

Summary of the

Evaluation of the Canada Book Fund

2018-19 to 2022-23



Overview

The Canada Book Fund (CBF) is a grants and contributions program that supports the Canadian book industry in the creation and dissemination of Canadian-authored books.

Program components

- Support for Publishers
- Support for Organizations

Special initiatives that provide temporary funding:

- Support for Booksellers – 2022-23 to 2023-24
- Accessible Digital Books – 2019-20 to 2023-24

The evaluation assessed the CBF’s relevance, effectiveness and efficiency from 2018-19 to 2022-23, with a focus on design and delivery, response to current and changing industry needs and alignment with different government priorities.

Relevance

The CBF is an **essential program** for the **Canadian publishing sector** which needs continuous investments to adapt, grow and innovate.

The **industry’s small size and economic limitations** compared to foreign publishers, as well as **high production and distribution costs**, continue to pose important challenges.

The program **has effectively responded to industry needs**, including those arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing emergency support and launching new recovery initiatives.

When it comes to needs of the book industry, there are **three main gaps**:

- Distribution of French-language books outside Quebec
- Translation of non-fiction Canadian-authored books
- Availability of quality metadata which is essential to discoverability

Adjustments to CBF guidelines and the delivery of new funding have enhanced program alignment with government priorities on **equity, diversity, accessibility and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples**.

However, as new funding was temporary and **barriers persist** - particularly for **smaller publishers and those from equity groups** - ongoing and expanded support is warranted.

Effectiveness

The CBF has positively impacted the production, marketing, and dissemination of Canadian-authored books, ensuring a vibrant Canadian-owned publishing sector.

The program supports a wide array of publishers, leading to the publication of **diverse titles in multiple languages and formats**, with Canadian-owned publishers producing over three-quarters of new Canadian-authored books annually.

Through domestic and international marketing initiatives, the CBF has **stimulated demand** and **increased the visibility** of Canadian-authored books.

Technological innovation and industry intelligence have also been fostered by the CBF.

Number of funded publishers, 2018-19 to 2022-23

Year	Number of funded publishers
2018-19	252
2019-20	251
2020-21	268
2021-22	259
2022-23	261

Number of funded publishers, by market segment (genre), 2018-19 to 2022-23*

*Data for 2020-21 was not available.

Year	General Literature	Educational	Other (combination of categories)	Scholarly
2018-19	180	49	15	8
2019-20	185	46	13	7
2021-22	191	45	14	9
2022-23	195	43	14	9

Effectiveness (continued)

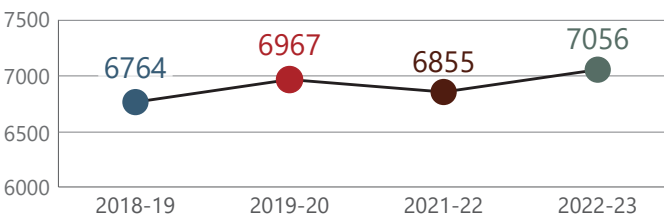


The program has **exceeded targets** for the publication (6000) and sales of Canadian-authored books by CBF recipients both domestically (\$250 million) and internationally (\$100 million).

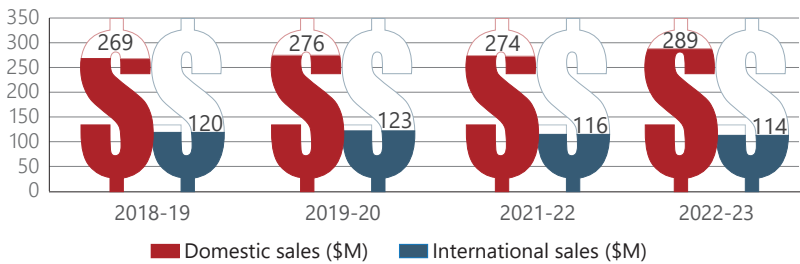


Support for Booksellers and the **Accessible Digital Books Initiative** have **helped boost** online sales and the production of accessible digital books.

Number of new Canadian-authored books published by CBF recipients, 2018-19 to 2022-23.*



Domestic and international sales of Canadian-authored books by CBF recipients, 2018-19 to 2022-23*



*Data for 2020-21 was not available.

Efficiency



The CBF is well managed, with actual spending aligning with planned budgets, a relatively low administrative cost ratio (6.4%), and the achievement of most service standards.

- The program efficiently delivered COVID-19 supplementary funding without additional operating costs.



While the program’s design and delivery are generally effective, there are some areas for improvement.

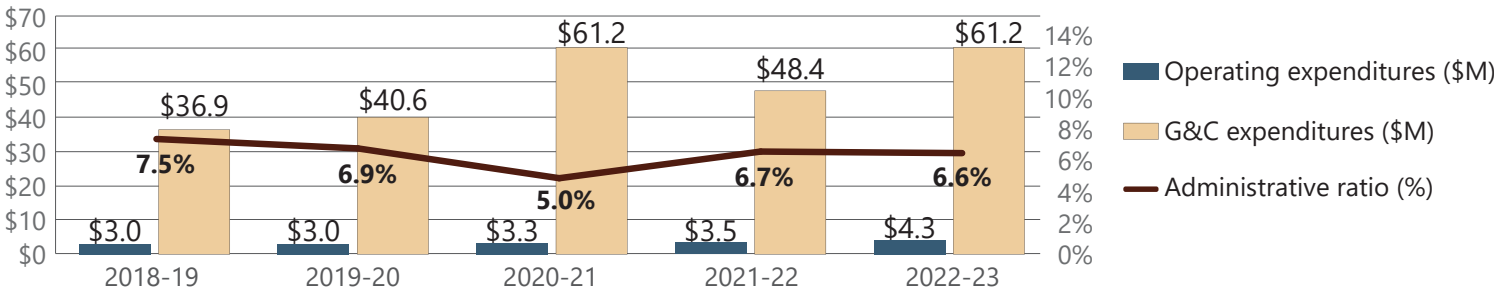
- Current eligibility criteria may **not fully support publishers from equity groups or who are Indigenous**.
- There are **gaps in the broader ecosystem** related to funding for non-literary book translations and distribution of French-language books in the English-language market.
- The application and reporting processes could be streamlined.
- Longer processing times for the Support for Organizations component.



The program’s performance measurement approach is generally appropriate, capturing key data.

- However, **certain performance measures are not well-defined**, particularly those related to achieving government priorities for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility and the outcomes of collective marketing initiatives.

CBF administrative ratio (\$M)



Recommendations

The Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Cultural Affairs Sector should:



1

Further improve program design and delivery by reviewing application and reporting processes and ensuring the CBF better responds to the evolving needs of the industry.

2

Better define how the CBF will address barriers and further support members of Indigenous, equity and official language minority groups within existing resources.

3

Make improvements to the performance measurement of the program to support ongoing decision-making and reporting on results.