

# Evaluation summary – Evaluation of the Airports Capital Assistance Program

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From: Transport Canada

## Evaluation summary, February 2023

The **Airports Capital Assistance Program (ACAP)** is a contribution program funded through Transport Canada's existing reference levels. ACAP's funding envelope is \$38 million per year. It has remained unchanged since 2000. The objectives of the program are to maintain and/or increase the safety of Canada's airport system, and to contribute to the protection of assets and infrastructure.

The **evaluation of ACAP** assessed the issues of relevance, performance, and efficiency and economy. Data collection methods included a document review, stakeholder interviews, and data review. The scope of the evaluation covered the period from 2014-2015 to 2020-2021, and part of 2021-2022.

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# Key milestones

**1995** ACAP was created

**2017** ACAP was fully centralized and delivered from one region, the National Capital Region (NCR)

**2019** ACAP started using the department's Surface Infrastructure System (SIS)

## **Over seven years (2014-2015 to 2020-2021):**

- \$301.7M in total contributions
- 240 projects funded
- 119 Priority 1 projects: Airside Rehabilitation & Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting
- 120 Priority 2 projects: Mobile Equipment
- 1 Priority 3 project: Air Terminal Rehabilitation
- 200 eligible airports that could apply for ACAP funding

# Findings

There is an ongoing need for safety improvements at small Canadian airports. Demand for ACAP funding has remained strong over the seven years covered by the evaluation.

ACAP has been successful in achieving its immediate outcomes by providing funding so that capital projects can be completed and mobile equipment purchased. Specifically, ACAP funded 240 projects and awarded \$301.7 million in contributions over the evaluation period.

ACAP funding has contributed to extending the life of airport infrastructure by improving asset conditions and, in turn, airport assets remain operational.

The 20-year lifecycle for snow-related mobile equipment does not work equally well across the country, given Canada's diverse climatic regions (e.g., Arctic Tundra vs. Pacific Coast). This creates funding pressures for airports who use their equipment frequently and are not able to meet the 20-year benchmark.

ACAP funded airports have maintained their certifications from 2014-2015 to 2020-2021.

ACAP is delivered in an efficient manner. Program staff reported that various efficiencies were gained once ACAP was centralized.

ACAP is currently transitioning to the Surface Infrastructure System (SIS) to help the department standardize and digitize the way it delivers grants and contributions (G&C) programs and to facilitate the analysis and reporting of G&C data. There is a risk that during the transition, program efficiency relating to processing claims will be negatively impacted. Change management strategies are being implemented to offset this risk.

## Recommendation

**The program should:**

**Reexamine mobile equipment lifecycle:** It is recommended that the Program reexamine the average lifecycle of 20 years for snow-related mobile equipment to determine if it could be better aligned to account for regional differences (e.g., climatic regions).

# Actions

**The program agreed to:**

**Management agrees with the recommendation to reexamine the lifecycle of mobile equipment.**

- Program officials have begun consultations with industry associations as a first step towards adjusting lifecycles for certain pieces of equipment.
- Program officials will review material sourced by industry associations, including the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), in order to inform our analysis.
- This review is expected to be completed by March 31, 2023.

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