



<b>Evaluation Policy</b>	
<b>Effective Date</b>	October 17, 2023
<b>Purpose</b>	To outline standards, processes, roles, and responsibilities regarding evaluation.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Director, Research, Measurement, and Data Analytics
<b>Accountability</b>	Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs
<b>Approved by</b>	Senior Management Committee
<b>Prepared by</b>	Research, Measurement and Data Analytics (RMDA)
<b>Related Canada Council Policies and Legal Contractual Obligations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Canada Council Strategic Plan</li> <li>Research Policy</li> <li>Performance Measurement Policy</li> <li>Procurement Policy</li> <li>Delegation of Authority Policy</li> <li>Code of Conduct</li> <li>Information Management Policy</li> <li>Governance Policy</li> <li>Granting Policy</li> <li>Operational Policies of the Arts Granting Programs Division</li> <li>Prizes Operational Policies</li> <li>Data Standards</li> <li>Data Alignment Architecture</li> <li>Fee Schedules for Compensation in Research and Evaluation Activities</li> </ul>
<b>Related Laws and External Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Government of Canada – Policy on Results</li> <li>Privacy Act</li> <li>Access to Information Act</li> <li>Official Languages Act</li> <li>Treasury Board Secretariat Directive on Open Government</li> <li>Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS)</li> <li>Canadian Evaluation Society Guidance for Ethical Evaluation Practice</li> </ul>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- provide a consistent and systematic approach to evaluation activities, including the collection and analysis of evidence on the design, delivery and outcomes of programs and initiatives of the Canada Council's (Council's) programs, initiatives, and activities<sup>1</sup> across the organization using best practices in government<sup>2</sup> reporting on evaluation, and
- establish roles and responsibilities for data collection and analysis related to design, delivery, and outcomes of the Council's programs, initiatives, and activities.

The Evaluation Policy enhances the management of the Council's programs, initiatives, and activities by articulating processes for the organization's tracking of whether the programs', initiatives', and activities' overall purposes are being achieved, what the unintended outcomes are (positive and negative), and how to adjust and refine logic models and theories of change in light of findings.

### 1.2 SCOPE

The Evaluation Policy sets out guidelines for undertaking evaluation for the Council in four key areas:

1. Granting Programs and Strategic Funds
2. Non-Granting Programs
3. Initiatives
4. Activities

### 1.3 ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Director and Chief Executive Officer** is accountable for all program evaluation activities. The Director and CEO is responsible for ensuring that the Director of Research, Measurement and Data Analytics has access to the Senior Management Committee as required, and for approving evaluation plans.

The **Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs** is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented, complied with, monitored, and assessed on a regular basis. Furthermore, the administrative accountability for evaluation is delegated to this position.

The **Director, Research, Measurement, and Data Analytics (RMDA)** is responsible for all aspects of evaluation, including but not limited to developing the Council's Evaluation

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this policy, "program" refers to the granting programs; non-granting programs that are outside the funding model (e.g., the Canada Council Art Bank, Prizes, Public Lending Right Program); initiatives refers to specific projects undertaken by the Council, e.g., partnerships; and "activities" refers to key Council areas of activities, e.g. Human Resources and Organizational Development (HROD), Information Technology and Information Management (IT/IM), Communications, Research, Measurement and Data Analytics (RMDA)

<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada (2010). *Supporting Effective Evaluations: A Guide to Developing Performance Measurement Strategies*

Plan, determining, and managing evaluation budgets, updating the plan annually, approving methodologies and reports, reporting on program evaluation and determining publication of reports. The Director of the RMDA section will ensure that all programs have appropriate indicators and performance measures in place along with data collection strategies to enable program evaluation.

The **Senior Management Committee** is responsible for oversight of the Council's Evaluation Plan and ensuring that recommendations are responded to and implemented. It is also responsible for the evaluation of non-granting programs/initiatives/activities where relevant, and for interpreting the results in order to meet the expected outcomes, within the scope of accountabilities.

The **Director General, Arts Granting Programs** is responsible for ensuring that all Arts Granting programs have appropriate indicators and performance measures in place along with data collection strategies to enable program evaluation, and that management responses are developed and implemented related to the programs. The Director General, Arts Granting Programs may also contribute to the development of the evaluation plan. Through the office of the Director General, the Arts Granting Programs Committee will review and discuss program evaluation results and recommendations.

Where evaluation is related to policy or procedures or to non-granting programs, the relevant unit's **Director General** is responsible for its implementation.

The **Deputy Director General, Arts Granting Programs** leads improvements to granting programs based on performance measurement and evaluation to ensure that granting programs are meeting stated program outcomes and objectives and works closely with the Director of Research, Measurement and Data Analytics to advance the Council's Evaluation Plan, as well as the implementation of recommendations from evaluations.

The **Director, Granting Program Operations** is responsible for reviewing grant program evaluation reports and recommendations, informing management responses, and ensuring that granting programs align with the Council's Evaluation Plan.

All **Directors** are responsible for ensuring that performance measurement data and all relevant program documentation is collected according to the Council's standards, policies and procedures; participating in the development of the Evaluation Plan; participating in advisory groups that help develop evaluation design, as internal program stakeholders; making program staff and program information available to the evaluators in a timely manner during an evaluation; contributing to the development of management responses to program evaluation recommendations, and the implementation of those responses.

The **Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO)** is responsible for the management of systems which house the data required for evaluation, information management and the Council's data retention and disposition. The Office is also responsible for provisioning and supporting the technology used for evaluation.

**Finance** is responsible for the financial and procedural approval of evaluation contracts according to the Council's Procurement Policy and the Delegation of Authority Policy.

## 1.4 DEFINITIONS

**Evaluation:** The systematic collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data on the design, delivery and outcomes (results) of programs, initiatives, and activities to make conclusions about their relevance, performance and efficiency.

**Canadian Arts Data/ Données sur les arts au Canada (CADAC):** CADAC is a joint effort by arts funding agencies across Canada and is dedicated to collecting, disseminating, and analyzing financial and statistical information about Canadian arts organizations.

**Data:** Units of information that are gathered through observation that can be used as a basis for calculation, reasoning, discussion, and drawing conclusions.

**Qualitative Data:** Information (i.e., ideas, stories, and other media) that is usually gathered from participants through interviews, focus groups or reports/surveys with open-ended questions.

**Quantitative Data:** Information gathered to describe a situation using numbers. This data is typically retrieved from questionnaires, surveys, forms, and other statistical data systems.

**External Data:** Information collected by external bodies such as Statistics Canada, including research data gathered for the Council by third parties through partnerships and contracts.

**Internal Data:** Information collected by the Council, from applicants, recipients, and other users, including application forms, budgets, and final report forms in either electronic or hard copy format, CADAC, and other internal applications or sources.

**Indicators:** Information that tracks a program's progress on outcomes and/or tracks progress made towards targets (e.g., artists create work that advances artistic practice; new works are created; a partnership supports the public access to the arts). A variable that provides a simple and reliable means to demonstrate change and answer the degree to which defined outcomes have been achieved. Indicators must relate to the desired outcomes and be reasonable, useful, and meaningful.

**Inputs:** Human, financial and material resources, knowledge, IT capacity invested in a program/ initiative/ activity to achieve its outcomes, e.g., staff, IT technology and infrastructure, facilities, budget, time, training, research, policy, etc.

**Logic Model:** A conceptual 'roadmap' or description of how the program/initiative/activity theoretically works to achieve desired outcomes. It is the "If...Then" sequence of changes that the program intends to set in motion through its inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. Logic models reflect rather than dictate how a program, initiative, or activity functions.

**Measures:** Instruments, based on quantitative or qualitative data/content, which help to evaluate the indicators and could include trends over time (i.e., number and type of productions; artists' perception of the grant's impact on their career, etc.).

**Outcomes:** The changed state toward which a program/initiative/activity strives – i.e., a change in (a client's, community's): circumstance, behaviour, knowledge, attitude, skill, practice, functioning, values, conditions, status, for participants during or after their involvement in the program. Sometimes broad, sometimes specific, outcomes are the benefits occurring for participants resulting from a program/initiative/activity as measured against the stated goals and objectives.

**Immediate Outcomes:**

The first level benefits or changes that a participant experiences and are most closely related to and influenced directly by the program or activity.

**Intermediate Outcomes:**

The secondary level benefits or changes in participant experiences that build on initial outcomes but set the stage for more complex change.

**Long-Term Outcomes:**

The final goals or ultimate outcome (sometimes called desired state) that the program or activity strives to achieve.

**Outputs:** The direct products and services of a program/initiative/activity, usually measured in actual work done, and expressed in numbers: e.g., number of deadlines, number of information sessions, number of applications received, number of grants processed, approved, number and type of partnerships, etc. They are always countable.

## 1.5 GUIDING VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The interrelated values to be reflected in all evaluation projects undertaken by Council are:

- Decolonizing
- Capacity building
- Practical
- Relevant
- Ethical

These values are understood as interconnected, and complementary, and should overlap and reinforce each other (e.g., building capacity for meaningful involvement of communities in evaluation processes and using methods relevant to communities that challenge a colonial status quo). All evaluations undertaken by the Council adopt an equity lens in alignment with its commitments to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion, anti-racism and decolonization and support to Indigenous communities.

Evaluation activities must be undertaken in an ethical manner, particularly with regard to the engagement of underserved and marginalized communities. The RMDA section is informed by the Canadian Evaluation Society's Guidance for Ethical Evaluation Practice and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS).

Evaluations must correspond to general research standards, be reliable, independent, consistent, rigorous, and conducted with integrity. Evaluators will not allow professional or personal relationships or interests to influence or limit the scope of the evaluation or evaluation questions and the rigour of their methodology. In addition, they will commit to

being self-reflexive, and not allow preconceived ideas or prejudices to affect their analysis, weaken, or bias evaluation findings, conclusions, or recommendations.

## 2. POLICY

The Council undertakes regular evaluations of all its programs (granting and non-granting), initiatives, and activities to assess their relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Evaluation is part of the Council's program management process.

The goal of evaluations is to determine impacts and to assess whether the programs or initiatives are achieving their expected outcomes. Evaluations are done with a holistic lens, involving collaboration, and looking at Council's funding ecosystem and best practices, rather than programs in isolation. This lens facilitates approaches for inquiry that are flexible and focused on key questions based on the Council's strategic priorities.

Evaluations are positioned to inform adjustments to existing programs or to develop and implement strategic initiatives (e.g., support for the sector to recover and rebuild, and innovation and digital transformation, prize for sustainable practices).

Evaluation opportunities will be identified based on the following criteria:

- The importance of the program, initiative, and activity within the Council's strategic priorities
- The feasibility of the evaluation process

Evaluation activities prioritize an integrated analysis, which involves the following key elements:

- Analysis of larger themes and patterns from multiple program evaluations
- Reviewing data on cross-cutting themes that come from multiple programs, initiatives, or activities,
- Reflecting on specific questions related to each program, initiative, or activity as well as system-wide questions within each program, initiative, and activity evaluation.

Evaluations may be conducted internally through the RMDA section or by external contractors as required. All Program evaluation or evaluative type exercises (e.g., program reviews) must be approved by the Director, RMDA.

### 2.1 APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The Council undertakes two primary modes of evaluation:

**Developmental evaluations:** Focused, rapid feedback evaluations that inform the design and/or early implementation of program innovations, adaptations, or new initiatives.

**Deep dive evaluations:** A comprehensive review of granting program(s) or initiatives to be conducted when program(s) or initiatives are mature and/or at a major inflection point in their lifecycle.

Evaluations at the Council will utilize a mixed methods approach. This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods in the design, collection and analysis of data.

## **2.2 COMPENSATION**

External advisors should generally be compensated for their time, as outlined in the Fee Schedules for Compensation in Research and Evaluation Activities.

Likewise, participants in research and evaluation activities, including interviews and focus groups, should generally be compensated for their time, according to the Fee Schedules for Compensation in Research and Evaluation Activities.

## **2.3 EVALUATION PLAN**

The Director, RMDA, in consultation with other directors, will prepare a rolling five-year evaluation plan that takes into account the Council's business planning, budget and operating planning processes. The Evaluation Plan will be updated annually. The plan will prioritize those programs or initiatives identified as high risk or in need of immediate review. Modifications to the plan will be communicated to the Senior Management Committee in a timely manner.

While Council is not formally required to follow Treasury Board guidelines, it should be noted that this Council policy reflects the *Standard on Evaluation* within the Government of Canada's 2016 Policy on Results and Directive on Results. Specifically, this policy adheres to the notion of a rolling five-year evaluation plan that responds to the assessment of risk, needs and priorities identified by the Council.

## **2.4 EVALUATION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Evaluations undertaken by the Council are expected to produce recommendations which are useful in policy or program design and implementation.

Evaluation recommendations require a management response and a plan for implementation, including timelines and accountabilities. The management response should be developed by the responsible program director(s) or manager(s) and approved and presented by the divisional Director General to the Senior Management Committee for approval. The Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs is accountable for tracking and monitoring evaluation recommendations, through the Director, RMDA, and reporting on this to Senior Management Committee.

## **2.5 PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS**

Granting Programs should not be subject to major changes<sup>3</sup> without having been evaluated, unless directed by the Director and CEO in exceptional circumstances<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Program modifications as defined in the Operational Policies of the Arts Granting Programs Division (see 7.3. Program, Strategic Fund or Profile Modifications section).

<sup>4</sup> Situations where circumstances might warrant such a situation include a government-wide directive, OAG special examination recommendation, or a CEO/Board directive.

Programs will be evaluated on a regular basis in alignment with the Council's Evaluation Plan. However, should a problem with the program be identified through the analysis of performance measures, staff and peer assessor input or other environmental developments, a program evaluation or review could be triggered. All major program modifications must be approved by the Director and CEO and/or the Board as per the Council's Governance Policy.

The results and recommendations of evaluations and the corresponding management responses and action plans will be the principal driver for major changes to granting program design.

Further, all proposed granting program modifications will be approved by the Director General, Arts Granting Programs Division and incorporated in the relevant granting program charters and policies to ensure consistency where the recommendations impact more than one program<sup>5</sup>. If any changes are required in the operational policies as a result of evaluation findings, the Director, Granting Program Operations is responsible for making the changes, also to be approved by the Director General, Arts Granting Programs Division.

## **2.6 PUBLICATION OF EVALUATION RESULTS**

The Council operates on the principle that evaluation findings should be made publicly available on the Council website.

Evaluation outputs may not be published in the following circumstances:

- They are incomplete or deemed to have methodological issues and/or erroneous findings.
- They are lengthy or technical and considered to have limited public distribution value.
- Evaluation outputs that include protected information according to the *Privacy Act* and *the Access to Information Act*, such as personal information, sensitive information or internal corporate information.

**Approved by Senior Management Committee:** October 17, 2023

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<sup>5</sup> This process is described in 7.3. Program, Strategic Fund or Profile Modifications section of the Operational Policies of the Arts Granting Programs Division.