

**Management Response and Action Plan (MRAP):
Evaluation of GAC’s Engagement in Complex Environments in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2018 to 2023**

Note: The findings of this evaluation and below recommendations only reflect the period 2018 to 2023. Canada’s Africa Strategy: A Partnership for Shared Prosperity and Security, launched in March 2025, is therefore not part of the evaluation scope. However, some of the considerations raised in this report have been reflected in the strategy.

Recommendation 1:
Explore and pilot a new approach to support integrated strategic country planning to provide an overall engagement and communication strategy for Canada to operate effectively in complex environments (i.e., countries classified as hardship 4 or 5). Resulting plans should align the objectives, activities and programs of the mission, headquarters and other government departments.
Management response and commitment
The Transformation Team Bureau (DMFT) agrees with this recommendation.

Actions	Expected Deliverables / Outcomes	Responsibility Centre (Bureau / Division)	Target Date
1.1 The department is exploring a framework for integrated country planning that aligns with objectives set out in GAC’s Transformation Implementation Plan (2023-2026), including: practices, tools and platforms to enable knowledge-sharing and collaboration across the department, as well as measures to strengthen Heads of Mission decision-making and accountability over resources deployed at their missions.	1.1 Streamlined country strategies to guide resource and program decisions.	1.1 DMFT with support/input of GPD. Implementation will require input and consultation with other relevant stakeholders from across the department.	1.1 March 2026

Recommendation 2:
Support projects in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS) to remain relevant by streamlining project approval processes and building flexibility in funding agreements to respond to unexpected crises.
Management response and commitment
<p>SGD, SXD and YOD agree with the recommendation.</p> <p>To incorporate flexibility into funding agreement templates to support timely crisis response actions to protect GAC-funded projects, the Grants and Contributions Center of Expertise (SGD) finalized the immediate crisis response clause in December 2024. This clause was developed in close cooperation with the Grants & Contributions Transformation Bureau (SXD) and in consultation with the International Assistance Operations Bureau (YOD). The clause has been incubated as part of the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative and has also been incorporated into the IDA contribution agreement template. The updated template is now in use, ensuring the related flexibility is included in new contribution agreements. In addition, SGD has extended the application of the new tool to cover operational projects.</p> <p>Several activities have taken place to socialize the new immediate crisis response clause. This has included a launch presentation with Project Team Leads, a joint learning session with the Evaluation Services and Learning division (RRE) on new tools for making grants and contributions (G&C) more resilient to emergencies, as well as an opportunity to engage with members of the Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee (PMEC) on the progress and potential impact of the new clause for the department. SGD has also developed and published a guidance note on the web to support internal and external stakeholders’ understanding and effective use in February 2025.</p> <p>The work to streamline project approval processes is well underway as part of the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative, led by SXD. SXD has conducted an extensive review of multiple funding processes across GAC with the view to create one core process for all G&C in the department, and to streamline and optimize G&C management processes across the entire funding cycle, i.e. including the project approval processes. SXD works collaboratively with respective business owners and other affected users to inform its review and optimization. The first iteration of the single core process for all G&C was released in December 2024.</p> <p>SGD, SXD and YOD will continue to collaborate, including with other relevant stakeholders in the department to address the recommendation as outlined in the proposed actions.</p>

Actions	Expected Deliverables / Outcomes	Responsibility Centre (Bureau / Division)	Target Date
2.1 Explore further flexibility to potentially adapt projects, consistent with the transfer payment framework, in light of new realities on the ground, including as part of project approvals.	2.1 SGD will assess potential further flexibility, in consultation with internal stakeholders, and, if further flexibility is feasible, will develop an approach.	2.1 SGD	2.1 March 2027

Actions	Expected Deliverables / Outcomes	Responsibility Centre (Bureau / Division)	Target Date
2.2 SxD in collaboration with YOS/YPS will build on work underway as part of the work of the Gs&Cs Transformation Initiative to review project approval process and potential streamlining.	2.2 SxD in collaboration with YOS/YPS will continue the review and optimization of grants and contributions management processes, including those pertaining to project approvals. The review will result in a streamlined and more flexible core process for G&C programming across GAC.	2.1 SxD in collaboration with YOD (YOS, YPS)	2.2 March 2027

Recommendation 3:

Strengthen personnel selection, pre-posting preparation, and support CBS and LES at post for hardships 4 and 5 assignments to improve staff capacity and resilience.

Management response and commitment

The Assignments, Performance and Talent Management Bureau (HFD) agrees with this recommendation but notes that this question goes well beyond Sub-Saharan Africa given that 70% of hardship 4 and 5 missions are located outside the region. HFD will review existing frameworks and consider additional action items to address this recommendation in the broader context of hardship 4 and 5 missions. Topics requested to be explored include:

- Improving CBS selection processes for complex environments
- Designing a Learning Road Map for complex environments (CBS and LES)
- Pre-posting preparations for CBS and families assigned to complex environments (including psychological self-assessment options)
- CBS and LES supports during assignments in hardships 4 and 5 assignments
- CBS debriefing and reintegration support post assignment in complex environments

Actions	Expected Deliverables / Outcomes	Responsibility Centre (Bureau / Division)	Target Date
3.1 HFD will identify items to be brought forward to People Committee that address this recommendation.	3.1 Overview of existing frameworks of support and additional action items to address recommendation.	3.1 HFD with the support/input of CFSD, GFD and ZID	3.1 May 2025