

## Summary of the Evaluation of Collaboration, Partnerships, and Participation (2017-22)



### Program Description

Partnership activities were expanded to some extent after 2014 through LAC's efforts to raise public awareness of the value of its collections and fulfill its mandate. This was supported by four commitments identified in the 2016–2019 Three-Year Plan, including a commitment to be proactive and for LAC to engage in national and international networks through innovative partnerships and active collaboration. This commitment was reiterated in the Three-Year Plan 2019–2022, which indicates that LAC “will continue to engage with our clients and partners to expand Canada’s documentary heritage and increase access to our collections—even in the most remote areas of the country.”



### Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation covered a five-year period, from 2017–18 to 2021–22. It examined the following:

- Whether there are clear objectives for partnership activities, and whether those objectives are understood by internal stakeholders and external partners?
- The extent to which the partnership activities are relevant to LAC’s mandate?
- What criteria guide the choice of partnership activities?
- The extent to which partnership activities have contributed to the achievement of the program’s expected short- and medium-term results, including the following:
  - Sharing of knowledge and practices between memory institutions?
  - Active relationships and collaboration supporting publications and archives?
  - User access to publications and archives?
- What are the lessons learned and best practices resulting from partnership activities?



### Methodology

The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Treasury Board’s Policy on Results and Directive on Results (2016). The methodology was based on a mixed approach, combining sources of qualitative and quantitative data, including a literature and internal document review, interviews with key informants, and an analysis of financial and performance information. As performance data were limited, the evaluation team mitigated this deficiency by triangulating data from the other sources mentioned above.



## Findings

- The evaluation was unable to confirm that there is a policy framework for partnerships at LAC or a statement of clear objectives that are understood by internal stakeholders and external partners.
- The evaluation was unable to confirm that there were criteria for the selection of partnerships.
- Some partnership agreements contribute to the fulfillment of LAC's mandate, promote the development of its collections, and help to make them more accessible to users through partners' networks.
- The existence of genuine, relevant opportunities for collaboration in support of LAC's mandate should be a prerequisite for entering into any partnership agreement. Agreements that would not result in collaboration opportunities that contribute to the fulfillment of LAC's mandate should be avoided.
- LAC should consider using partnerships to ensure that its collections better reflect the diversity of Canadians. Partnerships are an effective way to achieve this goal.
- The evaluation revealed the importance of GLAP's role in supporting internal stakeholders, and the need to evolve that role to ensure strategic coordination of partnership activities, monitoring of expected results, preparation of recommendations for renewal of agreements, and preparation of reports for senior management.
- There is no formal evaluation process for measuring the satisfaction of external partners. Interviewees suggested a flexible approach to measuring partner satisfaction. GLAP would be responsible for this measurement.
- The evaluation found efficiency issues related to the average time required to sign agreements and the associated costs.
- The implementation of partnership agreements may help LAC to expand its collections by including more publications and archives from diversity groups and Indigenous communities. In so doing, LAC may also contribute to reconciliation efforts.



## Conclusions

The conclusions of the evaluation of COSP partnership agreements are as follows:

- Partnership agreements with Canadian or international organizations are appropriate as long as they provide genuine opportunities for collaboration in support of LAC's mandate.
- LAC needs a practical, easy-to-use strategic orientation document, with clear goals, for the management of partnership agreements. The document should be circulated to

internal stakeholders and to external partners interested in partnering with LAC, and it should specify which circumstances require a formal agreement.

- Entering into and implementing partnership agreements can help ensure that LAC's collections better reflect the diversity of the population.
- GLAP plays an important role in supporting program sectors throughout the negotiation and signing of partnership agreements. This role should evolve to include better monitoring of the achievement of expected results, assessment of external partners' satisfaction and preparation of reports for decision-making purposes when agreements are renewed.
- Applying the lessons learned and best practices arising from the implementation of agreements may help to make partnership activities more effective and efficient.



## Recommendations

In the spirit of continuous improvement, program management in collaboration with LAC's internal stakeholders should:

1. Develop, disseminate and promote the use of a flexible, user friendly strategic orientation document for partnerships that would:
  - 1.1 include clear objectives and flexible arrangements for establishing partnership agreements;
  - 1.2 clarify the roles and responsibilities of internal stakeholders to ensure a coordinated approach; and
  - 1.3 reinforce the monitoring of expected results, the assessment of partner satisfaction, the preparation of recommendations for the renewal of agreements, and the preparation of reports for senior management.

The policy document should be reviewed periodically to ensure its long-term relevance.

2. Encourage internal stakeholders to consider partnership opportunities as a means of achieving operational objectives, including better representation of the publications and archives of diversity groups and Indigenous communities in LAC collections, by:
  - 2.1 preparing a high-level analysis of key operational areas in which LAC should actively seek partnerships; and
  - 2.2 encouraging the inclusion of partnership opportunities and their implementation in operational plans.

## Management response

Program management agreed with all the recommendations and developed an action plan that included targeted actions and a timeline for implementation. The action plan can be found in Appendix A of the evaluation report.