



# Evaluation of the Northern and Arctic Governance Partnerships Program

Prepared by: Evaluation Branch

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## List of Acronyms

ANPF	<i>Arctic and Northern Policy Framework</i>
CIRNAC	Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
GBA Plus	Gender-Based Analysis Plus
GC	Government of Canada
GN	Government of Nunavut
GNWT	Government of Northwest Territories
IHWG	Intergovernmental Housing Working Groups
IPP	Indigenous Permanent Participants
NA	Northern Affairs
NAGP	Northern and Arctic Governance and Partnerships
SDWG	Sustainable Development Working Group
UNDRIP	United Nation Declaration of Rights of Indigenous People

# Executive Summary

## Overview

The Audit and Evaluation Sector of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) led a mixed-methods evaluation of the Northern and Arctic Governance and Partnerships (NAGP) program in accordance with the departmental [Five-Year Evaluation Plan](#) and compliant with section 42.1 of the *Financial Administration Act* for the four grants and contributions administered by the program. The evaluation covered the period between April 2016 and March 2023.

The findings and conclusions related to the relevance, design and delivery, effectiveness and efficiency of NAGP activities are summarized below. Findings were triangulated across multiple lines of evidence, which included a review of relevant literature, a review of document and performance data, a comparative analysis of six program logic models, 25 key informant interviews and three case vignettes (Sustainable Development Working Group projects; Health Care Services Grants for the Territorial Governments and the initiation of the critical Infrastructure Intergovernmental Working Groups).

## *Relevance*

Overall the NAGP is aligned with the Government of Canada's and CIRNAC's priorities, including several chapters of the *Northern and Arctic Policy Framework*. The evidence indicates that the Program targets current, ongoing and pressing needs in the Arctic and the North and can be positioned to collaborate with territorial and Indigenous partners to address them. However, the evidence also suggests that the Program has an opportunity to more fulsomely contribute to advancing the renewed Crown-Indigenous and Inuit-Crown relationships by moving away from a historical tendency to prioritize territorial needs through bilateral processes, especially regarding the Health Care Grants.

## *Design and Delivery*

There is a disconnect between the logical sequencing of activities to support territorial priorities, resulting in limiting both vertical and horizontal linkage of the Program outcomes to support multilateral relationships. Further, the evaluation found that there is no evidence that the performance measurement framework is generating valid and reliable data that supports decision-making.

## *Effectiveness*

The evaluation found that support given to the negotiation process of devolving responsibility for lands and natural resources to the Government of Nunavut has been effective. The absence of reliable performance data limits the ability to measure the extent to which the program activities are improving the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Northerners. However, most program officials were confident that the program activities contributed to improvements. Finally, the support to circumpolar affairs activities enables Canada to provide leadership and facilitate a space for Canadian Indigenous Permanent Participants to have a voice at the Sustainable

Development Working Group, in spite of the persistent uncertainty of funding that threatens its viability over the medium and long-term.

### *Economy and Efficiency*

The evaluation found that reduced reporting requirements for recipients, increased availability of multi-year funding, and the creation of intergovernmental working groups have helped in responding to the needs of the Territorial governments. Conversely, for the Circumpolar Affairs area, the absence of long-term funding has led to difficulties in building and maintaining organizational capacity.

### *Lessons Learned*

Over the course of the evaluation, the following lessons were identified:

- Having a program focused on building and maintaining strong relationships and partnerships between Canada, territorial government and Indigenous peoples contributes to advance Northern and Arctic priorities and to successfully support reconciliation and renewed nation-to-nation relationships;
- Having a dedicated Minister of Northern Affairs portfolio brings dedicated focus to northern issues, challenges, opportunities and solutions; and
- There was no integration of gender considerations or the application of Gender-Based Analysis Plus ([GBA Plus](#)) in any of the program activities or to advance achievement of the programs outcomes.

### **Conclusions**

The NAGP is a complex program system with a framework in which the whole is not greater than the sum of its parts and in which the parts are independent of each other. There is limited interconnectivity between the activities and at least one activity is linear and has no relationship to the other functions within the larger system.

However, the NAGP demonstrates its potential to be adaptive and dynamic, as best illustrated through the recent activities related to housing and infrastructure. Adaptiveness and dynamic interactions are embedded in parts of the program logic, but there is a need to test the assumptions and more concretely integrate the contextual factors influencing program activities including the *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF)* and tri-lateral relationships. More precisely, the evaluation found:

- By not fully integrating Indigenous peoples into all program activities, the program is misaligned with reconciliation and, specifically, renewed Crown-Indigenous and Inuit-Crown relationships;
- The program is complex and it must be adaptive to changing needs but there was no evidence that work was undertaken during the evaluation period to strengthen program cohesion so that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts; and

- By not producing stable, reliable, and valid performance data, the current performance measurement strategy negatively impacts the ability to inform decision-making and to effectively track program progress over time.

## Recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings and conclusions, it is recommended that CIRNAC:

1. Recalibrate program activities to ensure that Indigenous peoples are represented in decision-making, and more specifically in the development and funding allocation process, which will support the recognition and implementation of key policies such as but not limited to the [Arctic and Northern Policy Framework](#) and the [Inuit Nunangat Policy](#).
2. Develop options for modernizing the Health Care Grants, that includes Indigenous self-determination, while reflecting the devolved status of health programming and services in the territories.
3. Review and revise the performance measurement system to ensure that the measurement of relationship related outcomes are being tracked across time.

# Management Response and Action Plan

## Project Title: Evaluation of the Northern and Arctic Governance and Partnerships

### 1. Management Response

The Northern Affairs Organization (NAO) welcomes the findings and recommendations of this evaluation.

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) is the lead federal department responsible for supporting Canada's Indigenous and northern people in the pursuit of healthy and sustainable communities, and broader economic and social development objectives.

The primary objective of the Northern Affairs Organization (NAO) is to support Canada's Arctic and Northern organizations, individuals, communities, and governments in the pursuit of a strong, inclusive, vibrant, prosperous, and self-sufficient North. This includes federal coordination, effective delivery of federal programming, and territorial relations.

The Northern and Arctic Governance Branch directly supports this mission by focusing on results that directly contribute to continued progress in building a strong, vibrant, and prosperous North and Arctic by focusing on:

- Community well-being in the North and Arctic;
- Status of Nunavut's devolution; and
- Reports produced by the Arctic Council that include Canadian content.

This evaluation covered the period between April 2016 and March 2023, and focused on addressing relevance, design and delivery, effectiveness and efficiency of NAGP activities across multiple lines of evidence, including: a review of relevant literature, a review of document and performance data, a comparative analysis of six program logic models, 25 key informant interviews and three case vignettes (Sustainable Development Working Group projects; Health Care Grants and the initiation of the critical Infrastructure Intergovernmental Working Groups).

Overall, the evaluation concluded that the Northern and Arctic Governance and Partnerships (NAGP) program aligns with the Government of Canada's and CIRNAC's priorities, including several chapters of the *Northern and Arctic Policy Framework*, as demonstrated by the findings and conclusions in the evaluation which focused on relevancy, design, delivery effectiveness and efficiency of NAGP activities. Furthermore, there is a high degree of alignment between NAGP, the Government of Canada (GC) and CIRNAC priorities, including: *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF)*, Speeches from the Throne, Ministerial Mandate Letters, Canada's position on Arctic Sovereignty, United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), and the long-standing policy of devolving of provincial-like responsibilities to the territorial governments.

As NAGP proceeds with implementing its response to this evaluation, there is the opportunity to contribute more fulsomely to advancing the renewed Crown-Indigenous and Inuit-Crown relationships by moving away from a historical tendency to prioritize territorial needs through bilateral processes. Such an approach requires not just a better integration of Indigenous peoples into all program activities, but the integration of all northerners (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), an approach currently being undertaken by NAO in its work supporting the *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework*.

## 2. Action Plan

Recommendations	Actions	Responsible Manager (Title / Sector) *	Planned Start and Completion Dates
1. Recalibrate program activities to ensure that Indigenous peoples are represented in decision-making, and more specifically in the development and funding allocation process, which will support the recognition and implementation of key policies such as but not limited to the <i>Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF)</i> and the <i>Inuit Nunangat Policy</i> .	<p>Northern and Arctic Governance and Partnerships (NAGP) is committed to revisiting its key program activities and identify (where applicable) areas where Indigenous viewpoints, traditional knowledge and foresight can be integrated into its core activities.</p> <p>NAGP will develop and implement a performance management framework against its strategic objectives and identify quantitative and qualitative performance indicators to assess the impact of NAGP initiatives.</p> <p>The indicators will help NAGP monitor and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its overall work and activities.</p> <p>Serving as a model on how best to accomplish this will be the <i>Arctic and Northern Policy Framework</i>. NAGP will draw upon the Framework's ability to collaborate with governments, northerners and Indigenous governments and organizations and take the best practices from the ANPF process and integrate these practices into NGAP activities.</p>	<p>Director General Northern Strategic Policy Branch (NSPB)</p> <p>Director General Northern Governance Branch (NGB)</p>	Start Date: March 2024
			Completion date: March 2025



2. Develop options for modernizing the Health Care Grants, which includes Indigenous self-determination, while reflecting the devolved status of health programming and services in the territories.	<p>In light of this evaluation, Northern Affairs Organization will continue to successfully deliver the grants in a manner consistent with the current approach.</p> <p>As per the evaluation's recommendation, NAGP will consider other alternative delivery mechanisms and will consult with appropriate federal central agencies and departments.</p> <p>NAO will also initiate discussions at the strategically appropriate times with the governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut on possible design and delivery alternatives.</p>	<p>Director General Northern Governance Branch (NGB)</p> <p>Director NGB</p>	Start Date: Spring 2024
			Completion: September 2025
3. Review and revise the performance measurement system to ensure that the measurement of relationship related outcomes is being tracked across time.	<p>Program will invest time into reviewing and updating its performance measurement system so that it more accurately reflects the NAGP's objective of building and maintaining strong relationships/partnerships between Canada, territorial governments and Indigenous Peoples.</p> <p>Work will be undertaken to expand the system beyond the current focus on the bi-lateral relationships and needs of territorial governments, to measure how NAGP activities support broader multilateral relationships and the lives of Northerners and Indigenous Peoples.</p> <p>A revised logic model and corresponding expected results and outcomes as well as associated indicators, data sources and methodologies will be developed and aligned with the on-going Nunavut Devolution Implementation Process.</p> <p>These steps will help ensure that the Program's performance data serves as a solid foundation for decision-making and better illustrates how the NAGP contributes to the advancement of the <i>Arctic and Northern Policy Framework</i> and the <i>Inuit Nunangat Policy</i>.</p>	<p>Director General Northern Strategic Policy Branch (NSPB)</p> <p>Director General Northern Governance Branch (NGB)</p>	Start Date: Winter 2024
			Completion: 2027-28

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) is the lead federal department responsible for supporting Canada's Indigenous and northern people in the pursuit of healthy and sustainable communities, and broader economic and social development objectives. The primary objective of Northern Affairs is to support Canada's Arctic and Northern organizations, individuals, communities, and governments in the pursuit of a strong, inclusive, vibrant, prosperous and self-sufficient North. This includes federal coordination, effective delivery of federal programming, and territorial relations.

The responsibilities of the Department are derived from a number of sources, including the Canadian Constitution; the [Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Act](#); the [Yukon Act](#), [Northwest Territories Act](#) and [Nunavut Act](#); statutes enacting modern treaties north of 60°, such as the [Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act](#), or self-government agreements, such as the [Yukon First Nations Self-Government Act](#); and statutes dealing with land and resource management, particularly in Nunavut.

## 1.2 Contextual Considerations

### Devolution

Devolution is the process in which the federal government transfers decision-making powers, including the management of expenditures to the territorial governments. Since the 1960s, the federal government has been actively devolving programs and services to territorial governments, including the transfer of responsibilities of health care, education, housing and social services. More recently, agreements were signed with the Yukon Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories in 2013 and 2014, respectively, for the devolution of land and resource management.

Meanwhile, a negotiation protocol was signed in 2008 with the Government of Nunavut and negotiations toward an Agreement-in-Principle began in October 2014. In 2019, the [Nunavut Lands and Resource Devolution Agreement-in-Principle](#) was signed between three parties: the Government of Canada (GC), Government of Nunavut (GN) and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

The Agreement-in-Principle establishes a pathway for the devolution of responsibilities associated with the management of public (Crown) lands, waters, and mineral resources in Nunavut from the GC to the GN, while respecting the rights of Inuit under the *Nunavut Agreement*. Once Nunavut devolution is complete, all three territories will have province-like powers and responsibilities.

## **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People**

The 2016 adoption of the [United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People \(UNDRIP\)](#), followed by the passing of the Act in 2021, demonstrates the importance of the new relationship between the GC and Indigenous Peoples, with a commitment to advancing self-determination and self-governance.

In addition to following the Calls to Action included in the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#) and a Call for Justice from the [National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#), Parliament adopted in 2021 the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), which commits the federal government to ensuring that all laws of Canada are consistent with UNDRIP, and to develop an action plan to achieve the objectives of UNDRIP.

### **The Arctic and Northern Policy Framework**

In September 2019, the Government of Canada announced the *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF)*, a co-developed framework created in tandem with Indigenous and territorial partners. The ANPF includes eight overarching and interconnected goals and associated objectives as federal priorities for the Arctic and the north through 2030. The Framework aims to provide a shared vision of the future and gives a roadmap to improving the standard of living in the Arctic and the North.

### **Departmental Transformation**

In recent years, there has been a significant organizational transformation within the federal government to improve and advance Crown-Indigenous relationships. The most notable change was the dissolution of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) in 2017, which was subsequently replaced, in 2019, with the creation of two new Departments: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

CIRNAC was designated with responsibility for files including the negotiation and implementation of treaties and agreements, the resolution of historical grievances, the consultation and accommodation of Indigenous peoples, and the ongoing delivery of programs and services in the North.

### **Minister, Northern Affairs**

In 2019, the Minister of Northern Affairs (NA) was re-established to foster economic opportunities and an improved quality of life for individuals residing in Canada's North. Administratively, Northern Affairs is co-managed with Crown-Indigenous Relations but has its own minister, mission, mandate and objectives. As per the [2021 Ministerial Mandate Letter](#), there are three key priority areas for NA:

- 1) the implementation of the *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF)*;
- 2) make significant advancement to improve housing outcomes; and

3) continue efforts towards devolution for the territory of Nunavut.

Northern Affairs is also responsible for supporting efforts towards sovereignty and national interest, including strengthening intergovernmental relationships, advancing programs and policies that support Northerners and determining CIRNAC's direction and level of contribution to the Arctic Council.

These contextual considerations taken together are central to frame how the Northern Affairs Organization, and specifically the Northern and Arctic Governance and Partnerships (NAGP) program should be understood beyond the static colonial version of the Arctic and North that once dominated and defined program development and delivery for Indigenous peoples and Northerners.

### **1.3 Program Information**

In 2016, with the implementation of an amended results-based management framework, the NAGP program was created, replacing the sub-program [Political Development and Intergovernmental Relations – The North](#). The primary activities, as with its predecessor, are broken into four distinct streams.

#### **Circumpolar Affairs**

CIRNAC, as the leading federal department in the North, plays an integral role in the advancement of Canada's northern interests, both domestically and internationally. Circumpolar affairs serves as the primary conduit for Indigenous and territorial engagement in international circumpolar forums.

To fulfill its mandate to support and coordinate Canadian engagement in circumpolar affairs, the Circumpolar Affairs Directorate (CAD) provides expertise, leadership, resources, and whole-of-government coordination and organizational support for Canada's engagement at the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG). The SDWG was established, for Arctic states, to advance sustainable development through the co-development and co-leading of projects in partnership with Indigenous Permanent Participant (IPP) organizations. By contributing to these initiatives, Canada seeks to actively improve and address the multitude of challenges faced by Indigenous peoples and Northerners, including those pertaining to their health, their well-being as well as the sustenance and strengthening of their respective cultures, environment and communities.

Additional responsibilities that are assembled under the circumpolar affairs stream include fostering and maintaining the domestic and international relationships and working both multi-laterally and bi-laterally to strengthen and improve the quality of life of Canada's Indigenous and Northern residents. Multi-lateral engagement is primarily realized through the international Arctic Council and its SDWG. Bi-lateral engagement is supported through maintaining strong ties with Canada's circumpolar neighbors, including formal relationships with Norway, the U.S., and Russia.

Finally, the circumpolar affairs stream provides capacity and project funding to support the three Canadian IPP organizations' ability to lead, advance, and deliver on areas of mutual interest through contribution agreements<sup>1</sup>.

### **Grants to the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Nunavut for Health Care of Indians and Inuit<sup>2</sup>**

Since the 1950s, the Government of Canada was directly involved in the delivery of health care programs and services in the territories with the original intent of having the federal and territorial governments equally assuming costs. In 1959, however, the Government of Northwest Territories (GNWT) asserted that they were not able to meet their commitments, citing the high expense of providing care in remote and Indigenous communities. Thus, the federal government approved and began providing a special annual grant to the GNWT, noting that the government would cover 95% of insured hospital services costs for status Indian<sup>3</sup> and Inuit residents. In 1970, this grant agreement was expanded to include a total (100%) reimbursement for the costs to provide physician services to Indigenous residents.

In 1995, as a result of an out-of-court settlement, the grant was amended to include a two percent annual escalator to be applied to A-base funding in perpetuity. Upon the creation of Nunavut in 1999, the funding was divided into two, with 56.3% being allotted to GNWT and 43.7% being allocated to GN. These remain the characteristics of the current Health Care Grants.

According to departmental documents, the purpose of the Grants are to support the GNWT and the GN in the delivery of hospital and physician services for Indigenous peoples, with the objective of improving the health outcomes. The funding is provided to the territorial governments via 5-year agreements. Consistent with the accountability requirements for transfer payments to other orders of government under the Treasury Board [Directive on Transfer Payments](#), the Grants are subject to minimal reporting requirements. Furthermore, the Grants sit outside of the Territorial Formula Financing, Canada Health Transfer and other health care transfer payments.

The resources for the Grants are allocated to CIRNAC through the [Main Estimates](#), as voted expenditures. The two percent annual increases are subsequently managed through the Annual Reference Level Update (ARLU) in advance of agreement renewals, as can be seen in Table 1. Agreements are signed at the Director General level 2 as per the Delegation of Spending and Financial Authority matrix.

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<sup>1</sup> IPPs are the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Gwich'in Council International, and the Arctic Athabaskan Council.

<sup>2</sup> This is the legal title for the funding authority. The term "Indian" was adopted by the Government of Canada as part of its colonial history and incorporated into the *Indian Act*, 1876. Today, the term "Indian" is used mostly in a legal sense, and most other uses are discouraged and considered offensive. Throughout the remainder of the report, the funding authority will be referred to as the "Health Care Grants" except when referencing any specific past reports with the grant as the title or when naming the funding authority in full is required.

<sup>3</sup> "Status Indian" is a legal term. In the context, it is used to explain who were the defined as beneficiaries of the Health Care Grants.

**Table 1: ARLU Snapshot for the Health Care Grants**

Exercise	Year	Source	Description	A-Base	Claims	Amount
2018-19 ARLU	2023-24	Reference Level	Base Reference Level	A-Base	Non-Claims	\$56,563,000
2018-19 ARLU	2023-24	Fiscal Framework	2% adjustment			\$2,285,000
2019-20 ARLU	2023-24	Fiscal Framework	2% adjustment – Northern Health Care			\$3,603,000

Since 2008, there have been at least two case studies, as part of the Special Study on INAC's Funding Arrangements and subsequently the [2017 Evaluation of the Grants to the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Nunavut for Health Care of Indians and Inuit<sup>4</sup>](#), both of which assessed the management and administration of the Grants. Most recently in response to the 2017 evaluation, Northern Affairs Organization committed to:

- considering other alternative delivery mechanisms;
- consult with appropriate federal central agencies and departments; and
- initiate discussions at the strategically appropriate times with the governments of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut on possible design and delivery alternatives.

While the 2017 Management Response and Action Plan indicates that the actions have been completed, some key informants for this evaluation noted that while work was initiated at the technical level, options were never presented for consideration to senior management.

### **Nunavut Devolution<sup>5</sup>**

Continuing to work with Inuit and the GN to finalize a co-developed Nunavut Devolution Final Agreement is included in the Minister of Northern Affairs' 2021 mandate letter and constitutes one of NAGP's program streams.

Devolution in Nunavut is an ongoing process:

- Consultations with all Indigenous groups with asserted or established rights in Nunavut will be conducted prior to the conclusion of the Final Agreement negotiations;
- The parties are currently targeting the transfer date of 2025. The transfer date is the date devolution comes into effect, with the administration and control over lands and resources devolved from the GC to the GN; and
- The Agreement-in-Principle commits to a three-year period between the signing of the Final Devolution Agreement and the transfer date to allow for legislation and implementation activities required for the transfer. This includes the development and implementation of legislation, due diligence activities, and additional Section 35 consultations. These phases are targeted to be implemented between 2022 and 2025.

<sup>4</sup> This is the name of the report.

<sup>5</sup> As devolution negotiations are ongoing there was limited exploration of the specific activities during the evaluation.

Upon completion of the devolution negotiation, legislation will have to be prepared, core funding agreements signed, and hand-over from the GC to the GN.

## Housing and Infrastructure

Canada's northern, remote and isolated communities face unique housing needs due to the challenges presented by geography, climate change, infrastructure and remoteness. To address these critical needs, two Intergovernmental Housing Working Groups (IHWGs) were established in 2021, with partners from the GNWT and the GN. Accompanied by funding to the territorial governments and co-chaired by the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) of the Northern Affairs Organization (NAO) and senior territorial officials, the IHWGs aim to address a broad array of issues by collating the expertise of Indigenous governments, municipal governments, industry leaders, and federal officials from CIRNAC, Indigenous Services Canada, Infrastructure Canada, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Natural Resource Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, and others<sup>6</sup>.

Each working group is expected to have at least four meetings per year, with a minimum of one meeting each fiscal quarter. The Terms of Reference of each IHWG was signed in 2022.

### 1.4 Activities and Expected Outcomes

The key activities of the program are:

- Lead negotiation process for devolution of lands administration and resource management in Nunavut;
- Support, coordinate, inform, and promote strong federal-territorial Indigenous relations;
- Support Territorial priority areas, including critical housing and infrastructure; and
- Support and coordinate Canadian engagement in circumpolar affairs.

Together, the streams enable activities and outputs in support towards the achievement of the ultimate outcome that *Political, economic, social and cultural development in Canada's Arctic and North are advanced* (refer to appendix B for the program logic model).

### 1.5 Program Management and Structure

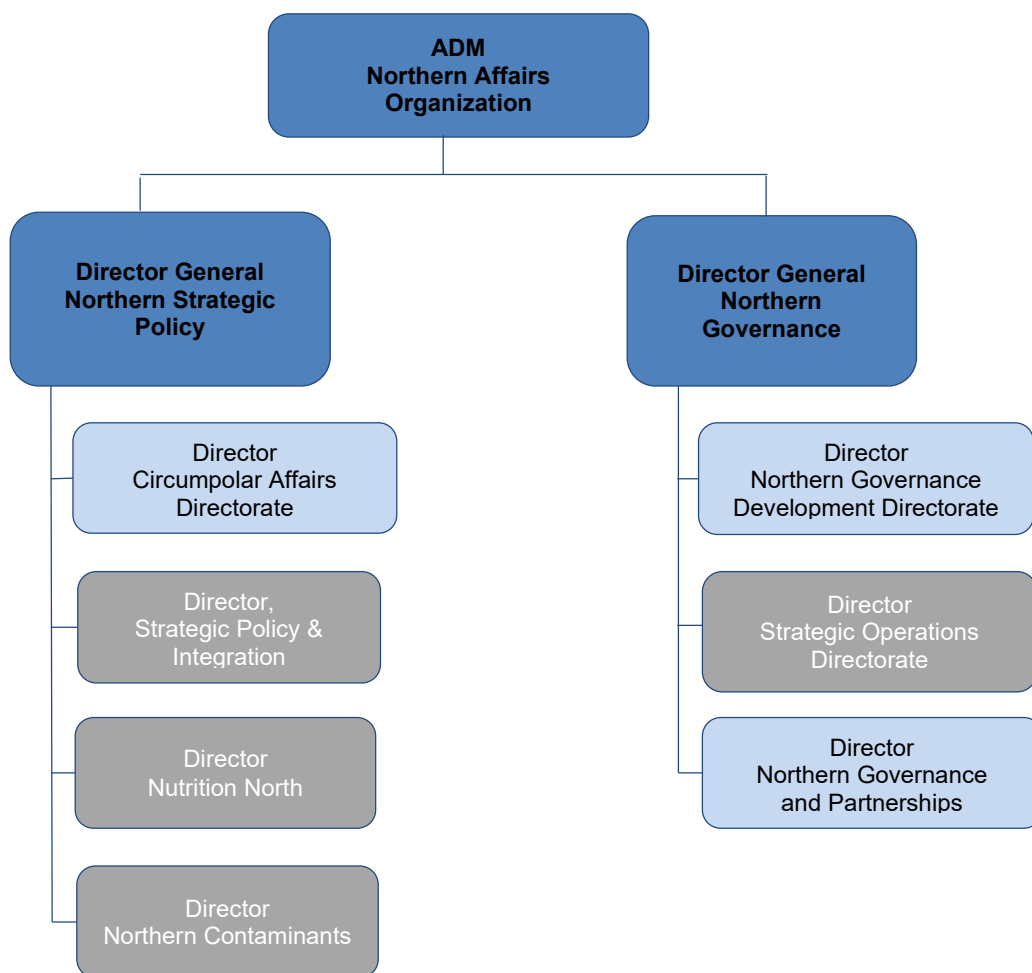
Figure 1, which shows a portion of the organizational structure of Northern Affairs Organization (NAO), illustrates that the program has a matrix structure with responsibilities and activities delivered through multiple directors and two directors general<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Nunavut IHWG is co-chaired by the Government of Nunavut, the Government of Canada and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

<sup>7</sup> The light blue boxes indicate the location of the program activities within the organizational structure. The grey boxes were not part of the evaluation scope.

**Figure 1: Organizational Structure**



While not reflected in the four activity streams, the program also has responsibility for coordinating and providing Ministerial policy analysis and advice, support and coordination, an activity that is shared between the two program areas.

## **1.6 Expected Outcomes**

Program documents described that the territorial governments, Northerners and all Canadians are expected to benefit through the activities supported by the NAGP; however, with respect to the Health Care Grants, Indigenous people are specifically expected to benefit from improved health outcomes as per the policy objective.

Together the activities are intended at the immediate level to achieve four outcomes: progress is made between the parties to advance Nunavut devolution; Canada has adequately fulfilled its Duty to Consult; knowledge and understanding is guided by informed decision-making and territories and Northerners have access to federal support. Progress in each area is to lead two intermediate outcomes: devolution of land and resources to the GN, and strong federal-



territorial-Indigenous and circumpolar relations. Both outcomes are seen as contributing to the following ultimate outcome: political, economic and social development in Canada's Arctic and North are advanced (refer to Appendix B).

## 1.7 Program Authorities and Resources

Table 2 provides the actual spending for the fiscal years 2016-2017 through 2021-2022 for the NAGP.

**Table 2: Program Expenditures by Fiscal Year**

Category		Expenditures (\$ Amounts by Fiscal Year)					
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Vote 1	Salaries	\$5,891	\$5,699	\$5,345	\$6,043	\$6,236	\$5,939
	O&M	\$2,441	\$2,466	\$2,515	\$889	\$662	\$796
Vote 10	Grants & Contributions	\$62,058,938	\$67,510,264	\$71,885,327	\$77,518,985	\$87,886,762	\$139,746,461
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$62,067,270</b>	<b>\$67,518,429</b>	<b>\$71,893,187</b>	<b>\$77,525,917</b>	<b>\$87,893,660</b>	<b>\$139,753,196</b>

The program has four funding authorities. Three are contributions, while the fourth, the Health Care Grants is an A-base grant (transfer payment). Table 3 provides a breakdown of funding expenditures by fiscal year for each funding authority.

**Table 3: Funding Authority Expenditures by Fiscal Year**

Funding Authority	Expenditures (\$ Amounts by Fiscal Year)					
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Grants to the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Government of Nunavut for health care of Indians and Inuit <sup>8</sup>	\$54,367,000	\$55,454,000	\$56,563,000	\$57,694,000	\$58,848,000	\$60,025,000
Grants for the Political Evolution of the Territories, particularly as it pertains to Devolution	\$7,691,938	\$8,051,264	\$9,599,382	\$14,234,462	\$20,585,566	\$71,104,224
Contributions to promote social and political development in the North	\$3,919,441	\$4,005,000	\$5,686,987	\$5,590,523	\$8,451,196 <sup>9</sup>	\$8,446,254 <sup>10</sup>
Contribution for promoting the safe use, development, conservation and protection of the North's natural resources and promoting scientific development	\$0	\$0	\$35,958	\$0	\$2,000	\$170,983
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$65,978,379</b>	<b>\$67,510,264</b>	<b>\$71,885,327</b>	<b>\$77,518,985</b>	<b>\$87,886,762</b>	<b>\$139,746,461</b>

<sup>8</sup> This is the current legal name of the funding authority.

<sup>9</sup> Excludes COVID-19 Funding by Strategic Policy and Integration and Northern Governance Branch (\$72,500,000 in 2020-2021).

<sup>10</sup> Excludes COVID-19 Funding by Northern Governance Branch (\$40,000,000 in 2021-2022).

## 2. Evaluation Description

### 2.1 Purpose and Scope

In accordance with the departmental Five-Year Evaluation Plan and in compliance with the Treasury Board (TB) *Policy on Results*, this evaluation also meets the requirements for evaluation of ongoing grants and contributions under Section 42.1 of the *Financial Administration Act*.

The scope of this evaluation excludes any assessment of the direct progress or mandate related to the negotiations of devolution of lands and resource management to the Government of Nunavut (GN).

The evaluation assessed the program's relevance and performance for the period between April 2016 to March 2023.

### 2.2 Methodology

To answer the identified issues and key evaluation questions, a mixed-methods approach with multiple lines of inquiry was used, Appendix A provides the detailed evaluation matrix. Table 4 highlights the lines of inquiry.

**Table 4: Lines of Inquiry**

<b>Document, Literature, and File Review</b>	Reviewed 128 documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial documents;</li><li>• Operational Plans;</li><li>• Agreements; and</li><li>• Program reporting documents.</li></ul>
<b>Performance Measurement Data</b>	Reviewed and compared <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Six (6) program information profiles; and</li><li>• 30+ performance measurement indicators.</li></ul>	
<b>Key Informant Interviews</b>	Conducted 25 interviews <i>(interview notes were verified by all interviewees, even when more than one individual was interviewed at the same time)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program Officials (16);</li><li>• Territorial Government Officials (3);</li><li>• Indigenous Organizations (3);</li><li>• Academics (2); and</li><li>• Other (1.)</li></ul>
<b>Case Vignettes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Sustainable Developed Working Group projects;</li><li>2. Health Care Grants; and</li><li>3. Critical Infrastructure in the North Intergovernmental working groups.</li></ol>	

Overall conclusions and recommendations were developed on the collective basis of all findings, which are reliable and valid.

### 2.3 Limitations and Mitigation

Table 5 describes both the limitations and mitigation strategies encountered during the evaluation.

**Table 5: Limitations and Mitigation Strategies**

Limitations	Mitigation Strategy
Of the 25 interviews that took place, 16 were with program officials; while another significant portion were recipients of program funding. Few Indigenous stakeholders were interviewed because of the nature of the programming, hence increasing the possibility of respondent bias.	In the report, the evaluation team identifies when the information conveyed comes solely from program officials. When information comes from more than one category of interviewees, categories are masked, with the exception of identifying the category of territorial government officials when referring directly to funding.
During the evaluation period, the program logic model was revised six (6) times, including modifications to all components (activities, outputs and outcomes).	The evaluation team conducted an analysis of the logic models to better understand the changes and to assess the potential impacts on the capacity to assess performance. Being the last version made available during the evaluation period and the only version to include Housing and Infrastructure activities, the sixth version of the Performance Information Profile was used by the evaluation team.
Weak performance measurement system in which the relationship between the indicators and their connected outcome sometimes had limited relatedness.	The evaluation team conducted an analysis of performance indicators and availability of data. To mitigate gaps, interview data was more heavily relied on.

It was important to ensure there was valid and reliable evidence across the lines of evidence to produce grounded findings. The evaluation team is confident that the mitigation strategies adequately addressed the limitations.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1 Relevance

Northern and Arctic Governance and Partnerships (NAGP) is aligned with Government and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) priorities including the *Northern and Arctic Policy Framework*.

Program key informants stated that there is a high degree of alignment between the program and Government of Canada (GC) and CIRNAC priorities, including: *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF)*, [Speeches from the Throne](#), Ministerial Mandate Letters, Canada's position on Arctic Sovereignty, United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), and the long-standing policy of devolving of provincial-like responsibilities to the territorial governments.

Key informants most often cited program alignment with the following ANPF goals:

**Goal 1:** Canadian Arctic and Northern Indigenous peoples are resilient and healthy.

**Goal 4:** Knowledge and understanding guides decision-making.

**Goal 6:** The rules-based international order in the Arctic responds effectively to new challenges and opportunities.

There is strong alignment to the [International Chapter of Framework of ANPF](#), with less alignment to Inuit Nunangat Chapter and Territorial Chapters.

The literature and documents reviewed, further support an alignment between the Program and the GC priorities, including: the Minister of Northern Affairs; priorities and on-going budgetary support to the devolution of lands and natural resources to the Governments of Yukon, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut; the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#); as well as [Departmental Plans](#) and [Departmental Results Reports](#).

The NAGP targets current, ongoing and pressing needs in the Arctic and the North and can be positioned to collaborate with territorial and Indigenous partners to address those needs.

### Housing Investment Support

Multiple reports<sup>11</sup>, as identified through the literature and document review, outline the housing crisis in the north, and indicate that it represents a serious public health emergency, particularly in Nunavut<sup>12</sup>. The chronic shortage of accessible, affordable and high quality housing in the North and the Arctic was described by interviewees as particularly challenging to address, in part because of the fact that the current federal housing investments are highly fragmented. The investments involve multiple departments, in addition to Territorial and First Nation Governments and Inuit Land Claim Organizations making efforts to address the shortage.

In 2021, the Governments of Northwest Territories and Nunavut received \$25 million from the federal government for investments to address the housing crisis with an additional \$150 million allocated over two years to support affordable housing and related infrastructure in the North. These new initiatives would support the program using the existing funding authority: [Contributions to Promote Social and Political Development in the North and for Northerners](#).

Through the document review and key informant interviews, the evaluation team found that the Program can be positioned to support territorial government work to increase the housing stock with initiatives aligned to the program outcome of improving the quality of life for Northerners.

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<sup>11</sup> [Standing Committee on Social Development – Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories. 2021. Report on Housing, Phase One: Needs for NWT Homeowners and Private Landlords.](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Nunavut Housing Corporation. 2020. Status of Housing Report 2020.](#)

Moreover, key tools, identified throughout the evaluation, in responding to the housing and infrastructure needs of the territorial governments are the dedicated Intergovernmental Housing Working Groups for Nunavut and Northwest Territories.

### Circumpolar Affairs

According to most key informants, the Northern and Arctic Governance and Partnerships (NAGP)'s circumpolar affairs activities directly support Canada's leadership role at the Arctic Council by facilitating the representation and participation of Northern and Arctic people in relevant international forums and negotiations. More specifically, program resources are allocated to vice-chairing the Arctic's Council Sustainable Development Working Group, including direct investments to enable the Canadian Indigenous Permanent Participants (IPP) to participate in the Working Groups decision-making processes. One of the evaluation case vignettes found that while Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) project funding for Canadian IPPs was short-term, the pilot projects were critical in adding to the body of knowledge in addressing the unique challenges experienced by Northerners, like mental health, sustainable development, and renewable energy, thus illustrating how the program's activities contributed to identifying and working on current stakeholder needs.

### Health Care Services for Indigenous peoples

There is substantial documentation that there continues to be gaps between Northerners and the rest of Canada with respect to health outcomes and that the gaps are magnified for Inuit, First Nations and Métis in the Arctic and Northern Canada<sup>13</sup>. Some of the issues noted include that the geography and low population density make it difficult to achieve the economies of scale that are possible in southern Canada. Furthermore, most specialized services and hospital care often require air travel, which dramatically adds to health care costs. Challenges are particularly marked for Indigenous peoples, who tend to have poorer health outcomes largely due to the ongoing legacy of colonialism, residential schools, and inequalities in access to health services. Almost unanimously, informants expressed confidence that the Health Care Grants are contributing to improving the health outcomes for all territorial residents, including the Indigenous peoples, however, there was no evidence provided to the evaluation team to support this perspective<sup>14</sup>.

Furthermore, we noted that there are no requirements for the Governments of Northwest Territories or Nunavut to report how the funds specifically support Indigenous peoples, and that the funding provided are transferred directly into the territorial governments general revenues. Several key informants stated that the current fiscal arrangement to territorial governments is administratively expedient, and explained that it represents a small portion of overall territorial government health care expenditures<sup>15</sup>. One key informant explicitly expressed uncertainty about the Grants' alignment with UNDRIP and reconciliation. No evidence was provided to

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<sup>13</sup> For example, as per the [Arctic and Northern Policy Framework: Inuit Nunangat](#), the Inuit infant mortality rate is 12.3% per 1,000 infants compared to 4.4% to non-indigenous infants for Canada and that there are 30 physicians per 100,000 in Nunavut compared to 119 in Urban Health Authorities.

<sup>14</sup> The examination of health outcomes was not within the scope of this evaluation.

<sup>15</sup> The Grants represented, on average, 72% of the NAGP annual expenditures.

demonstrate how the funding is contributing to improving the health outcomes Indigenous peoples as per the funding authorities objective.

NAGP has an opportunity to more fulsomely contribute to advancing the renewed Crown-Indigenous and Inuit-Crown relationships by moving away from a historical tendency to prioritize territorial needs through bilateral processes, especially regarding the Health Care Grants.

The *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework* emphasizes that reconciliation with Indigenous peoples is paramount to ensuring that Northern and Arctic people are thriving, strong, and safe. Several federal key informants reported that, in their opinion, because NAGP contributes to the *ANPF* goals and objectives, which were co-developed with Indigenous partners, the activities therefore must be strongly aligned with CIRNAC's approach to Crown-Indigenous relations. The evaluation team found limited evidence through the documents, performance data, and vignettes to support this view.

As can be seen in Table 6, some of the Program's areas of activity would do well to collaborate and integrate Indigenous partners' interests. For example, the circumpolar affairs activities enable the IPPs to have influence on the Arctic Council's SDWG through project proposals. Almost 90 percent of SDWG projects are co-selected and co-led with IPPs, hence contributing to building and maintaining strong relationships with them and with participating territorial officials. Similarly, the available evidence suggests that Inuit engagement is an integral component of devolution of lands and resource management to the Government of Nunavut (GN). However, under challenges, Table 6 shows that other program activities display a less clear path of engagement with Indigenous peoples.

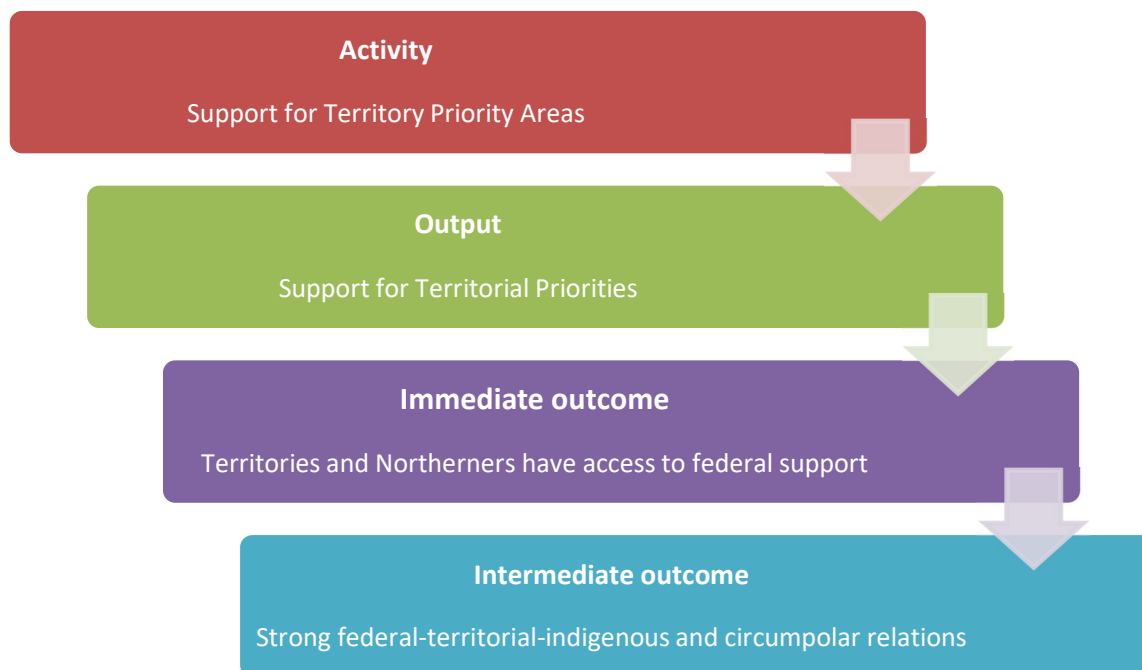
**Table 6: Strengths and challenges of NAGP engagement with Indigenous peoples**

Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial support to facilitate Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated participation in the Nunavut Devolution process.</li><li>• By facilitating Indigenous partners' involvement in project development and implementation, the activities related to circumpolar affairs build on a strong history embedded in building trust and relationships and developing mutual respect with Indigenous partners and organizations.</li></ul>
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Primary focus is on the bi-lateral relationships and needs of Territorial governments.</li><li>• Limited to no Indigenous partnership and engagement in activities related to the health care grants and, to a lesser extent, housing<sup>16</sup>.</li><li>• Not all program activities incorporate the Arctic or Inuit Nunangat.</li></ul>

<sup>16</sup> It is expected that IHWGs will be advancing a series of projects/activities in response to the critical housing and infrastructure needs of the territories, albeit the territorial governments are ultimately responsible to confirm decisions on the projects/activities brought by the IHWG. Only one of the two Intergovernmental Housing Working Group formally includes Indigenous partners.

Figure 2 illustrates how the Program's historical focus on territorial needs, which has been anchored in bilateral relationships, is still embedded within the logic sequencing of the program. As previously noted, even though the Health Care Grants are based solely on bilateral relationships, they are expected to contribute to the intermediate outcome of strong tri-lateral relationship. As the evaluation team found no evidence of engagement with Indigenous peoples with respect to the Health Care Grants, there is therefore a disconnect between what is actually achievable and what is required for the program to be able to achieve its outcomes.

**Figure 2: Logic Sequence for Activity 3**



### 3.2 Design and delivery

The logical sequencing of activities intended to support territorial priorities is not reflected in the actual sequencing and therefore there should be a limited assumption that there is linkage with the outcomes pertaining to multilateral relationships.

Independently, some activities have sound internal logic and clear progression towards the linked outcomes. In other words, within the complex system of the program, the logic sequencing is a standalone logic chain, disconnected from the other activities, and as such will independently achieve an outcome.

An example of this is Circumpolar Affairs, in which the embedded collaboration with Indigenous and territorial partners within SDWG initiatives can reasonably be expected to meaningfully



improve knowledge and understanding between all northern partners, and thus lead to stronger relationships.

Another example is devolution. Key informants reported that NAGP's approach to devolution is appropriate for the tri-partite process, hence constituting a critical step in the political and social development of Nunavut, and in working towards reconciliation. On its own, it therefore succeeds in achieving its stated immediate and intermediate outcomes: Progress is made between the parties to advance Nunavut Devolution and Devolution of land and resource management to the Government of Nunavut, respectively (refer to Appendix B). However, it is completely disconnected from all other Program outputs and outcomes, and completely insulated from all other areas of activity.

There is a cautionary note: in the current version of the logic model, devolution is not sequenced to contribute to multilateral relationships. It is unclear as to how it is connected to the other activities that are linked to the tri-lateral relations indicating that key informants have an espoused perception of the program logic which differs from the actual.

Other areas of activities show less internal coherence. As mentioned in Figure 2 of section 3.1, the Health Care Grants operate solely as bilateral mechanisms with no evidence of broader stakeholder engagement. Thus, there is no clear path of progress towards an intermediate outcome focused on the tri-lateral relationships. Given how long the activity has been stable, it is reasonable to expect that contextual factors and assumptions would have been explicitly integrated to enable logic sequencing.

Overall, the sequencing suggests interdependency and relationships of activities, however, the extent to which these assumptions have been tested was not found by the evaluation team.

There is no evidence that the performance measurement framework is generating valid and reliable performance data that supports decision-making.

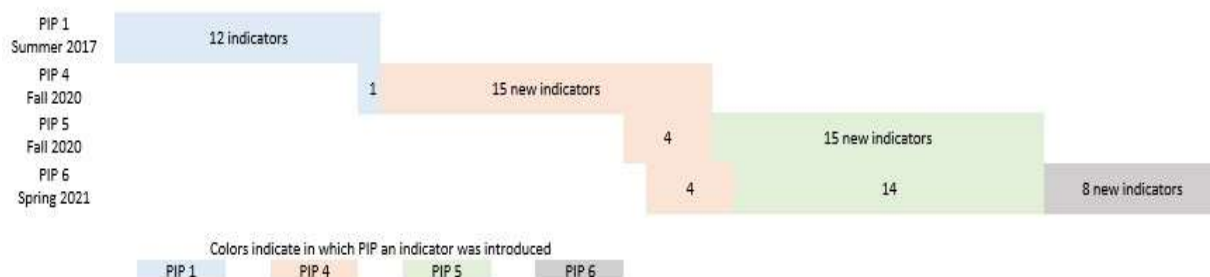
Across the lines of evidence, the evaluation found that collecting, analyzing and using performance data to inform decision-making was not present during the evaluation period. A possible contributing factor, substantiated by several key informants, was the extreme instability in both the logic model and performance measurement indicators during the evaluation period.

During the evaluation period, the program logic model was revised six times. In some instances, and as illustrated in Figure 3, revisions were major: adding, dropping or revising the majority of indicators. In 2017, the program had 12 indicators to measure progress towards outcomes and for stocktaking purposes. In 2021, the program included 26 indicators, with more than half being added within the previous two years. Moreover, the evaluation team found data was not available for the majority of the indicators being measured during the evaluation period, even through the changes between 2017 and 2020 were fairly minor. Finally, post-2020 the majority



of the new indicators identify baseline measures and are expected to be collected at the end or after the evaluation period.

**Figure 3: Indicator continuity in NAGP's Performance Information Profiles**



Note: The Figure shows changes in indicators throughout the evaluation period. Each line shows the number of indicators included in a given version of the Performance Information Profile, as identified in the first column.

The evaluation team was not able to identify the cause(s) to account for the fluidity of the logic model and the substantial fluctuation of indicators, with the exception of the new housing investments which were announced in 2021. Otherwise, the core activities of the program have been stable since the completion of the previous evaluations in [2017](#) and [2016](#), respectively.

Beyond the performance measurement framework, the indicator number of devolution phases in Nunavut completed is the primary indicator that has been used to publicly report on the program progress as part of the program inventory in compliance with the *Policy on Results*, as shown in the [GC Infobase](#). The objective of the Policy is “access to data to best understand how programs are working towards achieving its results and the application of the resources”.

The evaluation found that the devolution expenditures accounted for less than 30% of the total program expenditures during the evaluation period. Another indicator, also included in the [GC Infobase](#) for at least two of the reporting years (2018-19 and 2019-20), percentage of Arctic Council initiatives that correlate to or advance Canadian Indigenous Permanent Participants' priorities, represents under 1% of program expenditures and is funded solely through internal reallocations.

Overall, many program officials reported that the performance measurement strategy was not well integrated to the decision-making process. Some described the indicators as having low utility, in part because they did not effectively capture what they expressed was the true essence of their work: relationships. And because of this, the officials noted that these issues compounded to create a lack of interest in using performance data to support decision making.

### 3.3 Effectiveness

Support for the negotiation process of devolving responsibility for lands and natural resources to the Government of Nunavut has been effective.

While devolution activities were not thoroughly investigated given the sensitivity and secrecy of the negotiation process, most evidence available to the evaluation team demonstrates that the NAGP has been effective in supporting advancements towards devolution. An Agreement-in-Principle was signed in August 2019, and parties commenced negotiations towards the ratification of a final agreement. While the final agreement was expected for fiscal year 2022-2023 and was delayed for various reasons (including the pandemic), evidence shows that CIRNAC continues to provide support to organizations engaged in the negotiation process and anticipates that a final agreement will be concluded soon. Various funding agreements with Indigenous organizations are also in place to support Section 35 consultations via the Negotiation protocol and the Agreement-in-Principle.

Program officials confirmed that progress was being made and highlighted a collaborative relationship between parties, stakeholders, and other Departments involved in the process. In their view, Devolution was the evolution of good governance in the North, as it gives people and communities more say in the administration of lands and resource management, will reduce the dependence of federal transfers, and has improved prosperity in the territories that have already undergone the process.

The absence of reliable performance data limits the ability to measure the extent of the impact of the activities on improving the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Northerners. However, most program officials were confident that the program activities contributed to improvements.

There was a consensus among most program officials that the Program's activities contribute to improving the lives of Indigenous peoples and Northerners. Even for activities related to housing and infrastructure, which started in 2021, optimism was common. Many felt that the creation of Intergovernmental Housing Working Groups and the newfound focus on the unique context and challenges of the north would lead to more adapted housing solutions.

Similarly, federal and territorial officials expressed confidence that the Health Care Grants were contributing to improved health care outcomes for Northerners. Transfer of funds was described as timely and efficient, and key respondents explained that upon reception, money was directly transferred into the territorial governments' general revenues. The evaluation team noted that it was not possible to assess the extent to which the resources were effective in improving the lives of Indigenous people and Northerners. Being efficient at transferring funds to territorial partners is a sign of positive bilateral relationships, but it does not necessarily equate with better health outcomes for the population, nor with better relationships with Indigenous partners.

Circumpolar affairs activities face similar challenges in assessing actual long-term impacts. While there was strong consensus among key informants that the Program's support for the Arctic Council's SDWG projects were improving lives and advancing several sustainable development initiatives, no performance data was available. One key informant noted that some SDWG projects were conducted at a very high level and therefore removed from providing observable improvements to the lives of Northerners. Another key informant recognized that the lack of follow-up information of SDWG projects made it difficult to measure the impacts that those outputs were having on longer-term outcomes.

### Northern Indigenous peoples

Challenges in assessing how the NAGP's activities are improving the lives of Northerners in general are compounded when looking at northern Indigenous peoples in particular. One individual cited the contextual factor that, given that the territorial population is significantly more Indigenous than elsewhere in Canada, improving the health care system for all Northerners would translate into improvements for Indigenous peoples in particular. Another surmised that because the costs for Indigenous health services are higher than the value of the Health Care Grants, the funding was contributing to the improvements of the lives of Indigenous peoples. The absence of any other qualitative or quantitative data prevented the evaluation team from corroborating these claims.

### GBA Plus

The extent to which Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) is being incorporated and considered within the Program to support achievement of program outcomes was not explicitly evident by the evaluation team. There was no data or information provided to demonstrate that GBA Plus is integrated to inform development or implementation, even though it is a required policy tool for program and policy development.

Despite the uncertainty of funding to support circumpolar affairs activities, the Program has been able to provide leadership and facilitate space for Canadian IPPs to have a voice at the SDWG.

The Circumpolar Affairs directorate plays a leadership role at the Arctic Council's Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG). In doing so, it works collaboratively with Indigenous Permanent Participant (IPP) organizations and with territorial and provincial representatives to address socio-economic issues that contribute to community resilience, knowledge creation and international best practices related to sustainable development in the Arctic. Canada's influence was described as sizeable compared to that of other countries sitting at the Arctic Council's table. The manner in which Canada empowered IPP to co-wield some of that influence was also praised by many key informants.

According to performance data, all (100%) of Arctic Council initiatives correlate to or advance the priorities of Canadian IPPs, and 88% of the SDWG projects were co-developed and co-delivered with IPPs during the evaluation period. Key informants corroborated the importance of Canada's support for projects identified as priorities by IPPs, highlighting suicide prevention and sustainable energy projects as relevant examples.

Some key informants stated that the SDWG projects supported by circumpolar affairs were being developed and used in practical ways that advanced the priorities and capacity of local communities. As an example, one key informant cited how participants in a SDWG project had applied the experience gained to start a local iteration in their own communities. Another praised how communities were given the tools to adapt initiatives to their own context. Networking and knowledge-sharing were also saluted as two crucial benefits of Indigenous participation in SDWG project.

These successes are remarkable given a persistent and widely agreed-on need for more stable funding. Key informants reported that long-term and predictable funding would go a long way in helping Canada to further its influence at the Arctic Council and improve its management of circumpolar affairs.

With IPPs being funded mainly on a project-by-project basis, some described a pressure to follow the lead of the department in determining priorities and in selecting how to address them, perpetuating the colonial power imbalance. It was suggested that having an independent multiyear source of funding would help to build capacity within Indigenous organizations by encouraging long-term stability and predictability for recipients, thus aligning further with reconciliation objectives.

The need for securing adequate and stable funding was previously flagged in the 2016 program evaluation and as a recommendation in a 2017 program business case.

### 3.4 Economy and Efficiency

Reduced reporting requirements for recipients, increased availability of multi-year funding, and the creation of intergovernmental working groups have helped in responding to the needs of the Territorial governments. Conversely, for the Circumpolar Affairs area, the absence of predictable long-term funding has led to difficulties in building and maintaining organizational capacity.

Key informants were unanimous about the advantages of having access to predictable funding. Those interviewed in relation with the Health Care Grants explained how moving to a five-year funding agreement led to a swifter and more straightforward transfer of funds to the territorial governments. Many suggested that moving expenditures reporting to a similar five-year schedule would increase efficiency further. Federal and territorial officials interviewed on housing and infrastructure activities agreed that predictable funding allowed for better planning and coordination with partners. They explained how even brief delays in transferring funds could push back projects for years, due to the very short Northern shipping and building seasons.

Conversely, key informants discussing circumpolar affairs activities identified short-term funding as one of the main challenges they had to contend with. Program officials described how short-term funding was creating difficulties in planning ahead and in supporting IPPs. Key informants also reported that the absence of predictable long-term funding led to difficulties in building and maintaining organizational capacity, and to a lower autonomy to bring up less consensual issues to the table. While some IPPs highlighted how low reporting requirements were helpful in attenuating these challenges, there is a consensus that multi-year funding agreements would greatly benefit circumpolar affairs activities.

#### Intergovernmental working groups

The formal implementation of working groups in housing and infrastructure activities was seen by many federal and territorial officials as a positive new practice as they felt that it would lead to a better integration of Northern Canada's unique challenges into decision-making. Key informants explained how these working groups help to improve knowledge-sharing and to reduce friction between federal and territorial departments and agencies, thus promoting the efficient use of funds. With working groups being a fairly recent development, most informants conceded that it was too early to effectively assess their utility. Most declared optimism based on what they had seen so far. However, a common critique directed towards interdepartmental working group was that meetings were too sporadic to build the kind of momentum that could ultimately lead to real change.

#### Minister of Northern Affairs

Many program officials indicated that having a dedicated Minister of Northern Affairs has brought a newfound authority to collaboration networks in Northern Canada. As a result, they noted that the unique context and challenges of the North were better reflected in discussion around policy issues and the NAGP activities.

## **4. Lessons Learned**

Over the course of the evaluation three key lessons were identified.

The first is that there is a need to have programs focused on building and maintaining strong relationships and partnerships between Canada, territorial governments and Indigenous people in order to advance Northern and Arctic priorities and to successfully support reconciliation and the renewed nation-to-nation relationships. As exemplified by the activities of circumpolar affairs, this is better done by having Indigenous partners contributing to decision-making,

Next, having a dedicated Minister of Northern Affairs portfolio brings dedicated focus to northern issues, challenges, opportunities and solutions. Many key informants, in accordance with the opening section of the *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework*, stated how "Ottawa-based" policies of the past often failed to take into account the specific context and realities of the North and the Arctic. Taking housing as an example, some explained how even slight delays in

funding lead to missing shipping and building seasons, which pushes timelines back by a year or more.

Finally, the evaluation team was not able to find any evidence of the integration of gender considerations or the application of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) in any of the program activities or to advance achievement of outcomes.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusions

The Northern and Arctic Governance and Partnerships (NAGP) is a complex program system with a framework in which the whole is not greater than the sum of its parts and in which the parts are independent of each other. There is limited interconnectivity between the activities and at least one activity is linear and has no relationship to the other functions within the larger system.

However, the NAGP demonstrates its potential to be adaptive and dynamic, as best illustrated through the recent activities related to housing and infrastructure. Adaptiveness and dynamic interactions are embedded in parts of the program logic, but there is a need to test the assumptions and more concretely integrate the contextual factors influencing program activities including the *Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF)* and tri-lateral relationships. More precisely, the evaluation found:

- By not fully integrating Indigenous peoples into all program activities, the program is misaligned with reconciliation and, specifically, renewed Crown-Indigenous and Inuit-Crown relationships;
- The program is complex and it must be adaptive to changing needs but there was no evidence that work was undertaken during the evaluation period to strengthen program cohesion so that the whole was greater than the sum of its parts; and
- By not producing stable, reliable, and valid performance data, the current performance measurement strategy negatively impacts the ability to inform decision-making and to effectively track program progress over time.

### 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings and conclusions, it is recommended that CIRNAC:

1. Recalibrate program activities to ensure that Indigenous peoples are represented in decision-making, and more specifically in the development and funding allocation process, which will support the recognition and implementation of key policies such as but not limited to the [Arctic and Northern Policy Framework](#) and the [Inuit Nunangat Policy](#).

2. Develop options for modernizing the Health Care Grants, that includes Indigenous self-determination, while reflecting the devolved status of health programming and services in the territories.
3. Review and revise the performance measurement system to ensure that the measurement of relationship related outcomes are being tracked across time.

## Annex A – Logic Model (Version 6)

