essential to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of program delivery.

Depending on the decision regarding program renewal, the findings from the Evaluation of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy will be used to guide and strengthen program redesign, implementation and delivery.

2. Action Plan

Recommendations	Actions		Responsible Manager (Title / Sector)	Planned Start and Completion Dates
1. Support efforts to enhance cultural sensitivity among social service organizations and the wider social service delivery network, at all jurisdictional levels, in order to render existing services more accessible.	**We do concur.** (do, do not, partially)	Given plans for program redesign, an update will be presented to EPMRC in September or sooner if items are actionable.	Paula Isaak, ADM ESDPP	*Start Date:* *September 2018* *Completion:* *Completed at time of introduction of new program*
2. Create multi-jurisdictional networks, involving all levels of government and key organizations, in order to support more coordinated and culturally accessible services for Indigenous peoples.	**We do concur.** (do, do not, partially)	Given plans for program redesign, an update will be presented to EPMRC in September or sooner if items are actionable.	Paula Isaak, ADM ESDPP	*Start Date:* *September 2018* *Completion:* *Completed at time of introduction of new program*
3. Broaden the orientation of the urban Indigenous programming to include community priorities beyond the narrow focus of economic participation.	**We do concur.** (do, do not, partially)	Given plans for program redesign, an update will be presented to EPMRC in September or sooner if items are actionable.	Paula Isaak, ADM ESDPP	*Start Date:* *September 2018* *Completion* *Completed at time of introduction of new program*
4. Widen the network of those able to access funding in support of urban Indigenous peoples, while ensuring that there is limited duplication of and coordinated use of available resources.	**We do concur.** (do, do not, partially)	Given plans for program redesign, an update will be presented to EPMRC in September or sooner if items are actionable.	Paula Isaak, ADM ESDPP	*Start Date:* *September 2018* *Completion:* *Completed at time of introduction of new program*
5. Employ multi-stream communications strategies to ensure a wide range of eligible organizations are aware of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in order to ensure application by these organizations.	**We do concur.** (do, do not, partially)	Given plans for program redesign, an update will be presented to EPMRC in September or sooner if items are actionable.	Paula Isaak, ADM ESDPP	*Start Date :* *September 2018* *Completion:* *Completed at time of introduction of new program*
6. Implement a funding model that includes strong monitoring practices and allows for the renewal of funding beyond a single year for projects that demonstrate achievement of results.	**We do concur.** (do, do not, partially)	Given plans for program redesign, an update will be presented to EPMRC in September or sooner if items are actionable.	Paula Isaak, ADM ESDPP	*Start Date:* *September 2018* *Completion:* *Completed at time of introduction of new program*
7. Ensure fairness and transparency of funding allocations by clarifying terms and conditions to include detailed definitions of eligible recipients and expenditures.	**We do concur.** (do, do not, partially)	Given plans for program redesign, an update will be presented to EPMRC in September or sooner if items are actionable.	Paula Isaak, ADM ESDPP	*Start Date:* *September 2018* *Completion:* *Completed at time of introduction of new program*

I recommend this Management Response and Action Plan for approval by the Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Committee

Original signed by:

Michel Burrowes
Senior Director, Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Branch

I approve the above Management Response and Action Plan

Original signed by:

Paula Isaak
Assistant Deputy Minister, Education and Social Development Programs and Partnerships (ESDPP)

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This report presents the results of the evaluation of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC) Urban Aboriginal Strategy, undertaken by INAC's Evaluation, Performance Measurement, and Review Branch (EPMRB). The purpose of the evaluation is to provide a credible, reliable and timely evidence-based assessment of the Strategy. As part of the evaluation, a specific focus was placed on whether the Strategy's delivery model, which was reformulated in 2014, had proven to represent a more streamlined and efficient approach to achieving the program's expected results.

The evaluation was conducted pursuant to Treasury Board Secretariat's *Policy on Results*. Further, given that the Urban Aboriginal Strategy provides grants and contributions funding through Funding Authority T4101, it was conducted in accordance with Section 42.1 of the *Financial Administration Act*, which requires that an evaluation of the relevance and effectiveness of all ongoing programs of grants and contributions be produced every five years. Finally, the information contained in this report is meant to support INAC in responding to its key mandate commitments as well as the Results Agenda outlined by the federal government.

1.2 Report Structure

The report includes seven sections: Section 1 introduces the Urban Aboriginal Strategy; Section 2 outlines the evaluation methodology; Section 3 briefly profiles urban Indigenous populations and the issues they face; sections 4, 5 and 6 detail evaluation findings; and Section 7 provides a summary of the main conclusions and recommendations arising from the evaluation.

1.3 Program Profile

1.3.1   Urban Aboriginal Strategy – Background and Description

The initial Urban Aboriginal Strategy was launched by the Canadian government in 1997 to help address urban Indigenous issues. The primary intent of the Strategy at that time was to promote self-reliance and increase life choices for Indigenous people in urban centres. In 2007, the federal government renewed the Urban Aboriginal Strategy with a $68.5 million investment over five years (2007-2008 to 2011-2012).

In 2012, three programming elements administered by Canadian Heritage, namely the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program, the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth Program, and the Young Canada Works for Aboriginal Youth Program, were transferred to INAC to facilitate a coordinated federal approach to urban Indigenous issues. Following the transfer, amendments to the program terms and conditions were made for the spending authority entitled 'Urban Aboriginal Strategy'.

In 2014, all four programs were then consolidated into two in an effort to streamline administrative and spending efforts, and reduce costs, while maintaining the ability to collaborate with partners and stakeholders. Throughout the report this may be referred to as the 'consolidated' Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

The two programs delivered under the Strategy since 2014 include the Urban Partnerships and the Community Capacity Support Programs. The Urban Partnerships Program provides funding to projects that leverage partnerships and additional investments from other stakeholders. The Community Capacity Support Program provides core-like funding[1] to support the operations of Friendship Centres and other urban Indigenous organizations in order for them to maintain a stable base from which to deliver programs and services, or provide case management and referral services to clients.

1.3.2   Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, it is expected that urban Indigenous individuals, families and communities will participate more fully in the economy. The Strategy is intended to address the socio-economic needs and priorities of all urban Indigenous individuals, and is therefore a 'status-blind' initiative. It aims to provide opportunities for other federal departments, provincial and municipal governments, and urban Indigenous communities, to develop partnerships that will help to achieve this objective. The establishment of collaboration at all levels aims to yield strong regional and community plans that outline the best way forward in order to achieve the Strategy's ultimate outcome.

1.3.3   Program Management, Key Stakeholders and Beneficiaries

The consolidated Urban Aboriginal Strategy includes the implementation of a new program delivery model. Under the 2014 model, the Community Capacity Support Program, and a large portion of the Urban Partnerships Program, are delivered by the National Association of Friendship Centres. This is made possible by a contribution agreement with INAC that allows for the flow of funds to the National Association of Friendship Centres. The National Association of Friendship Centres chose to then flow INAC funding to its provincial-territorial associations to support eligible activities, and projects and services provided by the Friendship Centers or other eligible urban Indigenous organizations, including those located in the Yukon, Northwest Territory and Nunavut territories. The delivery model was designed to retain the collaborative approach that made previous iterations of the Strategy successful, while achieving improved efficiency by having the National Association of Friendship Centres deliver funding.

INAC Headquarters continue to deliver a portion of the Urban Partnerships Program by supporting and funding regional and community planning activities, with a focus on coordinating and leveraging investments by stakeholders. INAC Headquarters is responsible for:

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[1] 'Core-like' funding is allocated to maintain or enhance the operational capacity of organizations. However, it places specific limitations on eligible operational expenditures.

- leading urban Indigenous policy development;
- reporting on Urban Aboriginal Strategy outcomes;
- managing stakeholder relations at the national level;
- undertaking research; and
- providing support and guidance to regional offices and communities working with stakeholders, such as provincial/territorial or municipal governments. INAC regional offices are responsible for developing partnerships with provinces and other stakeholders at the local and regional levels, supporting the development of community capacity to partner with other governments, and facilitating regional and community planning activities.

The consolidation of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy was intended to allow INAC to maintain its leadership role while also enhancing collaborative efforts with other partners and stakeholders, including federal departments and agencies, provincial/territorial and municipal governments, local Indigenous organizations and leaders, as well as private sector stakeholders.

1.3.4 Program Resources

When announced in February 2014, $53 million was to be allocated to the Strategy in 2014-15[2]. Of this, $43 million was anticipated to be provided to the National Association of Friendship Centres to deliver the Community Capacity Support Program ($23 million) and the project funding portion of the Urban Partnerships Program ($20 million). INAC retained $10 million of the Urban Partnerships Program funding to deliver regional strategic planning initiatives. While a portion of the funding for both the Community Capacity Support Program and the Urban Partnerships Program were to sunset in 2015-16, an extension was granted for one year.

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[2] INAC (2016). 2014-15 Departmental Performance Report, Urban Aboriginal Strategy. URL: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1432837046128/1432837073962

2. Evaluation Methodology

2.1 Evaluation Scope and Timing

The evaluation examined the Urban Aboriginal Strategy from the time of its consolidation in April 2014 to July 2016.

2.2 Evaluation Issues and Questions

The evaluation focused on three key questions.

1) Does the Urban Aboriginal Strategy support the federal government in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities related to urban Indigenous issues?

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy is intended to address the socio-economic needs and priorities of Canada's urban Indigenous population. The Strategy, consolidated in 2014, was anticipated to enable the federal government to maintain a meaningful level of visibility on urban Indigenous issues while facilitating greater collaboration among partners and stakeholders. The evaluation aimed to examine whether the consolidated Urban Aboriginal Strategy helps enable the federal government to fulfill its roles and responsibilities on urban Indigenous issues, and to determine whether it was complementary or duplicative of other federally supported programming. (See Section 4 of the report).

2) How effective is the Urban Aboriginal Strategy's delivery model?

The evaluation examined the Urban Aboriginal Strategy delivery model, which involves the delivery of resources with the support of a third party, to determine its appropriateness and effectiveness, including the use of regional strategic plans to guide investments and program activities. (See sections 5 and 6 of the report).

3) What have been the early impacts and outcomes since the implementation of the consolidated Urban Aboriginal Strategy?

The evaluation attempted to examine the short-term outcomes of the consolidated Urban Aboriginal Strategy, as measured against the expected program outcomes. The evaluation focused on how the Urban Aboriginal Strategy has contributed to partnership development, the coordination of financial resources to promote Urban Indigenous participation in the economy, and documented success stories. (See Section 7 of the report).

2.3 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation findings and conclusions are based on the analysis of information gathered from interviews, site visits and a survey of organizations that applied for Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding. In addition, program documents and relevant literature were considered. The approach used to gather information is outlined below.

2.3.1 Data Collection Methods

- *Key informant interviews* – Approximately 30 key informants were interviewed representing a full range of program administration, delivery organizations, and other partners, stakeholders, and experts. The list of key informants was developed in consultation with INAC officials and the National Association of Friendship Centres. Table 1 provides a summary of the number of key informants interviewed by organization, type and location.

Table 1: Interviewees by Organization Type and Location

Organization Type	Location	Count	Method
INAC Headquarters	Ottawa	5	In Person
INAC Regional Offices	Regions	6	Phone
NAFC Head Office	Ottawa	4	In Person
Other Federal Departments	Ottawa	4	In Person
Provincial Governments	Regions	6	Phone/In Person
Other Indigenous Organizations	Ottawa/Regions	5	Phone/In Person
	Total	30	

- *Site Visits* – A total of seven site visits were conducted in the cities identified in Table 2. The selected sites reflect the diverse distribution of Métis, Inuit, First Nations, and Non-Status Indians in large and mid-sized urban centres across Canada. The National Association of Friendship Centres' Provincial-Territorial Associations and a sample of recipients of Urban Partnerships and Community Capacity Support Program funding were visited in order to gain insight into the implementation of programming. The site visits helped evaluators to gain in-depth information about the operation and impact of Urban Aboriginal Strategy-funded projects, and the administrative function of the National Association of Friendship Centres' provincial-territorial associations in key regions.

Table 2: Site Visit Locations and Type of Interviewee

Region	Site	Type of Interview Conducted at Each Site
Atlantic	St. John's	➤ National Association of Friendship Centres representative at Provincial-Territorial Association
British Columbia	Vancouver	
Alberta	Edmonton	
Saskatchewan	Regina, Prince Albert	➤ Provincial Indigenous Governance Organizations
Manitoba	Winnipeg	
Ontario	Ottawa	➤ Recipient Organizations
Quebec	Wendake	➤ Provincial and Municipal Governments

In preparation for each site visit, a literature and internet search was conducted to help understand the unique regional factors and the history of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in that region.

For each site, evaluators visited at least two recipient organizations and toured facilities to gain insight into the level of service provided by key organization, the demographics of the client-base, and whether or not these services were reflective of the objectives established in regional plans and program terms and conditions. At each site visit, evaluators also explored the level of availability of similar services from alternate providers in the identified regions.

- *Applicants/Recipient Survey* – An online survey was conducted of funded recipient organizations and unfunded applicant organizations to collect feedback on their experience with the application process and their perception of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. Contact information of applicant and recipient organizations was obtained from the National Association of Friendship Centres' provincial-territorial associations. The survey was distributed to approximately 230 organizations who applied for Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding in either 2014-15 or 2015-16, of which 90 (39 percent) submitted responses. Data collected from the survey helped to inform an assessment of the consistency, transparency, and fairness of the funding application and proposal review process.

2.3.2 Evaluation Considerations, Strengths and Limitations

- *Considerations* – At the time of the evaluation, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy's Performance Measurement Strategy had not been updated to reflect the consolidated program and new delivery model. Also, it was found that the existing transfer payment tracking system and Urban Aboriginal Strategy's Project Information Management System were outdated and not designed to capture the required performance data for the consolidated Urban Aboriginal Strategy. At the time of the evaluation, work within INAC had begun to address the data collection needs of the Strategy. While the program's implementation strategy had been developed in part, there remained work to be done to establish, approve and implement data collection strategies and establish baselines for targets through regional and community planning.

- *Strengths* – To speed the execution of the evaluation, additional planning was done to ensure that the evaluation could proceed in a timely manner, limiting the need for a detailed methodology document. Consistent with the Treasury Board Secretariat's *Policy on Results*, the evaluation focused on addressing the areas of relevance and effectiveness, while also ensuring that the needs of the Department and its constituents were being met.

- *Limitations* – The short period of program time examined by the evaluation (under two years, i.e., since the Urban Aboriginal Strategy was consolidated), limits the evaluation's ability to determine the longer-term outcomes of the Strategy. Also, due to internal INAC capacity and data collection challenges, program-specific measures such as those outlined in the Strategy's Performance Measurement Strategy have not been tracked and reported. In addition, the timeline of the evaluation also limited the number of evaluation methods that could be applied in order to gather definitive answers to the evaluation questions about the relevance and effectiveness of the Strategy. To mitigate this challenge, the evaluation focused on determining the effectiveness and efficiency of the new delivery model, and examining the utility and accessibility of the directed investments. Greater attention, focus and resources have been accorded to answering the three key questions as listed in Section 2.2.

3. The Urban Indigenous Situation

The purpose of this section is to provide a general profile of urban Indigenous populations and highlight their current condition, in relation to non-Indigenous peoples and to each other.

3.1 Profile of Urban Indigenous Populations

The term 'Indigenous' refers to Inuit, Métis, and First Nations peoples living in Canada. According to the most recent available census data, Indigenous peoples comprise approximately four percent of Canada's total population. Approximately 61 percent identify as First Nations, 32 percent as Métis, four percent as Inuit, and about two percent report more than one or other Indigenous identity.[3]

The distribution of each Indigenous group varies across Canada. Figure 1 below provides an overview of the general distribution of the three key groups. Taken as a whole, the majority of Indigenous peoples live in Ontario and the four western provinces; however, as shown in Figure 2, distribution between the three groups varies within each province.

Figure 1: Indigenous Populations – General Distribution within Canada

First Nations	Inuit	Métis
The federal government distinguishes between those First Nations persons who are "Status Indian", i.e., those registered under the *Indian Act*, and those who are 'Non-Status.' According to the most recent census data, less than half of "Status" First Nations persons live on a reserve and 42 percent live in urban areas. Among 'Non-Status' First Nations, 75 percent live in urban areas.[4]	Inuit in Canada live predominantly in the northern areas of the Northwest Territories, Quebec, Labrador, and in Nunavut. These territories are referred to as Inuit Nungangat.[5] Approximately 43 percent urban area, with 11 percent residing in major cities. Cities with the largest Inuit populations include Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa-Gatineau, Yellowknife, and Saint John's.[6]	Métis people account for a large proportion of urban dwelling Indigenous persons in Canada. The majority of Métis people in Canada reside in urban areas, with about 25 percent of Métis people living in four cities – Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Calgary.[7]

More than half of people identifying as Inuit, Métis or First Nations live in urban areas, and the proportion of Indigenous peoples living in urban areas has increased over time to 56 percent in 2011, the most recent period for which data is available.[8] The Indigenous population is younger and growing faster than non-Indigenous populations in Canada.[9]

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[3] Statistics Canada. (2013). *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit.*
[4] INAC Strategic Research Directorate (2013) "Aboriginal Demographics from the 2011 National Household Survey" (PowerPoint). URL: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ-AI/STAGING/texte-text/abo_demo2013_1370443844970_eng.pdf
[5] Ibid.
[6] Statistics Canada. (2011). Analytical Document: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit. URL: http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.pdf
[7] Statistics Canada (2013).
[8] INAC (2010) *Fact Sheet – Urban Aboriginal Population in Canada.*
[9] UAKN & National Association of Friendship Centres. (2014). "2014 Fact Sheet – A Snapshot of the Urban Aboriginal Population" http://nafc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2014-Fact-Sheet-%E2%80%93-A-Snapshot-of-the-Urban-Aboriginal-Population.pdf

Figure 2: Métis, Inuit, First Nations and Other Aboriginal Identity as a Proportion of Total Aboriginal population (by Province)[10]
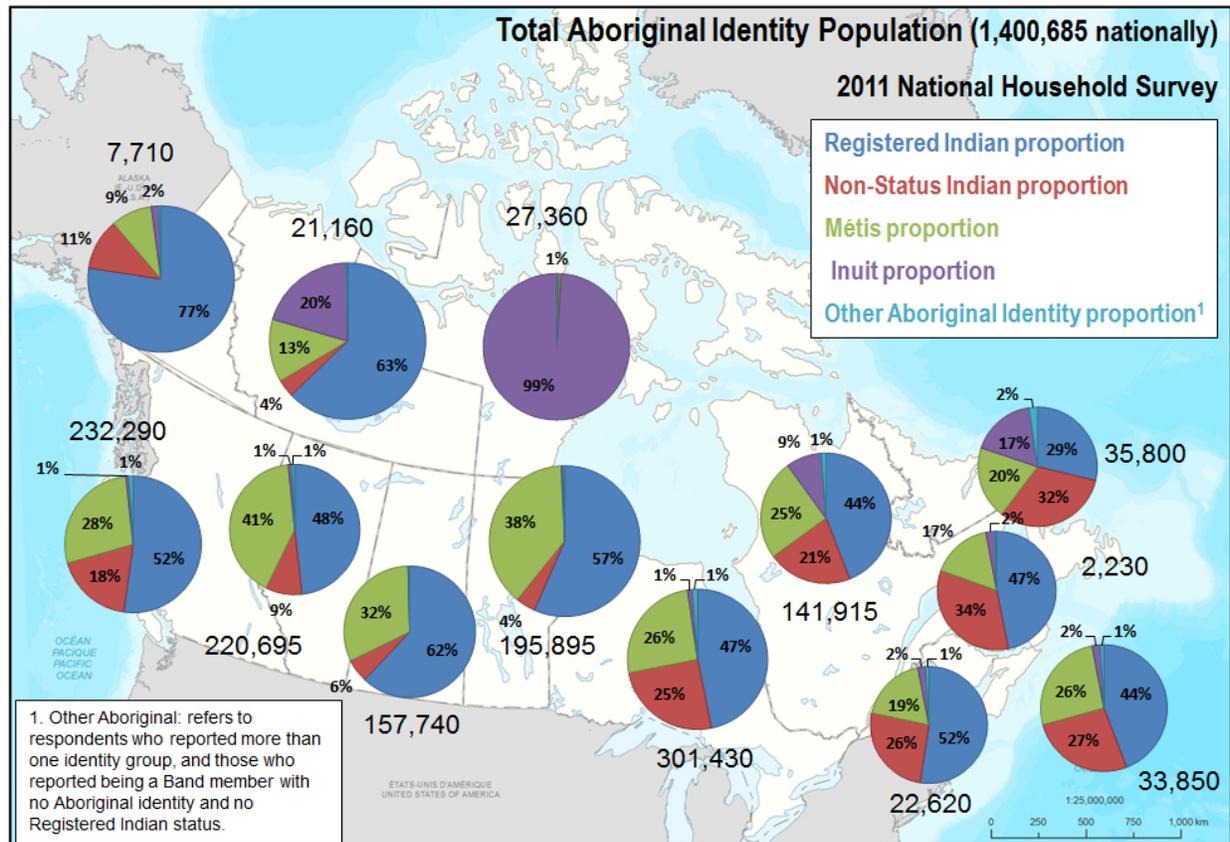
3.2   Socio-Economic Realities for Urban Indigenous Persons

Increasing statistical representation of Indigenous peoples in cities is a result of multiple factors. In part, the increasing urban presence is as a result of migration to the cities. Recent studies have also shown that the increase is predominantly driven by an increased likeliness that urban-dwelling individuals will self-identify as Indigenous.[11] This may be in part due to increased awareness of Indigenous identity within Canada and improved public perceptions of Indigenous peoples.[12] Nonetheless, the Indigenous population is more mobile than the non-Indigenous population. People who identified as Indigenous were twice as likely as non-Indigenous persons to have moved within their community. There is variation between Indigenous groups; on average, registered Indians are the most 'mobile' off-reserve urban Indigenous groups, followed by Non-Status Indians, Métis and Inuit.[13]

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[10] Aboriginal Demographics from the 2011 National Household Survey. Sources: Mapping: Natural Resources Canada, National Atlas. Data: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, AANDC custom tabulations. URL: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1370438978311/1370439050610
[11] The term 'ethnic mobility' describes when individuals and families change their self-declared ethnic identity, for example, in censuses. (See: AANDC, 2012).
[12] AANDC (2012) "Aboriginal Populations in Canadian Cities: Why Are They Growing So Fast?" *AANDC Strategic Research Directorate.* Retrieved from http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ-AI/STAGING/texte-text/rs_re_pubs_cmapop_PDF_1353606366564_eng.pdf
[13] King-Andrews, H. (2012) *The Urban Aboriginal Middle Income Group in Canada: A Demographic Profile.* Ottawa, ON: Amanda Parriag and Associates.

While many Indigenous people move to cities from reserves or rural areas, many still were raised in urban environments. The majority of urban Indigenous people consider the city their home, including those who are the first generation within their family to reside in cities, and they are as likely as non-Indigenous people to feel they can make positive impacts on their urban communities.[14] In Canada, Indigenous communities are a significant part of the urban landscape.

3.2.1   Education and Employment Outcomes

Urban Indigenous people, on average, express very distinct outcomes on economic and education indicators when compared to Indigenous persons living in smaller areas. Compared to Indigenous people living in cities or towns with a population under 100,000, urban Indigenous populations are more likely to have a university degree, more likely to be employed, and report a slightly higher average income level.[15,16] This reflects a large motivating factor among first-generation urban migration from Indigenous people: when asked why they moved to the city, respondents were equally likely to report that it was to be closer to family, to attend school, or to work and find a job.[17] While there is still a gap between urban Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons in terms of average employment rates, this gap disappears for persons who have completed post-secondary education.[18]

Findings from the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey reinforce the importance of educational opportunities for urban Indigenous peoples across Canada. Pursuit of education was a leading life aspiration among urban Indigenous respondents, particularly those who were younger and had lower average income levels.[19] Urban-dwelling Indigenous people and families still face some challenges; they are more likely to have average income levels that fall below the "low income cut off line" than families and individuals living in smaller towns.[20]

Among off-reserve Indigenous populations, school completion is associated with higher rates of employment. Seventy-one percent of Inuit high school completers, 72 percent of First Nations completers, and 80 percent of Métis completers were employed, compared to non-completer employment rates of 44 percent, 47 percent and 61 percent respectively.[21] Barriers to high-school completion varied among the three groups; for off-reserve First Nations persons, financial considerations were key, particularly among men. Others included it not being a personal priority or lacking the confidence to complete further education.[22]

Among Inuit people, 66 percent of female school leavers identified family issues and time constraints (43 percent) as barriers to further education. Inuit female respondents cited pregnancy or the need to care for their own children (38 percent) as reasons to leave school, while Inuit male

[14] Environics. (2010). Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey Final Report. http://www.uaps.ca/
[15] Statistics Canada. (2008). *2006 Census Topic Based Tabulations.*
[16] INAC (2010) *Fact Sheet - Urban Aboriginal population in Canada.*
[17] Environics. (2010). Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey Final Report. http://www.uaps.ca/
[18] INAC (2010) *Fact Sheet. Urban Aboriginal population in Canada.* Retrieved from https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014298/1100100014302
[19] Environics. (2010). Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey Final Report. http://www.uaps.ca/
[20] Statistics Canada. (2008). *2006 Census Topic Based Tabulations.*
[21] INAC (2014). The Aboriginal Peoples Survey at a Glance: Preliminary Findings on Education and Employment Outcomes. URL: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1405957280544/1405957331745
[22] INAC (2015). Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2012: Gender Difference in Off-reserve First Nations Education and Employment. URL: http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1421860565610/1421860622523

respondents cited school problems (22 percent), lack of interest (15 percent), and wanting to work (11 percent).

3.2.2 Health and Wellness Outcomes

Accurate data reflecting the health status of urban-dwelling Indigenous persons is scarce. While studies have been published focusing on off-reserve Indigenous health generally, a recent detailed analysis of health status between rural and urban off-reserve Indigenous persons is not available.

Using off-reserve data as a proxy, certain trends are noticeable. Firstly, results from the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey indicate that about half of off-reserve First Nations persons report good health compared to two thirds among the general Canadian public. Off-Reserve First Nations persons, particularly women, were more likely to have been diagnosed with a chronic illness. Several social factors are known to contribute to self-reported health status within off-reserve First Nations communities. These include daily smoking; being overweight; living in a home in need of major repairs; being unemployed; having annual incomes in the lowest tercile; experiencing food insecurity; having unmet health needs; and a lack of social supports.[23] As the presence of these social determinants increases, the likelihood of poor health outcomes (poor self-reported physical or mental health, chronic conditions) increases.

There is limited data available on Métis specific health status. Survey evidence suggests that Métis women and men have slightly higher life expectancy compared to status-Indian First Nations, but slightly lower life expectancy compared to non-Indigenous persons.[24]

3.2.3 Housing

It is generally understood that adequate, affordable, and suitable housing contributes directly to improved health and well-being. These in turn are linked to the ability to participate in the economy. Employment and educational attainment levels are also understood to be linked to housing security.

It has been estimated that more than a third of Canada's Indigenous population lives in inadequate, unsuitable or unaffordable housing, compared to 18 percent of the non-Indigenous population. Of the three indigenous groups, Métis and Non-Status Indians are more likely to become homeowners than Status Indians and Inuit.

Most studies show that urban Indigenous people experience comparatively depressed living conditions, which impacts individual and collective socio-economic outcomes.[25] Improving socio-economic conditions, it is argued, begins with affordable housing. And with First Nations peoples having been identified as experiencing a high degree of mobility, moving from reserves to cities and returning, the demand for affordable housing will continue to rise.

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[23] Statistics Canada (2015) Social determinants of health for the off-reserve First Nations population, 15 years of age and older, 2012. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2016010-eng.htm
[24] Tjempkema, M. et al. (2009) Mortality of Métis and Registered Indian Adults: An 11 Year Follow Up Study. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2009004/article/11034-eng.pdf
[25] Belanger et al. (2012). Assessing Urban Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness in Canada. http://homelesshub.ca/resource/assessing-urban-aboriginal-housing-and-homelessness-canada

4. Evaluation Findings – Federal Roles and Responsibilities with Respect to Urban Indigenous Issues

This section examines the Government of Canada's role with respect to urban Indigenous issues.

4.1 Alignment and Coordination of Federal, Provincial and Municipal Efforts in Urban Settings

Research suggests that urban Indigenous people experience more challenges to prosperity and employment than non-Indigenous urban individuals.[26,27] Literature and data also suggest that urban Indigenous people often face challenges in accessing services through conventional service providers.[28] Although there are a range of organizations and entities involved in delivering support services in urban settings, engagement by the federal government is considered important. Evidence collected through interviews and site visits suggests that there is a need for federal resources to help facilitate access to culturally appropriate services and programming for Indigenous people living in urban settings.

> **Finding: There is agreement on the need for the federal government to support the socio-economic needs of Indigenous persons living in urban centres.**

The continued growth of urban Indigenous populations and ongoing activism to support this demographic has expanded the focus of federal government support of Indigenous groups to include an urban presence. The most significant factor contributing to the growth in the urban Indigenous population is ethnic mobility - the phenomenon by which changes in ethnocultural affiliation happen among individuals and families. Census data shows that from 1996 to 2006, there was a significant increase in the number of individuals who self-identify as Métis or First Nations living off-reserve. Ninety percent of the increased self-reporting in ethno cultural affiliations occurred in urban settings.[29] While a definitive explanation of the increase in self-identification has yet to be determined, reasons may include the ethnic diversity found in Canadian cities, increased awareness of one's identity, improved public perceptions about Indigenous peoples, and recent legal decisions.[30]

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[26] Carli, V. (2013). *The City as a "Space of Opportunity": Urban Indigenous Experiences and Community Safety Partnerships.* http://apr.thompsonbooks.com/vols/WBUAC_Ch1.pdf

[27] Findlay, et al. (2014). *Comparing the Lived Experience of Urban Aboriginal Peoples with Canadian Rights to Quality of Life. Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.* http://uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/UAKN-PRC-Final-Report_Comparing-the-Lived-Experience-of-Urban-Aboriginal-Peoples-with-Canadian-Rights-to-Quality-of-Life_FINAL_Spring-2014.pdf

[28] Snyder. MR. (2013). *Aboriginal Peoples' Mobility and Health in Urban Canada: Traversing Ideological and Geographical Boundaries. University of Toronto.*

[29] INAC. (2013) *Fact Sheet - Aboriginal Populations in Canadian Cities: Why are the Growing so fast?* https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1352402108618

[30] Ibid.

More than half of the urban Indigenous population growth from 1996 to 2006 resulted from the increased numbers of Métis.[31] While Métis and Non-Status Indians are distinct Indigenous groups, they do not have *Indian Act* status and, until 2013, it was unclear whether they were included in Section 91(24) of the *1867 Constitution*. Section 91 describes matters in the "exclusive Legislative Authority" or jurisdiction of the federal government, which includes sub-section 24: "Indians, and Lands reserved for Indians".[32] In 2013, the Federal Court of Canada's decision in *Daniels et al. v. Canada* declared that Métis and Non-Status Indians are included in the definition of the "Indians" in Section 91(24). This declaration clarifies that the federal government has jurisdiction over Métis and Non-Status Indian issues. In 2016, the Supreme Court determined that as a result of the previous exclusion of Métis "[t]hey are deprived of programs, services and intangible benefits recognized by all governments as needed."[33] The decision does not dictate that the federal government must provide programs and services to Métis and Non-Status Indians; however, it supports the position that the federal government has a role to play when it comes to meeting the needs of these groups, the majority of whom reside in urban centres.

> **Finding: The question of jurisdictional responsibility for service provision for First Nations, Métis, Non-Status Indians and Inuit living in urban centres continues to be a barrier to needed programs and services.**

Statistics Canada reports show that Indigenous populations are the most mobile demographic in Canada.[34] Some individuals move from rural and on-reserve communities to urban centres in search of better access to education and employment opportunities, heath care services, and housing, which may not be available or easily accessible in their home communities.[35] When moving to urban centres, Indigenous peoples may face significant barriers, including poverty, health and mental health issues, racism, lack of housing, and lack of culturally appropriate services. Individuals may also struggle to transition from rural to urban life, and feel disconnected from their community and culture.[36]

The evaluation found that the question of jurisdictional responsibility for service provision for Indigenous peoples living in urban centres continues to be a barrier to needed programs and services. Key informants noted that in some provinces, Indigenous individuals living in urban centres still struggle to access needed services because provincial authorities argue that their responsibilities in serving Indigenous population is not fiduciary as it is primarily the responsibility of the federal government. Strong coordination between all levels of government can improve service delivery so that services are available and accessible for off-reserve Indigenous residents in a way that supports a 'client-first' approach where jurisdictional responsibilities are unclear.

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Jurisdiction refers the responsibility to legislate on Métis and Non-Status Indians issues.

[33] Judgements of the Supreme Court of Canada. Daniels v. Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development) https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/15858/index.do

[34] Statistics Canada. (2012). *Aboriginal Peoples Survey*.

[35] Graham, K (1998). *Urban Aboriginal Governance in Canada: Paradigms and Prospects*. http://carleton.ca/3ci/wp-content/uploads/1998_033_077-089.pdf

[36] Newhouse & Peters. *Literature Review on Urban Aboriginal Peoples*. (2003). http://uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Literature-Review-on-Urban-Aboriginal-Peoples-FINAL-Mar.-20-2013.pdf

4.2   Coordination of Federal, Provincial and Municipal Efforts in Providing Culturally Appropriate Services

Finding: Lack of accessibility to culturally appropriate services is a barrier to urban Indigenous prosperity.

The evaluation found that some individuals may not feel comfortable accessing provincial and municipal programs and services if they are not culturally appropriate. Several key informants working in the not-for-profit sector stated that the non-Indigenous social service sector in many cities is not well-equipped to provide services that are sensitive to Indigenous cultures and values. For example, an organization representing the interests of Inuit in an urban centre noted that language can be a barrier to services for new Inuit residents.

Most key informants also stated that, while awareness of Indigenous issues such as legal rights, culture, and the traumatic impact of residential schools is starting to improve in urban settings, discrimination and racism continues to be an obstacle to prosperity for Indigenous urban residents. The 2011 Urban Aboriginal People Study supports these findings. The Study revealed while the majority of respondents believed perceptions are improving, 71 percent believed non-Indigenous Canadians generally had a negative impression of Indigenous peoples. Of study participants who reported a negative experience with accessing mainstream services, 43 percent stated it was due to discrimination, racism, or a lack of empathy or cultural understanding. There was consensus among Study respondents (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) that there was a need for Indigenous specific services.[37] In the spirit of reconciliation and building a nation-to-nation relationship between the Crown and Indigenous peoples, the federal government has outlined, through its communications on the matter of reconciliation, that it wishes to be an active participant in combating discrimination against Indigenous populations, including in off-reserve and urban settings. In order to increase accessibility of programs and services by Indigenous populations in urban settings, efforts to enhance cultural sensitivity should be supported and encouraged at all jurisdictional levels of the social service delivery network.

Recommendation 1: Support efforts to enhance cultural sensitivity among social service organizations and the wider social service delivery network, at all jurisdictional levels, in order to render services more accessible.

Literature reviewed to support this evaluation provided evidence that coordinating efforts between various sectors can improve service delivery and result in better community outcomes. Kania and Kremer argue that in order to achieve long-lasting results in resolving a social problem, there must be a strong structure of collaboration between different sectors, such as the collaborative model of collective impact. Collective impact is defined as "the commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem."[38] Preliminary evidence in this area suggests that "greater progress could be made in alleviating many of the most serious and complex social problems if not-for-profit organizations, governments, businesses, and

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[37] Environics. (2010). Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey Final Report. http://www.uaps.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/UAPS-Main-Report_Dec.pdf
[38]   Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (2011). Collective Impact. Stanford Social Innovation Review. Winter 2011. URL: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

the public are brought together around a common agenda to create collective impact."[39] Issues facing Indigenous populations such as the need for improved outcomes in the areas of health, housing, education, employment and overall community well-being, are complex and interconnected. A strategy targeting the social needs of this demographic requires enhanced coordination among all levels of government and non-government organizations to establish more comprehensive multi-jurisdictional service delivery networks.

Recommendation 2: Create multi-jurisdictional networks, involving all levels of government and key organizations, in order to support more coordinated and culturally accessible services for Indigenous peoples.

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[39] See https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact for examples of successful collective impact initiatives involving government, private sector, and non-for-profit players.

5. Evaluation Findings – Appropriateness of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy's Strategic Orientation

This section examines the extent to which the Urban Aboriginal Strategy's strategic orientation on the participation of urban Indigenous peoples in the economy is appropriate.

5.1 Urban Indigenous Priorities

Finding: The Urban Aboriginal Strategy's focus on increasing participation in the economy is too narrow. This focus leads to the exclusion of other priority areas important for individual and community well-being in urban Indigenous communities. It is also duplicative of other federal programming.

Nearly 60 percent of Indigenous people live in urban areas. However, the economic well-being of Indigenous people in urban areas is well below that of non-Indigenous people.[40] Statistics Canada studies show that Indigenous persons are much more likely to be unemployed and living below the poverty line than non-Indigenous persons.[41] The goal of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy is to reduce the disparity in socio-economic circumstances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in Canada's urban centres. It corresponds to the view of the Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples that Indigenous economic development is a key factor in the process of restructuring the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada.

The ultimate outcome of activities undertaken in the Urban Aboriginal Strategy is that the "urban Indigenous individuals, families and communities participate more fully in the economy."[42] According to the Urban Aboriginal Strategy Terms and Conditions, 'participation in the economy'" means that:

> … Aboriginal People have the skills, knowledge, and training to secure, maintain and excel in a strong Canadian economy. It is generally accepted that increased participation in the economy is achieved by individuals having a suitable education, a skill set, life skills, self-advocacy skills and can access and utilize services/supports that reduce small challenges that create barriers, such as transportation and childcare.[43]

However, this objective was perceived by almost all evaluation respondents as too narrow and rigid. Evidence collected through the evaluation suggests that the emphasis on employment and training by the Urban Aboriginal Strategy did not recognize the complexity and interconnections of the challenges to socio-economic well-being that urban Indigenous peoples face. A report produced in 2016 by the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres noted that the redesigned Urban

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[40] INAC. (2013). *Aboriginal Demographics from the 2011 National Household Survey.* https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1370438978311/1370439050610
[41] Statistics Canada. (2011)
[42] Urban Aboriginal Strategy Terms and Conditions. INAC. https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1386530682712/1386530771640
[43] Ibid.

Aboriginal Strategy "set economic participation as a focus, leaving out other objectives".[44] Many evaluation respondents emphasized the importance of cultural programming, particularly for Indigenous youth, who are the fastest growing demographic in Canada, and are preparing to enter the workforce.

In order to be eligible for Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding, applicants were required to demonstrate that programs and services are directly related to increasing urban Indigenous participation in the economy. Therefore, any expenditures that do not have a direct link to economic outcomes, although based on real community needs, were likely to be deemed ineligible. In fiscal year 2014-15, most provincial and territorial associations were required to provide extensive additional documentation to justify project funding allocation as many funded Urban Partnerships projects were deemed ineligible when reviewed by INAC. Under such a funding environment, real community needs became secondary to 'chasing money' in order to deliver a local project of any kind.

Opinion among various Indigenous groups on the appropriate orientation of urban programming varied. Métis representatives embraced the economic focus more than those who primarily serve a First Nation or Inuit client base. Employment has been a focus of the Métis National Council for a number of years. Evidence of this can be found in the Métis Economic Development Accord signed in 2015 between the Métis National Council and the Government of Canada. It was signed in support of continued collaboration in developing a strategy for Métis economic development. The Accord acknowledges that "economic development is an important element in the Métis National Protocol both in its Bilateral Process and in multilateral discussions with the provinces from Ontario westward." Some Métis representatives participating in the evaluation supported this finding, stating that Métis governing organizations have been focusing on economic development among the Métis for a very long time.

Statistics Canada data collected through the census also shows that a higher percentage of Métis are participating in the labour market and have obtained post-secondary education credentials than First Nation and Inuit populations. Although there is still a gap compared to the non-Indigenous population, Métis have the largest labour force participation (78 percent) and employment rate (71.2 percent), and lowest unemployment rate (8.6 percent) among the Indigenous populations aged 25-64 years.[45] These are factors that contribute to job-readiness and may elevate employment as a community priority for Métis. In addition, Métis are less likely to have migrated to an urban centre from a rural or remote Indigenous community, and may not be as likely to require basic level transitional services and navigation support.

Recommendation 3: Broaden the orientation of the urban Indigenous programming to include community priorities beyond the narrow focus of economic participation.

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[44] Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres. (2016). Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) – Position Paper, p.2.
[45] Isaac T. (2016). *A Matter of National and Constitutional Import: Report of the Minister's Special Representative on Reconciliation with Métis: Section 35 Métis Rights and the Manitoba Métis Federation Decision.* https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1467641790303/1467641835266

5.2   Coordination Among Federal Programs

The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS), funded by Employment and Social Development Canada, links individuals' needs to labour market demands, and provides Indigenous people with training or skills upgrading needed to help them find a job. The ASETS was allocated $1.6 billion over five years (2010-11 to 2014-15), and is status-blind, with its programs and services being open to all Indigenous people regardless of status or location. Programs and services funded through the ASETS include:

- skills development;
- training for high-demand jobs;
- job finding;
- programs for youth, urban Indigenous people and for Indigenous people with disabilities; and
- access to child care.[46]

The ASETS funds organizations, called Aboriginal Agreement Holders, to design and deliver employment programs and services best suited to meet the needs of the Indigenous population in their respective areas. The ASETS does not provide operational capacity funding. The three priorities of the ASETS include supporting demand-driven skills development, fostering partnerships with the private sector and other levels of government, and placing emphasis on accountability and results. The ASETS funding is available in all locations (rural, urban, on-reserve, off-reserve), and there are agreement holders in all major cities.

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy's focus on participation in the economy, its status-blind approach, and its emphasis on establishing stable partnerships in urban centres are similar to the priorities of the ASETS, although focused more on employability than job readiness. Some activities, including child care and job preparation, may be eligible for funding by both ASETS and the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. While Aboriginal Agreement Holders are predominantly First Nation organizations, evaluation evidence showed that these recipients also include Métis governments, Provincial-Territorial Associations of Friendship Centres, and other status-blind service delivery organizations that may also be Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding recipients. The evaluation found that, in urban centres where the ASETS and the Urban Aboriginal Strategy fund complementary activities, there is a perception of the potential for overlap across these federally-funded programs. Evaluation interviewees indicated that there is a need for regular, ongoing communication between INAC and Employment and Social Development Canada in order to ensure that the ASETS and the Urban Aboriginal Strategy work together in a complementary manner to support urban Indigenous communities.

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[46] Employment and Social Development Canada. *Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy.* https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/indigenous/asets.html

6. Evaluation Findings – Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy's Delivery Model

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy is intended to address the socio-economic needs and priorities of each off-reserve and urban Indigenous population, regardless of the rights or distinctions inherent in those populations. The Urban Aboriginal Strategy's delivery model is, therefore, based on a 'pan-Indigenous' approach, which is constructed on a view that although urban Indigenous populations are diverse in many ways, there are common challenges and opportunities due to a shared Indigenous identity. By delivering the program through the National Association of Friendship Centres, a not-for-profit, status-blind third-party, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy aims to leverage the experience and expertise of a community-driven service network while maintaining inclusivity as a priority. This section explores the effectiveness of this approach.

6.1 Appropriateness of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy Delivery Model

There was disagreement among evaluation respondents on the best approach to delivering programs and services to various urban Indigenous groups. For example, respondents from members of the National Association of Friendship Centres supported the idea of not-for-profit and non-partisan service delivery to all Indigenous groups through a status-blind third-party, while those from Métis or Inuit organizations advocated for Métis or Inuit specific funding. This debate is explored in further detail below.

> *Finding: The National Association of Friendship Centres is a leader in urban Indigenous service delivery. However, its role as the third-party delivery agent of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy may have limited the range of organizations that applied for or were granted funding.*

In the mid-1950s, Friendship Centres emerged to help address the gap in service provision for off-reserve Indigenous persons moving to and living in urban centres. These volunteer-led, 'status-blind', grassroots organizations would provide referrals for specialized services, offer counseling on matters of employment, housing, education, health, and liaise with other community organizations. As the population of First Nations, Métis and Inuit in urban centres grew, the number of Friendship Centres and the nature of their work expanded as well. Since the 1970s, Friendship Centres have been providing referrals, front-line essential social services, and cultural programming, and have been operating under established provincial associations and a national representative body, i.e., the National Association of Friendship Centres.

The National Association of Friendship Centres has established a unique relationship with the federal government since Canadian Heritage transferred the administration of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program to the National Association of Friendship Centres in 1996. Since that time, the federal government has continued to partner with the National Association of Friendship Centres for the administration of program funding to support the Friendship Centre network and

build community partnerships. Friendship Centres are recognized as a model for developing effective institutions for Indigenous economic development in urban areas.[47]

In 2014, when the Urban Aboriginal Strategy was redesigned with a new delivery model and focus on increasing urban Indigenous participation in the economy, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada continued to leverage its relationship with the National Association of Friendship Centres for the delivery of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. This decision was supported by a number of factors, including:

- The federal government's recognition that the National Association of Friendship Centres is "an established organization that plays a central role in providing cultural-based programs and services to a growing urban Aboriginal population";[48]

- The National Association of Friendship Centres' successful administration and delivery of the former Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program;

- By collaborating with the National Association of Friendship Centres, the Government could streamline resources and reduce administrative burdens;

- The National Association of Friendship Centres and its members are 'status-blind' organizations, meaning their services are available to all individuals regardless of ethnic affiliation, which could help broaden the reach of Urban Aboriginal Strategy' impact; and

- INAC ranked the National Association of Friendship Centres as 'low' risk in their general assessment (organizational risk assessment), suggesting capacity to deliver the program.[49]

The focus of the 2014 Urban Aboriginal Strategy redesign emphasized partnership development to maximize the impact of projects and services. The National Association of Friendship Centres and its members have extensive experience in building effective partnerships with service delivery agents, the private sector, municipal and provincial governments, and other federal departments. The National Association of Friendship Centres estimates that these partnerships have enabled its Provincial-Territorial Associations to leverage federal government funding eight to one. In a 2013 report, they stated that "[W]ith $16.1 million in support for core operations from the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program, Friendship Centres delivered approximately $37 million for federal departments; approximately $39 million for provincial/territorial governments; $4.5 million for municipal governments; and $4 million for non-governmental and other Aboriginal organizations."[50] The National Association of Friendship Centres and its Provincial-Territorial Associations also supported the strategic planning and reporting activities led by INAC, another important component of the redesigned Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

However, there are administrative burdens placed on the National Association of Friendship Centres as the third-party delivery agent of the redesigned Urban Aboriginal Strategy. For instance, the National Association of Friendship Centres' approach to service delivery is not fully aligned with

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[47] Urban Aboriginal Economic Development (2009), *Opportunities and Challenges Urban Environments Represent For Urban Aboriginal Economic Development.*

[48] Government of Canada. (2014). *Harper Government invests in Aboriginal People Living in Urban Centres.*

[49] Since 2014, NAFC's ranking has increased to medium in 2015-16 and then further increased to high later in 2015-16.

[50] Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres. (2013) *Friendship Centres and the Urban Aboriginal Strategy: A Way Forward.*

the narrow scope of the main objective of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. While it supports participation in the economy as a priority for urban Indigenous communities, this is not the only focus of the Friendship Centre movement. The National Association of Friendship Centres and its members employ a 'wrap-around' service delivery approach, meaning that they bring together a number of programs and services to meet the mental, physical, cultural and emotional needs of an individual. However, the terms and conditions of the redesigned Urban Aboriginal Strategy programs were more restrictive in terms of the scope of services, activities, and expenses that are eligible for funding. Significantly changing the focus on longstanding program activities delivered at the Friendship Centre level appeared to have been challenging for the movement to affect in the timeframe given.

Under the redesigned Urban Aboriginal Strategy delivery model, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program was amalgamated into the Community Capacity Supports Program, and core-like funding became available not only to Friendship Centres but also to other status-blind organizations outside of the Friendship Centre movement. Prior to this, in its role as the administrator of the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program, the National Association of Friendship Centres was only responsible for funding its network of members. With approximately 12 weeks to prepare for implementation, the evaluation found that the transfer of the responsibility for delivering the Urban Aboriginal Strategy programs did not allow enough time for the Provincial-Territorial Associations to strengthen their internal administrative capacity to meet the demand of applicants under the redesigned Urban Aboriginal Strategy. As part of the new delivery model, the Provincial-Territorial Associations took on responsibility for developing the call for proposals, managing the adjudication and selection process, and responding to information requests, among other tasks.

In addition, Friendship Centres were no longer guaranteed operational funding, and the National Association of Friendship Centres had responsibility to deliver funds to an expanded pool of eligible organizations. In the redesigned delivery model, the National Association of Friendship Centres, as overseers of the administration of the adjudication process for applicant proposals, which included the expanded applicant pool, was placed in a position where its members might not obtain funding, potentially compromising members' ability to maintain operations. Some Provincial-Territorial Association representatives expressed that this compromised their ability to maintaining strong relationships with their membership. This situation created a real or perceived issue around accessibility to funding by organizations both within and outside the Friendship Centre movement. When interviewed, many organizations outside of the Friendship Centre movement perceived that funding preferences were being made in favour of the National Association of Friendship Centre membership.

Finding: The Urban Aboriginal Strategy delivery approach limits the ability to respond to the respective needs of distinct Indigenous groups.

To help understand the needs of distinct Indigenous groups in urban centres, organizations representing the distinct interests of urban Métis and Inuit were interviewed, including the Métis Nation Council and its provincial affiliates, and Inuit service delivery and advocacy organizations.

These organizations expressed that a pan-Indigenous program delivered by a non-governmental, status-blind third party, like the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, lacks sensitivity to the distinct needs and identity of the Métis and Inuit. Some Métis government representatives placed this argument in today's broader political context, expressing that it is inappropriate for Indigenous governments to

apply to service-delivery agents for funding, particularly in light of the federal government's commitment to engage Indigenous peoples in nation-to-nation and government to government relationships.

In June 2016, INAC released a report titled *A Matter of National and Constitutional Importance: Report of the Minister's Special Representative on Reconciliation with Métis: Section 35 Métis Rights and the Manitoba Métis Federation Decision.* The report urges Canada to work with Métis people in a nation-to-nation relationship. The report claims that "Métis access a very small proportion of Canada's resources set aside to deal with Aboriginal peoples." The report states that there is "a demonstrated need to re-examine federal Aboriginal representative programs to ensure the program objectives enable a distinct focus on Métis as a distinct Aboriginal peoples in Canada, rather than being grouped into general 'Aboriginal' programming". The report further recommended that "Canada review its existing policies, programs and services dealing with, or available to, Aboriginal peoples, or any of them, to ensure that Métis peoples and Section 35 Métis rights, are expressly and distinctly considered and be cognizant that any new Aboriginal-related policies, programs and services consider and, where appropriate, address Métis and their Section 35 rights distinctly and equitably."[51]

The Inuit must also be recognized as one of Canada's three distinct Indigenous groups with a unique language, culture, and history as per Section 35 of the *Constitution Act (1982).* While being the smallest group in terms of population, the urban Inuit demographic continues to grow, with approximately 11 percent[52] of Inuit now living in major urban areas, compared to four percent in 2008[53]. Gaps exist between the well-being of urban Inuit and that of the general urban population and other Indigenous groups. For example, in Montreal, urban Inuit represent 10 percent of the Indigenous population, but account for 45 percent of homeless Indigenous people in the city.[54]

Both Inuit and Métis organizations representing the interests of their respective populations argue that in order to improve individual and community well-being, urban programs and services must be delivered in accordance with Inuit and Métis cultures and values. This point of view is generally supported in academic literature concerning effective Indigenous programming, which have demonstrated that community-controlled, culturally-based programs enable impactful and sustainable programming.[55,56,57]

[51] Isaac T. (2016). *A Matter of National and Constitutional Import: Report of the Minister's Special Representative on Reconciliation with Métis: Section 35 Métis Rights and the Manitoba Métis Federation Decision.* https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1467641790303/1467641835266

[52] Statistics Canada. (2011). *Analytical Document: Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: First Nations People, Métis and Inuit.* http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.pdf

[53] Place J. (2012). *The Health of Aboriginal People Residing in Urban Areas.*

[54] Kishigami, N. (2008). Homeless Inuit in Montreal. *Inuit urbains.* Volume 32, Issue 1, 2008. URL: https://www.erudit.org/revue/etudinuit/2008/v32/n1/029820ar.pdf

[55] Rowley, K.G. et. al. (2000). Effectiveness of a community-directed 'healthy lifestyle' program in a remote Australian Aboriginal community. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health.* Volume 24, Issue 2, April 2000. URL: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-842X.2000.tb00133.x/abstract

[56] Hunter, L.M. et. al. (2006). Aboriginal Healing: Regaining Balance and Culture. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing.* Volume 17, Issue 1, 2006. URL: http://tcn.sagepub.com/content/17/1/13.short

[57] Brady, M. (1995). Culture in treatment, culture as treatment. A critical appraisal of developments in addictions programs for indigenous North Americans and Australians. *Social Science & Medicine.* Volume 41, Issue 11, December 1995. URL: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/027795369500055C

In 2016, INAC contracted Tungasuvvingat Inuit to complete consultations with Inuit communities in urban centres to better understand the needs of this distinct demographic. Inuit who participated in these consultations voiced that they often feel marginalized within the Indigenous population in their respective cities, as services are more often grounded in First Nations or Métis cultures whose populations are more dominant. Inuit do not feel comfortable accessing such services. They contended that there is a need for Inuit specific services and building the capacity of Inuit organizations. They also expressed that existing Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations could be improved by collaborating with Inuit representative to ensure services can be provided in a culturally appropriate way. It is important to note that while participants supported having culturally-based services, they also felt that these services should open their doors to all persons regardless of their ethnic or cultural heritage or affiliation.

The evaluation found that Métis and Inuit-specific organizations faced barriers to accessing Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding to support operational capacity. As specified in the Urban Aboriginal Strategy Terms and Conditions, eligible recipients of the Community Capacity Support Program include:

> Friendship Centres and other incorporated urban Aboriginal not-for-profit service delivery organizations that deliver programs and services to all urban Aboriginal individuals, commonly referred to as status-blind, and are accountable and transparent Aboriginal community institutions.

Almost all Community Capacity Support Program funding was allocated to National Association of Friendship Centres members. The high proportion of funding to its members is believed to be reflective of an understanding, within the network, that this new core-like funding was akin to previous core funding. There was also a belief by some organizations outside of the Friendship Centre movement that the funds were not available to them, given that their services are not delivered under a status-blind service delivery model or that they are not focused on delivery to the urban Indigenous community. For instance, while most Métis and Inuit specific organizations open their doors to all individuals, their mandates are focused on providing services oriented toward their distinct cultures. This therefore makes them ineligible for Community Capacity Support funding as per the funding's 'status-blind' condition.

Métis and Inuit specific organizations interviewed for this evaluation also questioned the National Association of Friendship Centre's accountability as a third party delivery agent for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. Interviewees claimed that the Urban Aboriginal Strategy project funding under the Urban Partnerships Program has been disproportionately allocated among various Indigenous groups to the advantage of Friendship Centre recipients, whose principle client-base has historically been urban First Nations. According to program financial data, from 2014 to 2016, the National Association of Friendship Centres allocated a total $30.6 million in Urban Partnerships Program funding to urban projects. Less than four percent of this funding was granted to Métis specific organizations, although Métis make up 32 percent of the Indigenous population and 44 percent of Métis live in large urban centres.[58] A total of close to $520,000 was allocated to Inuit organizations from 2014 to 2016, representing less than two percent of the Urban Partnerships Program funding. However, it is important to note that Friendship Centres have a large membership of 118 across the

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[58] INAC. (2013). *Aboriginal Demographics from the 2011 National Household Survey.* https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ-AI/STAGING/texte-text/abo_demo2013_1370443844970_eng.pdf

country. Relative to Friendship Centres, few Métis and Inuit specific organizations applied for Urban Partnerships Program funding in both 2014-15 and 2015-16.

The Provincial-Territorial Associations of Friendship Centres take the position that their membership benefitted more from the former Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program than they do from the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. For example, in response to the 2016 Urban Aboriginal Strategy engagement process, the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres issued a position paper outlining its concerns and recommendations for a redesigned national approach to the delivery of programs and services to Indigenous people in urban and rural communities across Canada. The paper views the Urban Aboriginal Strategy as "[a] competitive funding environment that creates division, scarcity, and confusion among Friendship Centres and other urban Indigenous organizations."[59] Instead, Provincial-Territorial Associations advocate for a specific carve out of funding for Friendship Centres that provides for stable multi-year operational capacity support, similar to the core-funding provided through the previous Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program.

While attempting to ensure that the Urban Aboriginal Strategy does not favour any particular group, it appears that in practice this pan-Indigenous approach may work contrary to the idea of 'inclusion' on which the Strategy's delivery model is founded.

Recommendation 4: Widen the network of those able to access funding in support of urban Indigenous peoples, while ensuring that there is limited duplication of and coordinated use of available resources.

6.2 The Urban Aboriginal Strategy Programs' Application Processes

The National Association of Friendship Centres and the Provincial-Territorial Associations in each region are responsible for making the applications for the Urban Partnerships and Community Capacity Support programs available to potential applicants, and for providing support to applicants in the development and submission of their applications. Provincial-Territorial Associations are also responsible for establishing independent adjudication processes for each program, for notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants of the funding decision on their applications, and for administering the funding to successful applicants.

To assess the accessibility, feasibility and transparency of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy application processes, the Evaluation team developed a survey for organizations who applied for Community Capacity Support Program funding and/or Urban Partnerships Program funding in 2014-15 and 2015-16. The survey was made available to 230 applicants, of which 90 (39 percent) submitted responses. Table 3 shows the proportion of respondents by organization type.

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[59] Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres. (2016). Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) – Position Paper, p.2.

Table 3: Proportion of Respondents by Organization Type

Organization Type	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Friendship Centre	37	41%
Indigenous community organization, business or service provider	30	33.3%
National governance or representative organization	1	1.1%
Provincial or territorial governance or representative organization	1	1.1%
Non-Indigenous community organization, business or service provider	8	9%
Other	13	14.5%
Total	**90**	**100%**

Survey questions focused on applicants' experience throughout the entire process of applying for one or both of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy programs, from accessing the Request for Proposals, to developing and submitting proposals, to support provision, to receiving results and feedback. The survey consisted mostly of Likert Scale questions to determine applicants' level of agreement with statements regarding application accessibility, feasibility, and transparency. As the application processes for each Urban Aboriginal Strategy program are different, the survey contained separate questions for each process. Of the 90 respondents, 78 answered questions related to the Urban Partnerships Program; however, only 59 respondents completed all of the questions, with the remainder opting to abstain or skip some. Thirty-eight responded to questions related to the Community Capacity Support Program. Data from the survey was corroborated with findings extracted from key informant interviews. Differences in responses based on type of organization are noted.

Finding: The application process is accessible and clear; however, organizations found it challenging to complete all the application requirements within the time frames provided.

The survey found that the majority of respondents thought that the call for proposals and application criteria for both the Urban Partnerships Program and Community Capacity Support Program were easy to access online, that the application criteria were easy to understand, and that the application submission method was user friendly. However, 59 percent of Urban Partnerships Program respondents indicated that they 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with the statement that they had adequate time to complete their applications before the deadline. Approximately 50 percent of respondents indicated that applications took over nine days to complete either program's application, as indicated in the tables below.

Table 4: Number of Days to Complete an Urban Partnerships Program Application

Number of Days to Complete a Urban Partnerships Program Application	Number of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents
1-2 days	5	8%
3-5 days	19	30%
6-8 days	10	16%
9-10 days	15	24%
Over 10 days	14	22%
Total	**63**	**100%**

Table 5: Number of Days to Complete a Community Capacity Support Program Application

Number of Days to Complete a Community Capacity Support Program Application	Number of Survey Respondents	Percentage of Survey Respondents
1-2 days	3	8%
3-5 days	10	26%
6-8 days	6	16%
9-10 days	10	26%
Over 10 days	9	24%
Total	38	100%

A few Provincial-Territorial Associations who were interviewed indicated that the amount of information required to complete the Urban Partnerships Program application is disproportionate to the short duration of each project (one year), and that it was particularly burdensome for smaller organizations with limited administrative resources. A few applicant organizations stated that the level of effort and the documentation required, particularly the requirement to have strong stable partnerships, resulted in the exclusion of organizations that propose good projects but have not developed the same level of community partnerships and administrative capacity as larger organizations and well-networked Friendship Centres. Provincial-Territorial Associations held a similar view, noting that the Friendship Centres tend to have a stronger capacity to develop and submit strong proposals in a timely manner, giving them a leg up in the competition for Urban Partnerships Program funding.

Most applicants who participated in the survey felt that applying for program funding was reasonably straightforward. However, a number of respondents noted that communication around, and awareness of, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding cycle could be improved. Some respondents and key informants stated that the launch of the Calls for Proposals and their deadlines were not communicated to them. These organizations stated that the only reason they were able to participate in the processes was because a third-party had contacted them and alerted them about the deadline. This resulted in constrained timelines under which to submit their applications. Survey respondents noted that this compromised their ability to access support. All but one of the organizations that provided this feedback were not affiliated with the Friendship Centre movement, which suggests that Friendship Centres may have an advantage when applying for Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding, as they are better connected to, and experienced with, the administration of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.

Recommendation 5: Employ multi-stream communications strategies to ensure a wide range of eligible organizations are aware of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in order to ensure application by these organizations.

Finding: Provincial-Territorial Associations provided timely, adequate support to organizations applying for Urban Partnerships Program funding.

Survey results suggest that applicants were generally satisfied with the support they received in completing their applications. Overall, 57 percent of Urban Partnerships Program respondents and 60 percent of Community Capacity Support Program respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the statement 'Overall, my organization was satisfied with the support it received.' For both

Community Capacity Support Program and Urban Partnerships Program application processes, the top types of assistance received from the Provincial-Territorial Associations include a telephone number to call for assistance; guidelines to help complete the applications; and clarifications around application criteria. The majority of respondents for both application processes indicated the feedback received was helpful, that their questions and concerns were fully addressed, and that support was provided in a timely manner.

Finding: Funding decisions made by Provincial-Territorial Adjudicators with respect to both programs was sometimes questioned.

Evidence suggests that efforts were made to ensure the transparency of the application process. Most applicants were informed of how their applications would be assessed prior to the submission deadline. However, a rationale for rejection was not always provided to unsuccessful applicants. Close to a third (30 percent) of Urban Partnerships Program respondents who had experience being rejected for funding indicated that they did not receive a justification for why their application was rejected. Eighty percent of all Urban Partnerships Program and Community Capacity Support Program respondents answered that they were not provided with an opportunity to review the scoring of their application. By not being able to review the scoring applied to the application, or not being able to obtain information on the justification of the decision, applicants were not able to learn from any errors and improve future applications.

A number of survey respondents provided recommendations for how the application processes for Urban Aboriginal Strategy programs could be improved. Since the top reason for why Urban Partnerships Program applications were rejected was that proposed projects were not clearly linked to the Urban Aboriginal Strategy outcome of increasing participation in the economy, respondents called for more flexibility in the range of funding opportunities available under the Urban Partnerships Program. In particular, they felt:

- the Strategy's funding should be multi-year;
- there should be allowance for new organizations to build their partnership network. (Currently, organizations must demonstrate the existence of strong partnerships established prior to their submission);
- successful projects should have priority for renewal, or receive ongoing funding, so that they can expand and have a continued positive impact in communities;
- more time should be given to complete applications;
- the application process should begin in the late fall sufficiently ahead of the funding year. This would give applicants adequate time to complete their applications, receive support, and lengthen the application adjudication process so that applicants could review their scores and undergo an appeal process if they are not satisfied with the results of their assessment. More time would also allow for better communication between the Provincial-Territorial Associations and Urban Aboriginal Strategy applications, helping to build those relationships and increase awareness of the available funding under Urban Aboriginal Strategy; and
- the eligibility criteria should be clarified, particularly, the definition of a 'status-blind' organization for Community Capacity Support Program funding.

6.3 The Urban Aboriginal Strategy Funding Arrangement

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding model attempts to create greater efficiency, reduce duplication, and foster collaboration by streamlining the delivery of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy and partnering with the National Association of Friendship Centres for the delivery of program funding. This approach is aligned with principles of collective impact, integrating the public and non-for-profit sectors to deliver local programs and services. Under this model, it is expected that the National Association of Friendship Centres serve as a stable partner with dedicated staff who are directly connected to urban Indigenous issues on the ground, and is capable of managing the Urban Aboriginal Strategy through ongoing facilitation, technology, data collection, and reporting on outcomes.

The evaluation uncovered three key issues that have limited the expected impact of Urban Aboriginal Strategy funding. These include:

1) a lack of common understanding between INAC and the National Association of Friendship Centres concerning eligible expenditures and reporting requirements, resulting in funding delays to the detriment of recipient service delivery agents in urban communities;
2) the limitations of the National Association of Friendship Centres' funding formula; and
3) the limitations of one-year funding as per the terms and conditions of the funding agreement.

Finding: The interpretation of eligible expenditures under the Urban Aboriginal Strategy terms and conditions is not agreed to by the National Association of Friendships Centre and INAC.

Interviews and documentation revealed a lack of agreement between INAC and the National Association of Friendship Centres about eligible expenditures and reporting requirements, as outlined in the terms and conditions of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy contribution agreement. This ultimately resulted in a delay in the distribution of funds.

In 2014-15 and 2015-16, the National Association of Friendship Centres did not fully meet the reporting expectations as delineated in the Urban Aboriginal Strategy terms and conditions. The organization was deemed to have failed to provide the level of detail required, to INAC, on its expenditures. This was particularly the case for expenditures associated with the administration of the Urban Partnerships and Community Capacity Support programs. INAC was therefore challenged to ensure that adequate levels of due diligence and public transparency were met within the deadlines set out in the funding agreement.

Variance in the reporting capacity of organizations funded under the Community Capacity Support and Urban Partnerships programs also contributed to inconsistency in the quality of reporting on program outcomes. According to some Provincial-Territorial Associations, meeting the program reporting requirements were particularly challenging for smaller non-for-profit organizations.

In addition, there was confusion among Provincial-Territorial Associations concerning the role that Regional and Community Strategic Plans play in making funding decisions. The funding agreement stipulates that funding decisions under both the Urban Partnerships and Community Capacity Support programs should be guided by Community Strategic Plans and Regional Strategic Plans. However, a project cannot be deemed ineligible if it does not align with a plan, indicating that plans

cannot be used to as a criterion to screen applications. In interviews, Provincial-Territorial Associations questioned how they were supposed to use plans to guide funding decisions related to Urban Partnerships project proposals without considering alignment with the plans as a condition of eligibility, particularly with a limited amount of project funding available. In addition, in 2014-15, the regional and community plans were in development, therefore the Provincial-Territorial Associations were not able to leverage the content of plans to guide their funding decisions. While it was understood by both the National Association of Friendship Centres and INAC that plans would only be available beginning in the second year of the redesigned Urban Aboriginal Strategy (2015-16), some Provincial-Territorial Associations found it challenging to develop strong application evaluation criteria with limited resources during the first year of implementation (2014-15).

The failure to resolve the reporting issues between INAC and the National Association of Friendship Centres led to a delay in launching the 2016-17 funding cycle. For eligible Community Capacity Support Program recipients, that means that these organizations did not receive support for their operational capacity funding until the second quarter of the fiscal year. As a result, a number of organizations faced financial hardship, and some were forced to lay off staff and reduce programming and operations. Funding delays also significantly affected recipient organizations' capacity for annual organizational planning. Several organizations interviewed as part of the evaluation stated that this placed them in a state of uncertainty and stress, negatively impacting their services and employee wellness.

INAC and the National Association of Friendship Centres representatives agree that further detail and clarification within the terms and conditions would help mitigate the risk of misinterpretation in the future.

Finding: The National Association of Friendship Centres' funding formula for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy includes some factors that do not fully consider the diversity of organizations eligible for funding.

The National Association of Friendship Centres delegates the majority of the administration of both the Urban Partnerships and Community Capacity Support Program to its Provincial-Territorial Associations. Each Provincial-Territorial Association receives different levels of funding based on a number of factors, which include the number of Friendship Centres, historical funding level, and Indigenous population. While the Strategy's programs are open to other Indigenous service providers, this funding formula does not seem to take into account the number of Indigenous organization unaffiliated with the friendship centre movement in each province/territory, which could result in less available funding in provinces where there are fewer Friendship Centres but a large number of other Indigenous service providers. For example, the Friendship Centre movement has a small northern presence, and this funding formula does not account for the increased costs and challenges of service delivery in northern areas.

Finding: The one-year funding model appears burdensome for service delivery organizations, and limits Urban Aboriginal Strategy results to short-term assistance to individuals, rather than longer-term impacts for families and communities.

The Community Capacity Support and Urban Partnerships programs were generally delivered on an annual basis to organizations who applied for funding under one or both programs. As discussed previously, the application and reporting processes for these two programs were often described as lengthy and burdensome, potentially advantaging organizations with higher administrative capacity. Given an annual funding process, applicant organizations expressed that they are spending a lot of time focused on obtaining funding and reporting on dollars spent, which limits the time available to implement the activities committed to in their proposals. This was found to be particularly the case for Urban Partnerships Program recipient organizations, which must demonstrate project results, including the establishment of new partnerships, before the end of a funding year.

Urban Partnerships Program recipients lamented in interviews and the applicant survey that one-year project funding was not helping their communities to achieve long-term stable results. Many indicated that with the uncertainty of one-year funding, they are unable to effectively plan their programs and resources for the year or future years. This can particularly impact their ability to manage staff. Their capacity for planning and for implementing projects is further constrained when funding is delayed, as was the case for 2016-17 fiscal year. In addition, the terms and conditions of the Urban Partnerships Program are designed such that funding not be used to support organization's ongoing operations, or support already funded successful programs and initiatives. Interviewees expressed that funding, as they understood, should not be used to fund consecutive years of project activity; but that funding would be granted for new initiatives. Therefore, many organizations were not able to reapply for funding to continue successful projects. While one of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy objectives is to build partnerships to leverage resources for ongoing funding for successful projects, organizations interviewed found it extremely challenging to build stable financial partnerships within a one-year-or-less time-frame.

Provinces and municipalities interviewed supported this position. As representatives from one province stated, "[t]he level of funding being distributed for these one-year projects is insufficient. You will never see results in one to two years from non-for-profit community level organizations. [Multi-year funding] provides organizations with stability and planning capacity."

Urban Indigenous issues are often complex and multidimensional. It is difficult for single-year projects to make real and lasting impact. A funding model with strong monitoring practices and controls as well as multi-year funding cycles should be implemented in order to promote longer-term solutions.

Recommendation 6: Implement a funding model that includes strong monitoring practices and allows the renewal of funding beyond a single year for projects that demonstrate achievement of results.

7. Evaluation Findings – Early Impacts of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy

This section examines how Urban Aboriginal Strategy program funding has contributed to meeting its component programs' expected results and the Strategy's ultimate objective of increasing urban Indigenous participation in the economy. The section is divided based on the Urban Aboriginal Strategy's three lines of funding: 1) Community Capacity Support Program; 2) Urban Partnerships Program; and 3) Regional and Community Strategic Planning. As the evaluation scope is focused on the Urban Aboriginal Strategy since its redesign in 2014, the impacts discussed below are preliminary and seen as steps toward achieving expected results. The main limitation of the analysis presented in this section is that, due to internal capacity and data collection challenges, as well as a lack of detailed reporting from the National Association of Friendship Centres, the program-specific measures such as those outlined in the Strategy's Performance Measurement Strategy have not been tracked and reported.

7.1 Community Capacity Support Program

When the Urban Aboriginal Strategy was redesigned in 2014, the Community Capacity Support program effectively replaced the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program as the provider of operational capacity funding to Friendship Centres, and opened the program to other status-blind urban Indigenous service providers. The objective of the program is to have a stable base from which to deliver programs and services that increase urban Indigenous participation in the economy and attract additional investments.

Finding: Funding levels to Friendship Centres remained relatively similar to those that predated the consolidated Urban Aboriginal Strategy, thereby suggesting a comparative ability to impact urban initiatives and projects. Funding to organizations outside the network was about 10 percent.

In both 2014-15 and 2015-16, out of the $23 million of Community Capacity Support Program funding, $19 million was distributed by the National Association of Friendship Centres to urban Indigenous organizations. The rest was retained by the National Association of Friendship Centres and its Provincial and Territorial Associations to cover costs related to administering the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. In total, 126 organizations were funded by the Program. Of this, 93 percent ($17.7 million) went to Friendship Centres. Overall, Friendship Centres maintained similar levels of operational capacity support as they had prior to the consolidated Urban Aboriginal Strategy, when they received $16 million. Out of the $19 million, $1.4 million was allocated to other Indigenous organizations. Data reviewed indicates that organizations receiving Community Capacity Support Program funding were able to leverage that funding to access additional revenues. According to information shared by the National Association of Friendship Centres, in 2014-15, the $19 million allocated through the Program helped funded organizations leverage $94.4 million in additional investment, and allowed services to be delivered to approximately 683,000. Interviewees were generally clear that without federal investment, leveraging would not be feasible.

As discussed previously, Community Capacity Support Program funding is only available to

'status-blind' organizations, excluding culturally-specific organizations. However, many of these organizations asserted that while their programs and services are grounded in specific cultures or values, their doors remain open to all individuals in need of support, regardless of the cultural background. In the Program terms and conditions, the 'status blind' is only defined as "delivering programs and services to all urban Aboriginal individuals", and does not dictate that cultural orientation of programs and service must be general in nature. Therefore, as per the terms and conditions of the Strategy, as long as organizations demonstrate that they serve all urban Indigenous people they should be able to access Community Capacity Support Program funding to stabilize and enhance their operational capacity. There is an opportunity in the Urban Aboriginal Strategy to improve transparency through a clear articulation of program eligibility and definition of 'status-blind.'

Confusion remains among Friendship Centres and other Community Capacity Support recipients concerning the definition of 'core-like' funding. Most key informants were unable to articulate the difference between 'core' funding that they received under the previous Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program, and 'core-like' funding as described in the Urban Aboriginal Strategy terms and conditions. One key difference appears to be more limitations on eligible expenditures, and the requirement to apply for the funding on an annual basis. As discussed above, the one-year funding model of the Community Capacity Support Program led to uncertainty and hindered organizations' capacity for operational planning.

Recommendation 7: Ensure fairness and transparency of funding allocations by clarifying terms and conditions to include detailed definitions of eligible recipients and expenditures.

7.2 Urban Partnerships Program

7.2.1 Project Component

The Urban Partnerships Program consists of two components: proposal-based project funding ($20 million) and regional planning ($10 million). The project funding is delivered by the National Association of Friendship Centres, who delegates the administration of the funding to its Provincial-Territorial Associations.

Finding: Urban Partnerships Projects have continued to be focused on projects led by the Friendship Centre movement while demand from outside the movement is strong.

According to the National Association of Friendship Centres' final reports, 150 organizations were allocated Urban Partnerships funding in each of 2014-15 and 2015-16. In terms of the allocation of funding, over these two years approximately 44 percent of Urban Partnerships project applicants were Friendship Centres, with the balance being organizations outside of the National Association of Friendship Centres movement. In terms of allocated project funding, however, Friendship Centres received a higher proportion of Urban Partnerships project funding, at approximately 57 percent. These figures suggest a continued orientation towards funding of Friendship Centres, although data shows that the proportion of project funding allocated to Friendship Centres decreased from approximately 61 percent in 2014-15 to 53 percent in 2015-16.[60]

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[60] Information provided by the Provincial-Territorial Associations at the time of the evaluation.

Provincial-Territorial Associations of Friendship Centres, who facilitate the adjudication of project proposals, attributed this change to an increased awareness of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy's redesign among other Indigenous urban organizations, and the improvement of project proposals received from organizations outside the Friendship Centre network.

Urban Partnerships project funding, as set out by the National Association of Friendship Centres, focuses on three key priority areas, including youth, innovation and social enterprise. Prospective recipients must apply to the Provincial-Territorial Associations for funding through one of these three streams. The distribution of funding in each stream in 2014-15 and 2015-16 is provided in the following table:

Table 6: Distribution of Urban Partnerships Project Funding by Stream[61]

Urban Partnerships Funding Stream	2014-15 ($)[62]	2015-16 ($)	Total Proportion of Funding – Cumulative (%)
Youth	9,485,148	7,951024	57
Innovation	2,295,866	3,938,128	20
Social Enterprise	1,734,797	2,353,589	14
Unknown[63]		2,725,962	9
Total	**13,515,811.00[64]**	**16,968,703**	**100**

Finding: The Urban Partnerships Program 'Youth' stream receives the highest level of project-funding. The focus on youth programming is aligned with the stated priorities of urban Indigenous people and organizations. However, evaluation participants called for an increased emphasis on culture in project delivery.

The majority of projects (57 percent) were funded under the youth funding stream. This is consistent with key informant and document review findings that placed youth programming as one of the top priorities for urban Indigenous people. Interviews with service delivery agents revealed that there was concern among Indigenous service providers that funding to youth programming would decline when the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth[65] and the Young Canada Works for Aboriginal Urban Youth were collapsed within the redesigned Urban Aboriginal Strategy. Therefore, while the former youth-centered programs were allocated slightly more funding (approximately $12 million), the evaluation found that youth continue to be a supported priority of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy.[66]

Interviewees asserted that Indigenous youth programming is needed in urban centres, and that it must be delivered in a way that connects youth to their Indigenous cultures. This was a key

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[61] Information contained in this table is based on data included in the annual reports on the Urban Aboriginal Strategy produced and made public by the National Association of Friendship Centres for 2014-15 and 2015-16.
[62] NAFC (September, 2015). Urban Aboriginal Strategy – Final Report. - *Urban Partnerships Projects as of March 2015*
[63] Information on the funding streams for projects funded in Ontario in the 2015-16 fiscal year was not available.
[64] Due to delays in the signing of the funding agreement for the Urban Partnerships Program, only four months remained in the fiscal year to fully implement the project funding. Only $13.5 million was spent by March 31, 2015; however, the funding agreement allowed for funding to be carried over to the following fiscal year. This is noted in the difference in project funding in 2014-15 and 2015-16.
[65] Formally the Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centres Program.
[66] Canadian Heritage. (2011) Summative Evaluation of the Aboriginal Peoples' Program
http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/pc-ch/CH7-7-2011-eng.pdf

component of the Cultural Connections for Aboriginal Youth. In support of previously presented findings, many evaluation participants expressed a continued need in cultural programming specifically for Indigenous youth. This is supported by the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study, which found that urban Indigenous peoples who felt that they could participate in and make a positive impact in city life also maintained a strong connection to their culture and community.[67]

7.2.2 Success Stories

While a detailed review of all funded Urban Partnerships Program projects was not feasible, the stories heard within the context of regional site visits outlined any examples of initiatives making a difference in the lives of Indigenous peoples, including breaking down barriers to employment for urban Indigenous individuals who participated in the projects. To illustrate program success, an example from each funded stream is profiled below.

Youth

Circle of Voices, Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwin Theatre, Saskatchewan (2014-5 and 2015-16)[68]
The Circle of Voices Program provides a safe environment to explore creativity. Its purpose is to assist aspiring artists in strengthening self-confidence and cultural awareness while developing professional skills, and provide an experience where youth can work with and among professionals in the theatre industry. Participants receive training in all aspects of theatre, attend workshops by local artists and Circle of Voices alumni, attend plays, meet production teams and other theatre professionals in Saskatoon's diverse theatre scene and learn the skills needed to put on a full-scale production. Gordon Tootoosis Nikaniwin Theatre employs an Elder as a cultural leader, consultant and teacher who works with Circle of Voices youth on language, personal and spiritual development. The Urban Partnerships program supported a Youth Coordinator and Cultural Leader and Life Skills Coach who guided students throughout their experience toward a full theatre production and Circle of Voices graduation.

Innovation

Employment First North, Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre, Thompson, Manitoba (2015-16) [69]
The Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre and Vale, a large Nickel mining company, launched a partnership project in 2015 called Employment First North. It was focused on finding ways to facilitate the employment of Indigenous urban people in Thompson, Manitoba, within the company. The partnership works to break down barriers to employment for members of the Thompson Indigenous population by building equitable policy and procedure development, skills identification and development, and employment opportunities for Indigenous people within Vale. Within the first four months of implementation, Project First North began expanding its reach to other employers through outreach activities and events hosted at the Friendship Centre. The project experienced success, with seven of its participants moving through the first stage of skills assessment directly to employment within the company. In addition to leading to employment opportunities, the project also aimed to ensure that Indigenous employees are supported in their positions.

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[67] Environics. (2010). Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey Final Report. http://www.uaps.ca/
[68] Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan. (2017). 2014-2016 Urban Partnerships Approved Projects. URL: http://www.afcs.ca/ckfinder/userfiles/files/successful%20UPP%202014-2016.pdf
[69] Thompson Citizen. (2015). Employment project launches within Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre. URL: http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/thompson/employment-project-launches-within-ma-mow-we-tak-friendship-centre-1.2027355

Social Enterprise

Indigenous Social Enterprise Toolkit, Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council, British Columbia (2015-16)[70]
Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council is society of 25 Indigenous organizations representing a diverse range of programs, services, and mandates across Metro Vancouver. In 2015-16, with the support of the Urban Partnerships Program, the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council developed a toolkit to support Indigenous non-profit organizations in Vancouver in developing successful social enterprises. Social enterprises help these groups generate their own source revenue to enhance and expand their community services, and participate in the economy. Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council was able to help 10 Indigenous non-profit agencies in the development of social enterprise in 2015-16. Beyond the Urban Partnerships Program, the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council further expanded the initiative the following year to deliver workshops and small grants to social enterprise start-ups.

7.3   Strategic Planning Activities

To address local Indigenous issues, community involvement is crucial. Research conducted on Indigenous programming in Australia found that "[a]cross the variety of programs reviewed … almost without exception, successful programs were those in which the community defined its own needs and then designed and controlled the response."[71] The Urban Aboriginal Strategy strategic planning activities work to support such a community-based approach in order to provide relevant solutions.

Finding: Regional Strategic Plans and Community Strategic Plans generally reflect common urban Indigenous priorities related to employment. However, plans often did not reflect the top priorities of urban Indigenous populations.

INAC directly delivers a portion of the Urban Partnerships Program – $10 million annually – to develop Community and Regional Strategic Plans of three-five years to guide Urban Aboriginal Strategy investments. Once established, the plans could also be used by other partners to fund and/or attract investments in projects addressing the identified priorities. In each region, INAC leads and funds a collaborative process that brings together stakeholders and partners such as the federal government, provincial/territorial governments, municipal government, provincial/territorial associations of the National Association of Friendship Centres, and the urban Indigenous community (e.g. representative and governance organizations, advocacy groups, Indigenous housing providers, other urban Indigenous community service providers).

Based on feedback provided by key informants, the strategic planning process has led to some improved collaboration among urban stakeholders in some regions of the country. In regions where the Regional Strategic Plan was based on comprehensive community engagement and well-defined community level plans, participants acknowledged that the process helped build or expand positive relationships among planning partners. Participants in these regions also noted that the strategic

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[70] Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council. (2017). About the MVAEC. URL: http://www.mvaec.ca/about
[71] Campbell, Pyett, & McCarthy, 2007; Hoffmann et al., 2012; Smith, Grundy, & Nelson, 2010; Tsey & Every, 2000

planning process was an opportunity to share information about other projects and services in their community that complemented their own work.

Although the Regional Strategic Plans generally reflect relevant urban Indigenous priorities related to employment and training, respondents who were involved in the development of the plans noted that their content was greatly influenced by the established Urban Aboriginal Strategy mandate. If the communities and regions were to develop the plans without a narrow and pre-defined Urban Aboriginal Strategy objective, the plans would have been more holistic and included more emphasis on key areas that are not directly aligned with finding employment, such as housing and cultural programming for youth.

Finding: In some regions, strategic planning activities did not effectively engage with urban Indigenous communities, resulting in some duplication of planning efforts and the exclusion of key stakeholders from the planning process.

In some regions, the strategic planning process was seen as being too 'top-down'. For example, in one region, consultants were contracted to complete the Regional Strategic Plan, and input from Indigenous community organizations was limited to a selected few, resulting in a lack of representation from certain groups. The level of involvement of provincial and municipal governments was inconsistent from province to province. Municipal and provincial governments play a key role in delivering services to off-reserve Indigenous groups, and without their voice at the planning table, the opportunity for developing partnerships and leveraging alternative investments may be lost.

Furthermore, in many large cities, networks among urban Indigenous stakeholders that support formal community planning processes have been in place for a number of years. For example, some provinces, including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, and their major cities, have established urban or off-reserve Indigenous plans or planning committees. The National Association of Friendship Centres' Provincial-Territorial Associations all have strategic plans, as do some urban coalition and partnership tables. In such regions, the Urban Aboriginal Strategy's Regional and Community Strategic Plans are considered to be a duplication of effort and an inefficient use of Urban Aboriginal Strategy investment. In addition, after the first year of funding, the majority of the three-five year strategic plans were complete, and regions did not require the same level of funding for ongoing plan updates. INAC developed an Urban Aboriginal Strategy Engagement Framework and associated guides and templates to assist INAC regional offices and inform engagement activities. Evidence suggests that there was inconsistent interpretation between INAC Headquarters and the regions, in terms of the activities permitted to be funded by INAC in relation to the development of regional plans. These issues were a result of the changes made to the Program without adequate time to properly prepare regions for its implementation. Due in part to the inconsistent interpretations of eligible expenditures, INAC regional offices found it challenging to get timely approval of proposed planning initiatives by Headquarters and by the Minister, putting strain on timelines for implementation.

In support of findings presented earlier regarding the focus of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, the evaluation found that strategic plans could have been more impactful by taking a broader lens on community priorities, and ensuring stronger coordination among involved parties.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusions

There is a growing trend in Indigenous urban representation (more than half of all Canadian Indigenous peoples now reside in urban areas). The changing composition of Indigenous peoples (more women and youth in urban settings), as well as the socio-economic barriers faced by these individuals in accessing services through conventional service providers, suggest that there continues to be a need, in fact a growing need, for efforts that will help coordinate and render access to a range of support programs.

The consolidated Urban Aboriginal Strategy continued to address these needs. However, its more singular focus on economic outcomes meant that the program was less flexible and therefore less able to meet the wider range of needs of this population. Its focus on employment and training did not recognize the complexity and interconnections of the challenges to socio-economic well-being that urban Indigenous people face.

The program's delivery model, relying largely on the network of the National Association of Friendship Centres, while effective given the historic role of serving Indigenous peoples and the network it maintains, made it difficult for the Strategy to enlarge its activities to include a larger population of organizations outside of its network. Funding levels for the National Association of Friendship Centres, which were similar to those available to the program previous to its consolidation, also contributed to limiting its expanded reach. Further, the one-year time frame for Urban Aboriginal Strategy Urban Partnerships Program projects hindered the Strategy's overall effectiveness and efficiency, requiring Friendship Centres and other organizations to conceptualize new projects and reapply on a yearly basis.

In terms of access by other Indigenous groups, particularly Métis and Inuit, while the Strategy's delivery is status-blind, some of the organizations delivering services to these groups are not, or if they are, their core programming is nonetheless focused on key groups.

Urban Aboriginal Strategy program funding was delivered through a competitive process, which was also a new component of the consolidated Strategy. Overall, the application process was found to be accessible and clear, although timelines for completing applications were challenging for some, and for others, the level of effort required was also a strain on capacity.

In terms of the impacts of the Strategy, with funding levels remaining relatively similar to those of previous programming, impacts can be assumed to have been of a similar scope to previous programming. Even though the focus was redirected to economic outcomes, organizations continued by reframing, as possible, their previous project activity to align with the new Strategy's objectives. Overall the Strategy did demonstrate a small widening of inclusion by non-Friendship Centre entities. Of the three areas that the National Association of Friendship Centres targeted for funding (Youth, Innovation and Social Enterprise), funding for youth projects remained the most significant proportion of funded projects.

8.2   Recommendations

It is recommended that INAC:

1. Support efforts to enhance cultural sensitivity among social service organizations and the wider social service delivery network, at all jurisdictional levels, in order to render existing services more accessible.

2. Create multi-jurisdictional networks, involving all levels of government and key organizations, in order to support more coordinated and culturally accessible services for Indigenous peoples.

3. Broaden the orientation of the urban Indigenous programming to include community priorities beyond the narrow focus of economic participation.

4. Widen the network of those able to access funding in support of urban Indigenous peoples, while ensuring that there is limited duplication of and coordinated use of available resources.

5. Employ multi-stream communications strategies to ensure a wide range of eligible organizations are aware of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy in order to ensure application by these organizations.

6. Implement a funding model that includes strong monitoring practices and allows for the renewal of funding beyond a single year for projects that demonstrate achievement of results.

7. Ensure fairness and transparency of funding allocations by clarifying terms and conditions to include detailed definitions of eligible recipients and expenditures.