

Summative Evaluation of the National Literacy Secretariat

Final Report

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Executive Summary

The National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) is a grants and contributions initiative established in 1987. The NLS has two objectives:

- To increase opportunities and take-up, so that people improve their reading and writing skills; and
- To work towards making Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to those with weak literacy skills.

The NLS pursues a partnership approach with the provinces, territories, non-profit groups, and business and labour organizations. The NLS works with and through its partners to enhance literacy through two funding streams: a national funding stream to provide funding support to help address literacy issues that have a national scope; and a federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) funding stream to provide funding for community based projects that address regional and local needs.

From 1997/98 to 2001/02, the NLS distributed an average of \$29 million per year in grants and contributions to help create a more literate Canada. The NLS allocates the full amount in grants but converts some of the funds into contributions on a case-by-case basis in accordance with Treasury Board policy.

The NLS was last evaluated in 1995. The 1995 evaluation concluded the NLS was working in areas not dealt with by the provinces, had made a significant contribution to literacy in Canada (e.g. by encouraging many sectors become involved in literacy, reducing barriers to literacy training for some groups), and was highly rated by program sponsors.

Regarding areas for improvement, the 1995 evaluation noted that the NLS had not been proactive in terms of specifying priority areas for funding, and that literacy issues had not been well defined for the purpose of federal intervention. The 1995 evaluation also noted that the NLS should play a more active role in ensuring the quality of research and learning materials produced with its funding, improve the dissemination of information, and establish program safeguards to ensure against project duplication.

Since the 1995 evaluation, there have been a number of changes in the environment of the NLS. For example, the shift towards an interdependent, globalized and knowledge-based society is creating new challenges for literacy. In addition, an increased emphasis on public accountability means that organizations that distribute public funds are being asked to continually review and assess their performance to ensure their relevance, probity and effectiveness.

The current evaluation of the NLS covers the five-year period from 1997/98 to 2001/02.

Approach to the Evaluation

In accordance with the objectives of the NLS, the purpose of the evaluation is to study the effects of the NLS both, in terms of the opportunities for improved literacy and in terms of working towards making Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to people (i.e. benefits to individuals) with weak literacy skills. While the creation of opportunities is directly linked to the activities of the NLS, actual benefits to individuals may be viewed as an indirect, albeit an essential consequence of the first.

Evaluating partnership programs, such as the NLS, presents a number of practical challenges. As a partnership program, the NLS is designed to achieve its objectives through organizations and groups that are beyond the direct influence of the Secretariat. Also, the NLS funds a diverse range of projects and outputs, and there are no common metrics (such as the number of job placements) by which performance can be quantified. Therefore, in specific instances, it is difficult to track and measure program results/effects.

In addition, most (88% in 2001/02) of NLS funding is provided through grants and, by definition, grants have limited accountability requirements.

Given the nature of the relationships between the NLS and its partner organizations/projects (grant based) and the nature and scope of the projects, detailed level data are not available for direct estimation of effects on individuals. For example, some of the projects are concerned with the development of literacy related products while others that provide services directly to individuals, may focus on subsets of the population – relatively small groups (compared to the general population – making it difficult if not impossible to detect effects on the basis of general surveys / census based on the general population). Consequently, the focus of the evaluation is on the extent the organizations succeeded in providing expected products and, indirectly, qualitative assessments regarding the likely impacts on the individuals assisted.

The methodology used to evaluate the NLS recognized these challenges and attempted to address them in a number of ways. For example, the evaluation took a comprehensive approach and included a wide range of stakeholders related to the NLS and the literacy field. The use of multiple lines of evidence was emphasized to allow for findings from one approach to substantiate/corroborate and inform other lines of evidence. Case studies were used to provide in-depth analysis/illustrations of program issues, outputs and impacts.

The evaluation approach includes the following components:

- **Program database review:** A review of the NLS database was used to develop an understanding of the scope of NLS funding activities and as a starting point for developing questions to be explored by other lines of evidence;
- **Case studies:** Twenty-one case studies were completed (three funded under the national funding stream, and 18 funded under the FPT funding stream);
- **Key informant interviews:** A total of 43 key informant interviews were conducted with 5 stakeholder groups: NLS representatives (3), federal government representatives (4), representatives from organizations that received NLS funding from one of the NLS

funding streams (10), provincial and territorial representatives (13), organizations that had applied but were not accepted for funding from one of the NLS funding streams (13);

- **Survey of NLS funded projects:** A telephone survey was undertaken of 277 representatives of NLS funded projects. The survey was designed to delve deeper into issues and further confirm findings that emerged from the case study reviews and the key informant interviews;
- **Focus groups:** To fill in gaps and further explore issues emerging from the other lines of evidence, two focus groups were conducted (one composed of experts in the literacy field; and one with representatives from organizations that face the same challenges as the NLS in areas of funding provision, partnership activity and performance measurement). Focus group participants did not have a direct relationship with the NLS.

Evaluation Findings

Impacts and effects: There is evidence that NLS funding has improved literacy opportunities for a range of groups.

The case study analysis and key informants indicated that the NLS has had an important impact in areas such as family and workplace literacy. The project survey indicated that NLS funded projects improved literacy opportunities for a range of groups including low income people, people with disabilities, first generation Canadians, and Aboriginal people.

A catalyst: The general view is that the NLS acts as a catalyst to increase awareness of literacy issues, bring people together and advance literacy.

Evidence from case studies, key informant interviews, and the focus group of literacy experts indicates that the NLS has raised the profile of literacy and helped to increase collaboration/partnerships within the literacy community. The available evidence also suggests that the NLS has advanced the literacy movement by promoting research and improving the ability to deliver successful literacy programs within the community.

Also, there is a high level of satisfaction with 70% of the organizations surveyed indicating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with NLS services.

Partnership model: Regarding the FPT funding stream, the partnership model has been functioning well in the Canadian inter-jurisdictional environment. The NLS should consider, however, improving communication with partners in relation to the selection and announcement of projects funded under the national funding stream.

All provincial and territorial stakeholders, as well as funded organizations familiar with the NLS and its activities, were satisfied with the functioning of the partnership model as it applied to the FPT funding stream. For example, they cited that it facilitated flexibility and openness. While the NLS partnership model is viewed as working well under the

FPT program, provincial and territorial partners would like to see better communications and working relations with the NLS in the case of the program's national funding stream.

Project funding: NLS funding is broadly dispersed across many organizations.

Over 1997-2002 period, 2043 organizations received NLS funding for 2,853 projects. Most organizations (80%) had only one project during the period. In terms of funding support, 50% of all projects funded by the NLS received less than \$25,000.

Areas for Improvement

Areas for improvement identified in the 1995 evaluation included the need for clearly defined priorities concerning issues to be pursued and projects funded, a more active role in ensuring the quality of research and learning materials produced and improved dissemination of results in order to safeguard against project duplication. Although program enhancements have occurred since 1995, (e.g. improved communication) there is still room for improvement (e.g. monitoring of results).

Leveraging: There is some evidence that NLS support results in organizations being able to leverage further resources to support literacy efforts. However, there is a need for the NLS to be able to demonstrate that it has program safeguards in place to ensure that NLS projects and leveraged funds are incremental.

The majority of organizations that receive funding from the NLS also receive funding and/or in-kind resources from project partners and over time the share of total project funds accounted for by partners' contributions is declining. The program needs safeguards in place to protect against projects being funded that would have proceeded regardless of NLS funding. A potential safeguard could require sponsors to attest on the project application that the project would not proceed without NLS support.

Dissemination of information: While the NLS is credited for supporting the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) and International Adult Learning & Skills Survey (IALSS) as well as regular intergovernmental consultation, more attention should be given to ensuring dissemination of project results among stakeholders.

The majority of the provincial and territorial key informants indicated that communication across the country has increased significantly over the last five years through the activities of the NLS, leading to the dissemination of innovative ideas throughout the literacy community; however, evidence from the case studies and key informants indicate that there is a need to further improve the dissemination of information and results to stakeholders and partners.

The financial support for the NALD and the IALSS provided by the NLS reflects the commitment of the NLS to improve communication and sharing of data. At the same time, however, the evidence indicates that there is a need to further improve the dissemination of information and results to stakeholders and partners.

Overlap and duplication: The general view is that as a catalyst and an organization that works in partnership to achieve its objectives, the NLS plays a unique role that is not being duplicated. There is a risk, however, of duplication in specific project support.

There is a risk of project overlap and duplication, particularly in the application of the FPT funding stream. Evidence from case studies, key informants and survey respondents indicate a risk of duplication in specific project support. This risk arises from the current lack of formal or strategic dissemination of information regarding the results of previous projects, and a current lack of information sharing on project proposals that are under consideration. Increased sharing of information with NLS partners was identified as a way to help ensure that a research project in one part of the country is not duplicated in another.

Program implementation: The NLS could simplify and streamline procedures to make it easier for smaller organizations less familiar with the grant process to obtain funds.

Groups familiar with the NLS and its application process feel that process and guidelines are clear and work well. Organizations that are less familiar with the NLS and its work find that application and notification procedures are cumbersome, that forms are complex and that the need to develop new annual applications and approaches makes it difficult for smaller organizations to be successful in the competition for project funding.

Quality: The NLS should take steps to ensure the reliability and credibility of research projects.

While major research projects conducted through SSHRC and Statistics Canada ensure high quality and reduce the risk of being duplicative through peer review mechanisms, FPT research runs the risk of duplicating work done in other regions/communities. In addition, more than one-half of the provincial and territorial key informants felt that there is insufficient program monitoring and accountability on the FTP funding stream to ensure the quality of products. Furthermore, needs assessment projects funded under the FPT stream may lack the rigour necessary to be considered ‘applied research’. The application of a formal peer review process for all research conducted would help increase quality and help reduce the risk of duplication.

Monitoring performance: The NLS should put in place efficient data gathering and monitoring systems and consistent procedures for evaluating projects.

The monitoring of the results of projects by the NLS was identified as an area for improvement, even given the limitations imposed by the grant process. Also, there is a need to improve the data gathering and monitoring system (GMAX) used for the administration of grants. Coding limitations restrict its usefulness in providing an in-depth perspective of NLS activities and outputs. Data collection and storage should be examined to ensure that data is available to conduct a future evaluation.

While the NLS is credited with being a catalyst in promoting literacy across Canada, it is unclear to what extent it has been successful in meeting its stated objectives, due in part to issues of attribution and measurement.

Relevance: While the NLS plays a unique role in promoting literacy across Canada, there may be an opportunity to develop a more strategic approach through the setting of focused priorities.

There is a concern as to what the organization's role in the future should be relative to its current objectives and the needs of the literacy community. One approach is for the NLS to 'stay the course'. This approach reflects the view that more work needs to be done in raising the profile of literacy, and that the NLS as a funding organization continues to play a unique role in supporting the attainment of its objectives through other organizations. Another approach is for the NLS to consider developing a national approach to literacy that would involve the setting of Canada-wide priorities that would reflect the specific needs of today (e.g. focusing on technology, focusing on the needs of specific groups such as Aboriginals and families).

This suggests that there is an opportunity for the NLS to re-examine its role in order to determine how it could best meet its objectives in the changing environment. This could include a consultation process with stakeholders across the country to assess how the literacy challenge has evolved over the last fourteen years.

Sustainability and NLS Role: As part of developing a more strategic approach, the NLS may wish to look at ways to increase the sustainability of results and progress.

The NLS is the primary literacy organization in Canada which funds and supports first-time projects. More than half of the NLS funded projects continued after program funding expired, however, almost one-third of NLS funded projects were not sustainable. There are some pressures, however, for the NLS to consider providing longer-term funding in order to promote, expand and build upon past successes and to improve on project sustainability. While this could raise inter-jurisdictional issues, such an approach could be considered as part of a re-examination of the program's role.

Management Response

The National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) would like to thank participants who gave their time for this evaluation which was conducted over the summer and fall of 2002. In this Management Response, the NLS outlines areas of strength and acknowledges where improvements are warranted.

BACKGROUND

The National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) was established in 1988 as a result of increasing awareness and evidence that Canada was facing a serious challenge in the area of low literacy skills. Since, the NLS has worked to promote literacy as a foundational component of learning and to make Canada's social, economic and community life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills.

The key activities of the NLS support work which develops adult literacy learning materials and models, improves outreach and access to literacy programs, increases public awareness of the importance of literacy, supports research, and improves coordination and information sharing among literacy stakeholders. In carrying out its mandate, the NLS partners with the provinces and territories, non-profit organizations (NGOs), post-secondary institutions, provincial/territorial institutions (including crown corporations), as well as business and labour organizations. The NLS also works with many federal departments and agencies, particularly in the areas of Justice, Corrections and Health, to encourage horizontal support for literacy issues.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE EVALUATION

Monitoring, Accountability and Results Management

The Treasury Board Policy on Transfer Payments has one requirement for the use of grants as a funding mechanism which is that a program must verify the on-going eligibility of any funding recipient. This is quite different from contributions, which can be audited, and must provide financial statements, outcome data, interim and final reports.

The NLS receives its funds in the form of grants and has historically used its authority to fund most projects with this mechanism. Contributions have been used when there are certain risk factors involved such as a large sum of money or a new recipient without a track record known to the NLS. Joint initiatives with other government departments would also require the use of contribution agreements. In spite of Treasury Board requirements for using grants, however, the NLS has managed grants in a similar way to contribution agreements by requiring financial statements, and interim and final reports. In addition, unused grant funds are returned to the NLS, to efficiently use scarce resources.

Nonetheless, the current evaluation found a need for improved accountability in the NLS management of grants and contributions. In response to this the NLS will strengthen its requirements through an increased use of contribution agreements, while recognizing that there will always be a need for the use of grants particularly for those projects which are low-risk and support very small community organizations. The NLS has discussed the issue with Treasury Board and will use a phased-in approach, initially implementing the change with larger organizations and projects.

A new NLS evaluation framework and performance measurement strategy are currently being developed. The performance measurement strategy in particular will indicate specific data which the NLS will require from its clients in the future. The NLS has undergone a process of developing a new logic model, on which the evaluation framework is based, as well as a newly articulated program objectives. The evaluation framework will include a formative evaluation in year three and a summative evaluation in year five. The strategy will include some in-depth case studies designed to target the end-user in order to more effectively measure and capture the impact of the programming on individuals. This framework is expected to be completed by the end of September 2004.

The evaluation report states a need for an improved system for data gathering and monitoring. As with other programs, the NLS now uses the departmental Common System for Grants and Contributions (CSGC) as its main system for data gathering. In addition to this, the NLS has initiated discussions with key stakeholders regarding the kinds of data they collect and what might be possible to share.

Relevance

The 2002 evaluation report reaffirms that the Secretariat continues to play a unique role within the literacy community and that the five eligible funding areas that support capacity development remain relevant. Evaluation participants referred to the need for nation-wide leadership, a national literacy campaign, and the expansion of the role of the Secretariat in bringing together provinces and territories.

Several other initiatives confirm the relevance of the work of the NLS:

- The ongoing concern with literacy levels, supported in part by the International Adult Literacy Skills Survey (IALSS) currently underway, also demonstrates the relevance of the program. Country results are expected in February 2005 and in-depth Canada results will follow in Spring 2005;
- The National Summit on Learning and Innovation which took place in November 2002 resulted in a series of recommendations. One of these was for the development of a Pan-Canadian literacy strategy;
- The Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities undertook to study adult literacy in Canada in 2003. Its work resulted in a report entitled *Raising Adult Literacy Skills: the Need for a Pan-Canadian Response* which contained 21 recommendations. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) led the Government of Canada response to the report

and in doing so, committed to engaging partners in discussions to work towards a Pan-Canadian strategy on literacy.

Partnership

The Secretariat is highly regarded for its partnership approach as indicated in both the 1995 and 2002 evaluations. All provincial and territorial stakeholders, as well as funded organizations familiar with the Secretariat and its activities, believe that the partnerships function well within the federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) funding stream. In addition, the Secretariat structures individual working partnerships designed to meet the needs of each province and territory.

The NLS evaluation found that communication needs to be improved within the national funding stream. This is being accomplished through improved and increased web-based communication. Since the 2002 evaluation, calls for proposals have been issued for both the Research Partnerships and the National Non-Literacy projects funded under the national funding stream. In addition, a research consultation was held in March 2004 with stakeholders and partners from across the country. A range of issues was discussed, including accountability in literacy research and criteria for quality standards. A research framework is being developed based on the consultation and will be completed in September 2004. This framework will guide research funding priorities and principles for the NLS.

Leveraging/Incrementality

The NLS requires that funding applicants provide evidence of additional funds already secured through other partnership(s) when a proposal is submitted. NLS records indicate that this has resulted in over \$200 million from external sources being contributed to its funded initiatives since 1988. The evaluation report indicated that the majority of the larger provinces now contribute more funds to literacy than required by the NLS partnership model. For example, British Columbia recently doubled its funding for literacy.

The evaluation report confirmed that NLS funding results in organizations being able to leverage further resources to support on-going literacy efforts. Evidence of incrementality (the extent to which the program activity or interventions would have taken place regardless of any NLS support), however, was cited as a weakness in the evaluation report.

The NLS agrees that there is a need to demonstrate that it has program safeguards which would help to ensure that no other source of funds are being accessed for the same project or being displaced. Therefore during the 2004-2005 fiscal year the NLS will put in place measures to have funding applicants attest that NLS support is required for their project to be undertaken, and that the project will not be able to take place without the funding support of the NLS. Specifically, protocols will be included on the application form itself for clients to declare that their project could not be undertaken without the assistance of the NLS.

Information Dissemination

The majority of provincial and territorial key informants in the evaluation considered communication across the country to have increased significantly over the last five years through the activities of the NLS. They believe that this has led to the dissemination of innovative ideas throughout the literacy community.

Since the previous evaluation, additional information dissemination measures were undertaken. The NLS now:

- requires that all NLS-funded project descriptions be posted on the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) web-site;
- provides all products to the HRSDC library which is accessible to the public and whose catalogue is available on-line via the NALD; the NLS requires at least 2 copies of all projects and their products to be filed at provincial and territorial literacy resource centers to ensure that NLS-funded material has adequate distribution;
- is exploring the feasibility of putting all products/materials on NALD as full text documents (currently materials are put on NALD in full text on an ad hoc basis);
- supports the literacy database at the University of Alberta;
- funds a number of newsletters such as Connect and Literacy.ca and supports a new literacy research journal to publicize materials and resources developed; and
- supports conferences as a vehicle for sharing information, such as the National Best Practices Workshop on Literacy.

Overlap and Duplication

Federal/provincial/territorial literacy funding processes have typically included project review committees. One of their functions is to ensure that projects recommended for funding are not duplicated. The proposal review committee in each province or territory typically includes representation from the NLS, the respective province or territory, as well as individuals from the NGO or academic community that have additional expertise.

The evaluation did not find evidence of overlap or duplication, but in the absence of specific measures to prevent this, it identified the area as being in need of improvement. Further measures to avoid overlap and duplication will be taken by the NLS, requesting that applicants attest to having done literature searches related to their issue/proposed activity on NALD and an environmental scan to ensure that no current initiatives exist that would duplicate their efforts.

CONCLUSION

Strengths

The evaluation found that the NLS had an important impact in areas such as family and workplace literacy, and that it improved literacy opportunities for a range of disadvantaged groups such as Aboriginal people and people with disabilities. As a catalyst, the NLS was found to increase awareness of literacy issues and to increase collaboration and partnerships in the literacy community. It has advanced research on literacy and improved the ability of organizations to deliver successful literacy programs within the community. Evaluation participants also expressed a high level of client satisfaction with the NLS and its program. The federal/provincial/territorial funding stream, in particular, was pleased with the partnership approach used by the NLS.

Recommended Areas for Attention

The evaluation report identified a number of areas that require attention. Increasing the proportion of contributions will strengthen the NLS's ability to monitor projects and improve its ability to demonstrate outcomes. The evaluation framework and performance measurement strategy will also assist in fine-tuning the program's ability to track outcomes. Safeguards are required to prevent the funding of projects that could go ahead without NLS funds. Mechanisms are needed to avoid duplication and overlap. Application procedures need to be simplified and streamlined. We must ensure the quality of research in the federal/provincial/territorial funding stream in order to improve the program. Data gathering and monitoring systems also need improvement.

Work has begun in several of these areas

The work of the NLS goes beyond the administration of grants and contributions, which much of the evaluation covers. It is intended that future evaluations will provide a clearer view of the value added of the NLS in helping to build the literacy infrastructure that Canada needs, as well as its strategies of partnership development and multi-sectoral targeting.

ADDENDUM TO THE 2002 NATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAM (NLP) EVALUATION

Since the 2002 evaluation, changes have been implemented in response to evaluation findings. For example, a regular call for proposal process has been developed and implemented. A research consultation on adult literacy was held with experts from across the country to inform a new literacy research framework. A new evaluation strategy was developed. Funding applicants must now attest that NLP support is necessary to the undertaking of their project. Applicants must also conduct a complete literature search of relevant web sites in order to prevent the duplication of any undertaking. The findings of both NLP evaluations, in addition to the results of the above consultations, have provided support to program design and implementation.

Since 2002, several key events have taken place which have influenced the context in which the NLP conducts its activities. These include:

- The 2003 hearings of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities on adult literacy and the subsequent release of its Report entitled, *“Raising Adult Literacy Skills: the Need for a Pan-Canadian Response”*;
- The 2005 commitment of an additional \$30 million to the NLS for the further development of partnerships with provinces and territories, business and labour to foster awareness of and involvement in literacy issues and to promote learning in the workplace;
- The 2005 cross-country community consultations on learning, literacy and essential skills; and business and labour consultations on literacy and essential skills;
- The 2005-06 conduct of an interim evaluation of the NLS required by Treasury Board Secretariat prior to approval of any further terms and conditions;
- The 2005 release of the results of the 2003 Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, and cross-country presentations promoting the results as well as dialogue and collaboration on future actions;

Enhanced performance measurement and results reporting guided by a strong evaluation framework will continue to be a priority in implementation of learning and literacy programming.

1. Introduction

The National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) is a grants and contributions initiative established in 1987. The NLS has two objectives:

- To increase literacy opportunities and take-up, so that people improve their reading and writing skills; and
- To work towards making Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to those with weak literacy skills.

The NLS pursues a partnership approach with the provinces, territories, voluntary groups and associations, and business and labour organizations. Rather than being involved in direct program delivery, the NLS works with and through its partners to enhance literacy. From 1997/98 to 2001/02, the NLS distributed an average of \$29 million per year in grants and contributions to help improve literacy in Canada.

The NLS was last evaluated in 1995. The 1995 evaluation concluded the NLS was working in areas not dealt with by the provinces, had made a significant contribution to literacy in Canada (e.g. by encouraging many sectors and organizations to become involved in literacy, reducing barriers to literacy training for some groups), and was highly rated by program sponsors.

Regarding areas for improvement, the 1995 evaluation noted that the NLS had not been proactive in terms of specifying priority areas for funding, and that literacy issues had not been well identified for the purpose of federal intervention. The 1995 evaluation also noted that the NLS should play a more active role in ensuring the quality of research and learning materials produced with its funding, should improve the dissemination of information, and should establish program safeguards to respond to issues of project overlap and duplication.¹

Since the 1995 evaluation, the environment impacting on the NLS and the manner in which the federal government manages programs has changed. The shift towards an interdependent, globalized and knowledge-based society is creating new challenges for public, private and non-profit players involved in literacy. In addition, the federal government has further increased its emphasis on public accountability by requesting that organizations that distribute public funds continually review and assess their performance to ensure their relevance, probity and effectiveness.

The current evaluation of the NLS covers the five-year period from 1997/98 to 2001/02, and addresses issues of program relevance, design and delivery, achievement of objectives and impacts.

¹ The management response for the 1995 evaluation indicated that an effort would be made to more clearly articulate priorities without harming program flexibility, monitoring procedures would be codified, improvements had been made to the tracking and dissemination system, and consideration would be given to ensuring that an organization which completes a project has funds attached to it to ensure distribution.

This report on the current evaluation includes the following sections:

- An overview of the NLS;
- A summary of the evaluation issues and methodology;
- An overview of projects funded by the NLS, and an examination of the impacts and effects of NLS funding;
- A consideration of the NLS's success at achieving its objectives;
- An assessment of implementation issues;
- A review of the rationale and relevance of the NLS; and
- A summary of the main findings and areas identified for improvement.

2. Overview of the NLS

The origins of the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) lie in the 1986 Speech from the Throne which committed the federal government to “work with the provinces (and territories), the private sector and voluntary organizations to develop measures to ensure that Canadians have access to the literacy skills that are prerequisite for participation in an advanced economy.” The NLS was established in 1987.

2.1 Program Objectives

The NLS has two objectives:

- To increase literacy opportunities and take-up, so people improve their literacy skills; and
- To work towards making Canada’s social, economic and political life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills.

2.2 Program Funding

During the evaluation period (from 1997/98 to 2001/02), the NLS distributed an average of \$29 million per year in grants and contributions (as shown in Table 1). The program allocates the full amount in grants from Treasury Board (TB), but converts some of the funds into contributions on a case-by-case basis as required by TB policy. In 2000/01, 88% of the money was distributed through grants.²

FISCAL YEAR	TOTAL NLS PROJECT FUNDING
1997-1998	\$29,630,851
1998-1999	\$31,108,567
1999-2000	\$28,679,941
2000-2001	\$28,972,994
2001-2002	\$26,434,006

Source: TGN Administrative Database Technical Report

The NLS provides funding for projects in five project/activity areas:

- Developing learning materials;
- Improving coordination and information sharing;
- Improving access to literacy programs and outreach;

² Source: National Literacy Secretariat (NLS)

- Increasing public awareness of literacy issues; and
- Research.

NLS project funding is distributed through two streams:

- the national funding stream which provides support to organizations (e.g. national non-governmental, provincial and territorial literacy coalitions, national literacy organizations, and labour organizations) in addressing literacy issues that have a national scope; and
- the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) funding stream which works with the provinces and territories to provide funding support for literacy-based projects that address individual regional and local needs.

2.3 Organization

At the time of the evaluation, the NLS was based in the HRDC national capital headquarters. Its annual operating resources include \$1,203,000 in salary and \$1,431,850 in non-salary dollars, which after transfers to salary Operations and Maintenance totals \$645,501.

2.4 Partnership

The setting up of the NLS reflected the view of the Government of Canada that the advancement of literacy was too complex for any one level of government or sector to undertake alone. It also recognized that literacy falls within provincial jurisdiction. Accordingly, the NLS does not deliver programs directly but has pursued a partnership approach with the provinces and territories, other government departments, business and labour, the voluntary sector and non-governmental organizations.

2.5 Logic Model

The design of the NLS can be described in terms of its logic model (see Appendix I). The logic model articulates the relationship between the program's activities, the expected outputs and the outcomes that are expected to occur if the program is successful. To meet its objectives, the NLS conducts three types of activities: outreach/awareness, knowledge development, and project development and support.

Various products flow from these activities. Outreach/awareness activities are aimed at generating promotional products, partnership development, and information-related outputs (e.g. websites, project databases and resource collection). Knowledge development activities are aimed at producing outputs such as research reports, policy documents, and NLS symposia. The outputs from project development and support activities include

advancing strategic communications with partners and recommendations regarding grants and contributions.

As noted in the logic model, the short-term outcomes from the above include:

- Enhanced strategic partnerships involved in literacy;
- Increased evidence base; and
- Improved information sharing and coordination; development of innovative and best practices; increased public awareness activities by partners; more research produced by partners; better trained practitioners; and more learning materials produced by partners.

The immediate outcomes are in turn expected to lead to medium-term outcomes which include:

- Stronger community networks and networking to address literacy issues;
- Enhanced capacity of NLS partners to address literacy issues;
- Increased awareness of literacy issues by Canadians;
- More resources toward literacy;
- A better understanding of literacy in social and economic participation; and
- Knowledge of best practices by practitioners, researchers and policy analysts.

Over the long-term, NLS's activities are intended to contribute to the achievement of a broad range of goals including a more inclusive society, increased literacy opportunities for all Canadians and the removal of barriers to take-up, and the potential for full citizen participation in society.

Implicit in the logic model is a decline in the direct influence of the NLS as one moves from program activities toward longer-term outcomes. For example, the NLS has direct influence over its selection of projects for funding, but has less direct influence on the immediate outcomes resulting from that funding. In addition, the NLS is only one of many factors that influence on outcomes, whether they are immediate, intermediate or final outcomes.

3. Evaluation Approach

This section outlines the issues identified for the current evaluation of the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS). It also highlights some of the challenges in evaluating partnership-styled programs, such as the NLS, the methods used to undertake the current evaluation, and some of the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation approach.

3.1 Evaluation Issues

In accordance with the objectives of the NLS, the purpose of the evaluation is to study the effects of the NLS both, in terms of the opportunities for improved literacy and in terms of working towards making Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to people (i.e. benefits to individuals) with weak literacy skills. While the creation of opportunities is directly linked to the activities of the NLS, actual benefits to individuals may be viewed as an indirect, albeit an essential consequence of the first.

Given these and data limitations associated with the nature of grant arrangements (Section 3.2), the objective of this evaluation is still to study the effects of the NLS but with focus on the extent to which funding resulted in products that had the potential to improve opportunities for literacy and, where possible, to obtain, qualitative assessments regarding impacts on individuals.

Twenty-two issues were identified for the evaluation of the NLS under four broad categories:

Program Rationale and Relevance:

1. What is the rationale for the NLS in the current environment? To what extent has the role of the NLS changed since the last evaluation?
2. Are the literacy issues as defined in 1988 still valid for the purpose of federal intervention today?

Program Implementation:

3. What is the contribution of NLS activities by funding methods, purposes and areas of interest? What is the incremental value of the collection of projects in the areas of: innovation, development and best practices, public awareness, research, the training of practitioners and the production of learning materials? What is the complementary or leveraged funding associated with those?
4. How are the priorities established and pursued, and are there any gaps?
5. How do the NLS activities complement and reinforce those of other partners (i.e. the NLS value-added). Are there critical gaps? Duplication and overlap?

6. What are the project selection processes of the program? Assuming the continued relevance and appropriateness of the objectives and priorities of the NLS, have the development processes for projects and the selection processes for awarding grants and contributions been effective in identifying project activities that are in line with NLS objectives and priorities?
7. What progress has the NLS made in the promotion of plain language in the federal government?
8. Progress on the new accountability framework: does regular performance reporting occur? Do annual reviews with grant recipients take place to determine continued eligibility? Does the development of an Accountability Framework enhance the overall policy framework for NLS, and what are the early indications and evidence?
9. Did the program implement (or improve since the last evaluation) quality control of the learning materials produced or the research results?
10. Did the program improve information sharing and co-ordination, including the dissemination of research results and program products to the stakeholders?
11. What criteria are used to determine when NLS intervention is no longer required or appropriate?

Objective Achievement:

12. To what extent did the program create partnerships that increase literacy opportunities and their take up (so that people improve their literacy skills)?
13. To what extent did the program work toward making Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills?
14. What is the NLS contribution to: a better understanding of the influence of literacy in social and economic participation; integration of literacy considerations into related policy and institutional life?

Impacts and Effects:

15. Is there evidence of increased awareness of literacy issues by various sectors of society? To what extent is it attributable to the NLS?
16. Is there evidence of an increased participation by all partners and, if yes, what has been the impact of this increased participation (i.e. leveraged funding)?
17. To what extent did the NLS improve the information sharing and coordination among the stakeholders of the literacy sector and what are the expected impacts?
18. Is there evidence of increased opportunities and accessibility to literacy programming and, if yes, what are the particular groups that have benefited (e.g. Aboriginal peoples)? Are the barriers to participation in literacy learning being addressed and reduced?

19. To what extent do research findings address the relevant issues in the literacy field, such as: (a) preventative measures to counteract low literacy; (b) barriers to participation in literacy programs; and (c) local and regional needs? To what extent are such research studies conducted by the NLS or funded by it?
20. To what extent have NLS activities resulted in the development of non-traditional learning opportunities and innovative learning models? To what extent have the evaluation findings of those pilot and demonstration projects been used?
21. To what extent can successful projects be replicated with other groups or partners and under what conditions? To what extent have the barriers to participation in literacy learning been addressed and reduced and to what extent can this be attributed to the NLS?
22. Is there evidence that the NLS is responsive to emerging needs and priorities?

3.2 Evaluation Methods

Evaluating partnership programs such as the NLS raises a number of challenges. First, in the case of the NLS, the program is designed to provide project funding support to organizations in addressing literacy issues that are national in scope and to support literacy-based projects that address regional and local needs. Both of these funding streams are aimed at achieving the program's objectives through groups and organizations beyond the direct influence of the program. As a result, in individual instances, specific final outcomes directly linked to NLS funding are not easy to track and measure, if at all possible.

Second, the program funds a broad range of projects that produce diverse outputs (e.g. research reports, workshops, training programs) with no common metrics on which performance can be quantified.

Third, timing can be a challenge. In particular, the tracking and measuring of incremental, cumulative change can be a balance between measuring the achievement of short-term goals and the attainment of a long-term vision.

Additional challenges arise from the fact that much of NLS funding is provided through grants (with grants accounting for 88% of NLS funding in 2000/01). By definition, grants are not usually subject to audit and have only limited accountability requirements under which results information may be collected. Discussion of Treasury Board policy on grants and contributions and its impact on NLS activities is further discussed under Section 6.3.

The methodology used to evaluate the NLS recognized these challenges and attempted to address them, for example by:

- Emphasizing the use of multiple lines of evidence;
- Employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods;

- Making full use of case studies to provide in-depth analysis/illustrations of program issues, and the potential for outputs and impacts; and
- Using focus groups to help fill in the gaps and identify new directions.

The main components of the evaluation approach are presented below:

3.2.1 Literature Review

Prior to the evaluation, a literature review was conducted to examine methods used to evaluate programs with features similar to the NLS in other countries. The review identified the following conclusions to help guide the current evaluation of the NLS:

- A ready-made evaluation framework is not yet available for partnership programs such as the NLS;
- Other countries are placing considerable emphasis on the use of on multiple lines of evidence from both qualitative and quantitative sources to assess the impacts, results and achievements of programs that have features similar to the NLS;
- Case studies are considered to be a key method in evaluating partnership programs and are used to provide concrete examples and in-depth examinations of whether and how a partnership program is achieving its goals; and
- An initial document review is considered to be an important starting point and an important potential source of hard data for the evaluation of programs similar to the NLS.

3.2.2 Database Review

GMAX was the database designed for the administration of NLS grants. Because GMAX contains data on funded projects, it was used in the evaluation to develop an understanding of NLS funded activities. The database review was also used as a starting point for developing questions to be explored by other lines of evidence.

3.2.3 Case Studies

The case study analysis focused on documenting/illustrating the activities, outputs and results achieved by projects funded by the NLS (a summary of the 21 case studies is included in Appendix II). They added direct evidence of the projects undertaken and completed, the expected impacts and effects of NLS projects, and information regarding their achievements. They also added insights concerning a range of other program design and delivery issues.

The case study projects were randomly selected, based on regional distribution and funding stream. Twenty-one case studies were completed (three funded under the national funding stream, and 18 funded under the FPT funding stream).

Each of the case studies included three research and data gathering phases:

- A review of organizational documentation (consisting largely of a review of organizational websites);
- An in-depth review of project files; and
- Telephone interviews with project managers and key people involved in the project (with more than one project representative being interviewed in cases: (a) where the project involved more than one key player and; (b) when these individuals were still with the organization and available for the interview).

The case study analysis focused on the following research areas:

- General overview of the project;
- An assessment of the degree to which project objectives were achieved;
- A review of how the project was implemented, project-related monitoring and evaluation practices, and any obstacles that were encountered during implementation;
- The nature of interaction with the NLS throughout the life of the project; and
- An assessment of the longer-term impacts and effects of the project and whether the project was contributing to the achievement of NLS objectives.³

At the time of the evaluation, 9 of the 21 projects that were subject to a case study had not been completed on schedule (i.e., had received a deadline extension). One of the case study projects had been terminated prematurely and therefore was unable to achieve any of its objectives or intended impacts.

A case-study review protocol was developed. The project Working Group and the Evaluation Instrument Validation Working Group reviewed the case-study protocol. The Validation Working Group is composed of literacy experts and was established with a mandate to review various data collection instruments to be used in the evaluation in order to identify any problems or issues with content, format, or presentation – particularly for persons with weak literacy skills.

3.2.4 Key Informant Interviews

Coverage included a diverse range of key informants, with an emphasis on seeking out corroboration of assessments of issues and outcomes. The objective of the key informant interviews was to gather information and data regarding the NLS's program relevance and the overall impacts and effects of its funding and activities. The key informant interviews built on the findings from the literature review and database review undertaken at the outset of the evaluation. They also helped to inform the other lines of evidence.

³ For reasons elaborated in 3.2, in individual instances, specific final outcomes directly linked to NLS funding are not easy to track and measure, if at all possible. Therefore, the case studies are not able to speak to impacts and effects on individuals.

At the beginning of the evaluation, employees representing all units in the NLS met in a one and a half day workshop to examine the foundations for the NLS evaluation. The Outcome Mapping Workshop focused on issues related to NLS effectiveness over the evaluation period. As a result of the Outcome Mapping Workshop, five key stakeholder groups were identified for the key informant interviews. A total of 43 key informant interviews were conducted with the following stakeholder groups:

- **NLS representatives:** Three representatives from the NLS were interviewed regarding the rationale and relevance of the NLS as an organization, the effectiveness of the organizational objectives, the NLS partnership approach, the NLS proposal process, and operational issues and accountability;
- **Federal government representatives:** Four federal clients of the NLS were interviewed (two currently work within other areas of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), and two work outside HRDC but in other federal departments); Interviewees were asked about rationale and relevance, including the challenges and role of the NLS, their views about the NLS's achievement of objectives/impacts and effects;
- **Representatives from funded organizations:** Ten representatives from organizations that received NLS funding over the last 5 years under either of the two NLS funding streams were interviewed. These interviews focused on reviewing the relationship between the NLS and representatives of funded organizations;
- **Provincial and territorial representatives:** Thirteen individuals in provincial and territorial governments were interviewed (these were individuals who worked with the NLS in the delivery of the federal-provincial/territorial funding stream, and who also work with the NLS to move forward issues at a national level); Interviewees were asked about their involvement in and their views about NLS's program implementation (including partnership model, program funding, leveraging, monitoring and evaluation), views about the NLS's achievement of objectives/impacts and effects (including NLS's role as a catalyst, coordination and dissemination, and future role), and issues related to program rationale and relevance;
- **Representatives from non-funded organizations:** Thirteen individuals from organizations that had submitted proposals for NLS funding and were not funded were interviewed. These interviews were expected to provide some insight as to why some organizations are more successful than others at receiving NLS funding. Interviewees were asked questions related to program implementation (proposal submission/funding process and relevance of the five project areas) rationale and relevance (including NLS's role as a catalyst and future role), achievement of objectives/impacts and effects.

The interview protocols included the following areas:

- Program implementation;
- Achievement of objectives/ impacts and effects; and
- Program rationale and relevance.

Informant interviews were conducted primarily by telephone. Separate interview protocols were developed for each stakeholder group to tailor the information to each stakeholder group and to ensure that the data collection needs of the evaluation were met. The project Working Group and the Evaluation Instrument Validation Working Group reviewed the interview protocols and provided feedback.

3.2.5 Project Survey

A telephone survey was conducted in November 2002 and completed with 277 representatives of NLS funded project representatives selected randomly from a list of 627 potential contacts. The survey was designed to delve deeper into issues and further explore findings that emerged from the case study analysis and key informant interviews.⁴

Table 2 summarizes the project sponsor survey sample by size of organization (i.e. size of budget and number of employees), length of time the organization had been operating, NLS funding stream, and region.

Table 2	
Some Characteristics of the Survey Sample	
Attribute	Organizations (%)
Number of Employees (Q.34)	
One to five	41.5%
Six to twenty	38.3%
Twenty-one to fifty	7.6%
Fifty-one and higher	10.8%
Don't know/no answer	1.8%
Budget (Q.35)	
Less than \$100,000	31.0%
\$100,000 to \$500,000	37.9%
\$500,001 to \$1 million	9.7%
\$1 million and 1 to \$5 million	8.7%
\$5 million and higher	9.4%
Length of time Operating (Q.33)	
Up to six years	18.4%
Seven to ten years	13.7%
Eleven to fifteen years	20.2%
Sixteen to twenty years	15.2%
Twenty years and longer	31.4%

⁴ The approximate margin of error for a sample of this size was plus or minus 6% at the 95% confidence level.

Table 2 (continued) Some Characteristics of the Survey Sample	
Attribute	Organizations (%)
Funding Stream (Q.30)	
National	28.5%
Federal-Provincial/Territorial	45.1%
Not sure/don't know	24.2%
No answer	2.2%
Region	
Atlantic	23%
Quebec	28%
Ontario	24%
West and Territories	25%

3.2.6 Focus Groups

The focus group analysis was designed to provide program related observations (qualitative) and interpretations on the impacts and effects of the program. A decision was made to conduct the focus groups with stakeholders that did not necessarily have a direct relationship with the NLS, but who might have useful contributions to make. Thus, one focus group was held in Toronto with literacy experts/academics, and another focus group was held in Ottawa with like organizations facing similar challenges as the NLS in the areas of funding projects, partnership activity, performance measurement, etc.

The focus group with literacy experts/academics included representatives from the following organizations: the University of Toronto Adult Education and Counseling Psychology department; the YMCA of Greater Toronto; Clear Language and Design (a division of the Toronto East End Literacy Project); Preparatory Training Branch (a non-profit organization that has helped over 8,000 participants develop solid literacy and basic skills); the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy; and two academics (one associated with the University of Toronto and one from St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia).

Participants in the focus group of like organizations included representatives from the Justice Grants and Contributions Fund (Department of Justice); the National Secretariat on Homelessness (HRDC); the Federal Partners in Technology Transfer Program, National Research Council; the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Division (Health Canada); and the United Way of Ottawa.

3.3 Strengths and Limitations of the Evaluation Approach

The evaluation methodology developed to evaluate the NLS had the following strengths:

- Took a comprehensive approach and involved a wide range of stakeholders related to the NLS and the literacy field;
- Emphasized the use of multiple lines of evidence to allow the findings from one approach to substantiate/corroborate and inform findings from other lines of evidence;
- Interviewed key informants with multiple perspectives on evaluation questions. For example, representatives from provincial and territorial governments were inclined to view the issue of literacy, and the role of the NLS, not simply from a program effectiveness perspective but through the lens of federal/provincial relations;
- Conducted case studies analysis to provide more concrete analysis/illustrations of program issues, outputs and impacts (where such information was available).

Although the evaluation approach developed for the NLS recognized and attempted to address the challenges in evaluating this type of partnership-style program, the following limitations should be noted:

- Information to confirm specific outcomes of the NLS was often not available and the project representatives interviewed as part of the case study analysis often had no views on key issues, or were simply not very well informed. For example, very few of the interviewed project representatives were aware of the objectives of the NLS prior to the interview, and only one-third were able to provide in-depth commentary on the subject;
- There were challenges encountered in using GMAX for analytical purposes. For example, coding limitations only allowed a project to be coded against one activity even though it may have met the goals of multiple activities, thus limiting the usefulness of GMAX in providing an in-depth perspective of NLS activities. (The nature of the data being collected and how it is stored should be examined to ensure that appropriate data is available for a future evaluation of the NLS.);
- Representatives from non-funded organizations (those who were unsuccessful in getting NLS funding) had little knowledge of either the literacy issues or the Secretariat itself, and were often unwilling to participate in the evaluation. The majority of non-funded organizations that were interviewed tended to be small, with limited resources and high turnover of personnel associated with their NLS proposal. As a result, finding appropriate people to interview from the non-funded organizations was a major challenge (i.e. forty-nine organizations were contacted in order to complete thirteen interviews). It should be noted that difficulties in surveying refused/non-funded organizations are not unusual. Organizations are less likely to participate in studies of the program that rejected their proposals than organizations that received program funding.

4. Impacts and Effects

This section begins with an overview of National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) funded projects and then considers the impacts and effects of NLS funding by examining the incremental effects of NLS funding, the role of the NLS as a catalyst, program impacts on various groups, leveraging and the issue of sustainability.

4.1 Overview of NLS Projects

NLS funding is broadly dispersed across many organizations.

The NLS distributed an average of \$29 million per year in grants and contributions during the evaluation period.

NLS funding through the two funding streams is broadly dispersed. From 1997 to 2002, 2,043 organizations received funding for 2,853 projects. Four-fifths (80%) of these organizations had just one project over the five-year period, and accounted for 57% of all NLS projects during that time. The maximum number of projects that any one organization received funding for was nine, and almost all received funding for fewer than four projects. The largest recipients of NLS funds were literacy organizations.

Just over half of all projects funded by NLS received less than \$25,000.

In terms of the size of the funding provided by the NLS:

- Just over 50% of all projects funded by NLS received less than \$25,000;
- 33% were funded between \$25,000 and \$75,000;
- 13% were funded between \$75,000 and \$200,000; and
- The remaining 3% were projects funded at more than \$200,000.

From 1997 to 2002, there was a slight upward shift in the funding of projects; as the proportion receiving less than \$25,000 declined, while those receiving between \$25,000 and \$75,000 increased.

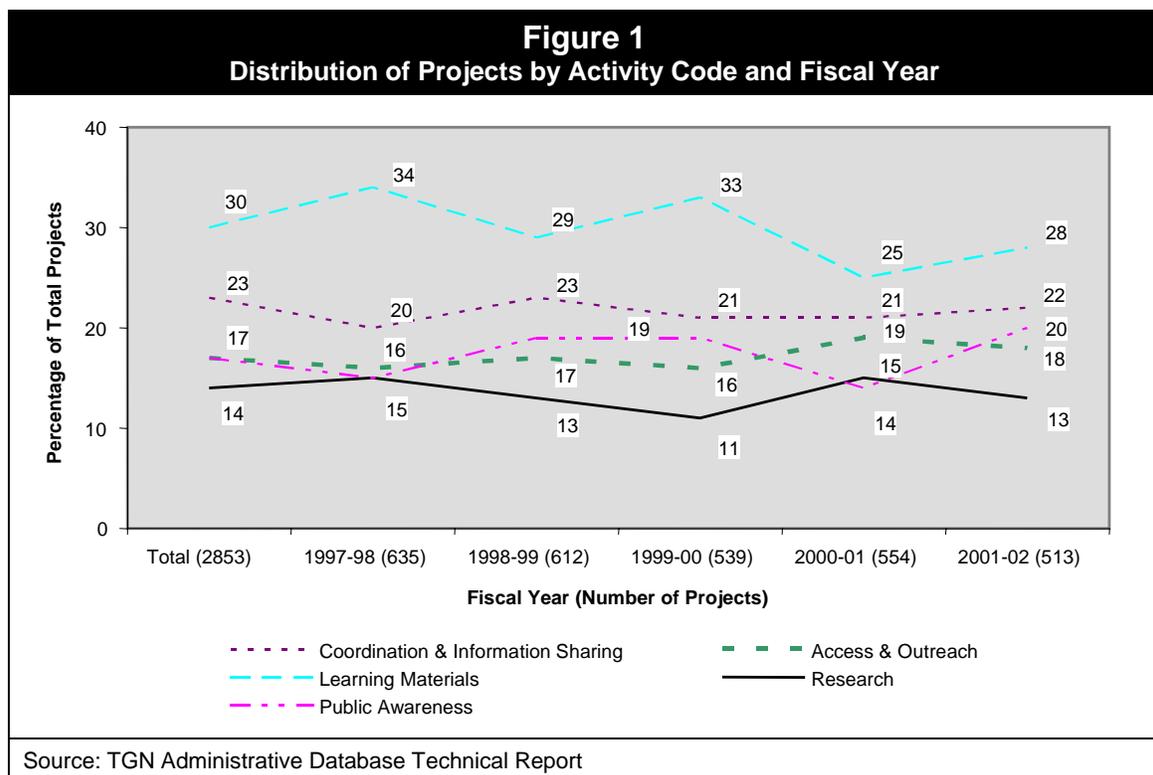
Projects focused on learning materials consistently accounted for the greatest proportion of projects funded during the evaluation period.

In order to be eligible for project funding through the NLS, proposals must fall under at least one of the following five project/activity areas: developing learning materials, improving coordination and information sharing, improving access to literacy programs and outreach, increasing public awareness of literacy issues, and research.

A review of the project areas funded by NLS over the past 5 years (shown in Figure 1) indicates:

- Projects focusing on learning materials consistently made up the greatest proportion of all projects funded during the five-year period, although there was considerable fluctuation in the share of projects they accounted for and a declining trend over the five-year period;
- Research and public awareness projects also experienced fluctuations in the share of projects they accounted for over the five-year period, with a slight upward trend in the case of research projects; and
- The project categories of coordination and information, and access and outreach, were fairly steady over the five-year period.

The processes used by the NLS to select projects for funding are examined in Section 6.



4.2 Incremental Effects

Incrementality, in program evaluation terms, refers to the difference a program made net of what would have happened in the absence of program funding. In the context of the NLS, and the projects funded, project incrementality is equal to the total projects funded less those projects that would have proceeded in the absence of NLS support. Similarly, the incrementality of the funds leveraged by project sponsors from partners is equal to total funds leveraged less those funds that could have been invested in NLS-type literacy activities if the program had not existed.

The available evidence suggests that only a small percent (less than 4%) of the projects would have proceeded at all without NLS funding, but this is difficult to confirm.

Less than 4% of the organizations responding to the survey on funded projects indicated that their project would have proceeded without NLS funding.

Key informants from organizations with funded projects indicated that NLS funding is viewed as critical in supporting their work at the community level. Also, many of the provincial and territorial key informants indicated that, without NLS funding, provinces and territories would not have had the resources to support projects in the area of workplace and family literacy.

It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to draw a final conclusion regarding incremental effects because it is difficult to separate the effects of NLS funding from other sources of support for NLS (as discussed in Sections 4.3 and 4.5, and in Section 5). However, the lack of evidence to support evaluation findings on incremental effects points to the importance of ensuring realistic program safeguards are in place to protect against project overlap and duplication to the extent possible. The issue of program safeguards is discussed further in Section 6.5.

4.3 Role of NLS as a Catalyst

Increasing Awareness

The NLS has increased awareness of literacy issues.

The case study analysis indicated that the NLS has contributed to increased awareness and understanding of the importance of literacy to social inclusion and ability to participate fully in society.

All thirteen of the provincial and territorial informants credited the NLS with raising the profile of issues related to literacy.

All ten of the key informants from organizations with funded projects indicated that the NLS has been successful at increasing the awareness about literacy issues in their organizations and among their contacts throughout Canada and for more broadly defining what literacy means to society.

Developing Partnerships

The available evidence indicates that the NLS contributed to bringing people together and developing partnerships in the area of literacy.

Almost all of the case study projects reported some form of consultation/collaboration within the literacy community and/or learners within the community to determine needs, establish best practices, or engage in project activities, such as developing or testing

learning tools. In almost all cases, projects benefited from collaborating with various community partners.

Organization: Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes

Project: *Promotion, sensibilisation et formation auprès d'organismes canadiens francophones de l'Ouest et du Nord – Nos compétences fortes (NCF)2*

Location: Quebec

NCF is a set of tools that was designed to allow French-speaking adults who may or may not have efficient writing skills or educational backgrounds to assess their own competencies and become more productive individuals within their communities.

This project began in 1998, at the general meeting of the Canadian Literacy Federation in French, held in Halifax. The francophone population of Western Canada wanted to know how to obtain funding to help literacy initiatives within their respective communities. It took approximately three years of talks and negotiations with the four western provinces to make substantial progress. Throughout this process, NLS representatives facilitated the discussion, which helped to ensure that the project was finally launched. It was felt that, had it not been for NLS's role in bringing together all involved parties, the project would never have gone forward.

Organization: Nunavut Literacy Council

Project: *Literacy & Community Development Workshops*

Location: Nunavut

The Nunavut Literacy Council implemented a project aimed at raising awareness and knowledge of community capacity building and literacy development among various groups such as Literacy Council Board members, educators, Inuit organizations, literacy practitioners and government officials by delivering literacy-related workshops. This has promoted partnerships within communities in the territory and the organization has subsequently been overwhelmed by the demand for its services.

Key informants from organizations with funded projects credited the NLS with creating and supporting partnerships throughout the literacy community. All thirteen of the provincial and territorial key informants also credited the NLS with bringing people together.

The focus group of literacy experts credited the NLS for being creative in bringing together people who do literacy work with academic researchers and encouraging a concerted focus on literacy issues.

Advancing the Literacy Movement

The evidence indicates that the NLS has been a catalyst for literacy initiatives.

The case study analysis indicates that the NLS has advanced the literacy movement, for example by encouraging practitioners to think of new ways to improve their reach, creating visibility for organizations and issues, bringing professional expertise to the area, creating new recruitment opportunities for under-resourced organizations, and increasing the overall level of sensitivity to literacy issues. A majority of the case studies indicated that

funding from the NLS has also allowed organizations to focus on key problem areas and has improved their ability to deliver successful literacy programs within the community.

Organization: Centre for Education and Work

Project: *Articulating Workplace Education*

Location: Manitoba

The objective of this project was to design and develop a pilot system for the articulation of essential skills work completed in the workplace. This project positions the workplace as a meaningful place of learning for adults returning to education. When completed, the project will have developed systems so that adult learners can receive formal recognition for their workplace learning efforts in various educational and employment settings.

Key informant interviews corroborated the findings of the case studies, with specific groups expanding upon certain themes. All of the thirteen provincial and territorial key informants credited the NLS with acting as a catalyst by encouraging them to provide budgetary resources for literacy programs, bringing people together, promoting research and raising the profile of literacy as a national issue.

The focus group of literacy experts credited the NLS with providing what it called the ‘space’ for practitioners, educators, academics and others to think, reflect, and collaborate in order to move literacy forward. The focus group also credited the NLS for supporting the National Adult Literacy Database.

Client Satisfaction

As shown in Table 3, 70% of the organizations surveyed indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with NLS services. Looking at the five activity/project areas of the NLS, the surveyed organizations are most satisfied with the performance of the NLS in the area of “encouraging the development of learning materials and methods” (81%) and are least satisfied with NLS performance in the area of “access and outreach in order to increase participation in literacy programs” (59%).

Table 3
Satisfaction with NLS Performance

	Satisfaction					
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Don't know/ no answer
Overall (Q.10)	1.8%	8.7%	15.9%	46.9%	23.5%	3.2%
Learning materials and Methods (Q.11a)	0.4%	2.9%	11.2%	50.2%	31%	4.3%
Access and Outreach (Q.11b)	1.8%	9.7%	24.5%	40.4%	19.1%	4.3%
Promotion and Public Awareness (Q.11c)	0.4%	9.7%	18.1%	46.9%	18.4%	6.5%
Coordination and information sharing (Q.11d)	0.7%	10.1%	19.5%	41.2%	24.9%	3.6%
Applied research (Q.11e)	0.7%	4.3%	19.5%	46.9%	19.9%	8.7%

Source: Survey of funded projects

Overall satisfaction with the NLS is higher among organizations with bigger budgets. Organizations with annual budgets of \$500,000 or above are more apt to be satisfied (82%) with the overall support of the NLS, compared to those with budgets below \$500,000 (66%). One possible explanation is that the larger organizations usually work more closely with the NLS under the national funding stream.

Overall satisfaction with the NLS is highest in Ontario (35% are very satisfied) and Western Canada (39% are very satisfied), and lowest in Quebec (5% are very satisfied). The low satisfaction rate in Quebec may be a function of the partnership relationship which is very limited in this province. Representatives from Ontario and Western Canada are also more satisfied with the performance of the NLS in each of the five activity areas, compared to other parts of Canada.

4.4 Impacts on Canadian Groups

There is evidence that NLS funding has improved literacy opportunities for a range of groups including people with low incomes and people with disabilities.

Two-thirds of the case study organizations noted that the NLS has made an important impact in areas such as family and workplace literacy.

The majority of the provincial and territorial key informants supported the evidence from the case study analysis that the NLS is improving the economic and social life of people with weak literacy skills through its expansion of literacy to target workplace and family literacy.

The Key Informants noted that the NLS has improved the level of service to workplace literacy students by elevating workplace literacy and raising the professionalism of workplace literacy providers/practitioners. Prior to the 1990's, community educators were involved in workplace education, but now as a result of the efforts of the NLS, as well as those of its partners, the teaching of adult and workplace literacy is viewed as being "professionalized."

The project survey asked the project representatives if their project improved literacy opportunities for any of a range of groups within the Canadian population. As indicated in Table 4, the project representatives were most likely to report that their projects improved literacy opportunities for people with low incomes (83%), for practitioners/tutors (69%), for people with disabilities (55%), first generation Canadians (40%), Aboriginal people (36%), seniors (35%) and, parolees and inmates (18%).

Table 4						
Impact of NLS Funded Project on Literacy Opportunities						
Population Group	Impact					
	Not at all	A Little	Some	A Lot	Not applicable	Don't know/ no answer
People with Disabilities (Q.31a)	19.5%	13.0%	31.8%	23.8%	6.1%	5.8%
Senior Citizens (Q.31b)	36.1%	18.4%	23.8%	11.2%	6.5%	4.0%
Aboriginal People (Q.31c)	33.2%	14.1%	23.1%	13%	12.6%	4.0%
Francophones (Q.31d)	32.9%	8.3%	14.1%	33.9%	7.9%	2.9%
First Generation Canadians (Q.31e)	27.4%	17.7%	23.5%	16.6%	9.0%	5.8%
Parolees/ Inmates (Q.31f)	50.9%	12.6%	10.8%	6.9%	12.6%	6.1%
Practitioners/ Tutors (Q.31g)	12.6%	9.7%	26%	43.3%	6.1%	2.2%
People with Low Incomes (Q.31h)	2.2%	6.5%	24.2%	59.6%	4.3%	3.2%

Sources: Survey of funded projects

To examine the potential of wider impacts, the project survey also asked whether the organization's involvement with the NLS had contributed to the overall success of the organization. Most of the project representatives (88%) indicated that being involved with the NLS had contributed in this fashion.

All of the key informants from organizations with funded projects indicated that funding from the NLS allowed their organizations to focus on key problem areas and improve the ability to deliver successful literacy programs within the community.

NLS' impact is discussed further in Section 5.2 with regards to the program's achievement of its objectives.

4.5 Leveraging

In the context of the NLS evaluation, there are two instances in which leveraging might occur – the project leveraging of financial and/or in-kind resources from partners and the leveraging of knowledge acquired by the outputs of the program (i.e. project leveraging). Leveraging of resources refers to *the use of funds to generate additional funds or in-kind resources* (such as computers, office supplies, volunteers, etc.). Project leveraging refers to *the application of projects to build on the knowledge generated by previous projects or to assist with the development of other projects*.

There is some evidence that NLS funding is leveraging funding and in-kind types of assistance from other sources in support of literacy-based initiatives.

Almost half of the case study organizations indicated that initial NLS funding has assisted in leveraging funding, as well as other support materials from partners.

About half of the funded organizations included in the project survey indicated that they were able to use their NLS funding to leverage other funds, and about two-thirds indicated that they were able to leverage other types of support. Organizations with higher annual budgets (at least \$500,000) appear more likely than smaller organizations to leverage additional funding and other resources. Organizations funded under the national funding stream also appear more likely to leverage other funds and resources.

In Saskatchewan, the NLS is credited with initiating funding for family literacy development in the province. As a result of NLS seed funding and other developments in the province, the family literacy initiative now has a budget of \$300,000 per year.

This conclusion is consistent with key informant interviews. All thirteen provincial and territorial key informants credited the NLS with encouraging them to provide money for literacy programs. The FPT funding stream was originally developed to encourage provinces to begin to fund literacy initiatives, and in a majority of the larger provinces the provincial governments are now contributing more funds than required under the match-funding program.

It has to be recognized that the available evaluation information collected on leveraging is impressionistic at best. Leveraging estimates have to be assessed in the context of the program's incremental impacts and here the evidence is ambiguous (see Section 4.2., Incremental Effects). Furthermore, even if leveraging is taking place, the data presented in Table 5 below point to the conclusion that NLS project funding as a proportion of total project budgets is increasing over time (i.e., NLS funding is playing a larger (percentage) role in total project funding).

Table 5
Comparison of NLS Project Funding to Project Budgets

Project Budget			
Fiscal Year	Total NLS Project Funding	Total Project Budgets	NLS Project Funding as a Percent of Total Project Budgets
1997-1998	\$29,630,851	\$66,078,274	44.8
1998-1999	\$31,108,567	\$64,620,382	48.1
1999-2000	\$28,679,941	\$54,720,518	51.7
2000-2001	\$28,972,994	\$57,139,598	50.8
2001-2002	\$26,434,006	\$49,252,370	53.5

Source: TGN Administrative Database Technical Report

The available evidence that NLS funding is leveraging funding from other sources indicates the need for the NLS to be able to demonstrate that it has program safeguards in place to ensure that NLS funded projects and the leveraged funds are incremental.

Given that NLS funded projects have the potential for leveraging funding and in-kind support from other sources, there is a need for the NLS to be able to demonstrate that it has program safeguards in place to reduce the risk that NLS funded projects would have gone ahead and leveraging would have occurred in the absence of NLS support. The issue of program safeguards is discussed further in Section 6.5.

4.6 Sustainability

The evidence indicates that more than half of the NLS funded projects continued after NLS funding expired.

Almost half of the case study organizations indicated that NLS funding has the potential for moving programs to become autonomous or self-sustaining. Only one organization indicated that, although its program was successful, it was unable to continue on with its program after the NLS ceased to fund the project (Comité Alpha Papineau: Project - L'Alphabétisation par les pairs).

Half of the project representatives included in the project survey indicated that their project continued after the NLS funding expired, 31% indicated that their projects did not continue, and 13% indicated that this was not applicable (i.e. the project was not intended to continue after the funding period). This evidence suggests that over half the projects that received NLS funding during the evaluation period became sustainable, while almost one-third were unable to continue.

More than half of the key informants from organizations with funded projects identified an ability to sustain the projects after NLS finished funding the project.

The issue of sustainability is also closely linked to the findings above on the need for a clearer perspective on the program's incremental effects. The fact that in nearly one-third of the cases examined sustainability was not maintained is important corroborative evidence that without the support of the federal initiative the projects would possibly not have proceeded at all in these cases. On the other hand, for those projects that did continue, it is not clear at present what factors contributed to this continuation and the role of initial NLS funding in this context.

The issue of sustainability is discussed further in Section 7.

5. Achievement of Objectives

This section looks at the extent to which the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) is achieving its two overall objectives:

- To increase literacy opportunities and take-up, so people improve their literacy skills; and
- To help make Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills.

5.1 Awareness of NLS Objectives

Many of the organizations receiving NLS funding are not well informed of the overall objectives of the NLS.

Very few of the case-study organizations were aware of the overall objectives of the NLS prior to being informed of these objectives as part of the case study analysis.

Some key informants were also unaware of the overall objectives of the NLS.

On the other hand, the focus group of literacy experts was aware of the two objectives of the NLS and was very supportive of them.

5.2 Evidence of Achieving NLS Objectives

There is some evidence to suggest that NLS projects are achieving their stated objectives and contributing to the broader objectives of the NLS, although it is unclear to what extent the NLS has been successful in meeting its stated objectives in part due to issues of measurement and attribution.

Case Study Evidence

Once the representatives of the case study organizations were informed of the overall objectives of the NLS as part of the case study analysis, they all indicated that they felt that NLS was achieving them, although only one-third of the case study organizations were able to provide in-depth commentary on this subject.

Regarding access to literacy opportunities, for example, one of the case study organizations indicated that participation in literacy-oriented programs had been minimal in the past because the programs were not provided free of charge within its community and were narrowly targeted (only to select groups). Through NLS project funding, however, participation in their literacy programs has increased.

Organization: The Canadian Mental Health Association

Project: *Barriers to Literacy*

Location: Prince Edward Island

This project involved hiring a literacy coordinator to determine whether greater coordination could improve participation in adult literacy programs. The project revealed that it was a misconception that adults were not participating in literacy programs due to the stigma attached to having low literacy skills. The project demonstrated that there was a lack of coordination, and that adult learners did not know what programs were available or how to access them. The project also helped 20 people take the first steps toward improving their literacy skills by accessing the services available to them.

Organization: Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes

Project: *Promotion, sensibilisation et formation auprès d'organismes canadiens francophones de l'Ouest et du Nord – Nos compétences fortes (NCF)2*

Location: Quebec

In Quebec, a set of tools called nos compétences fortes (Our Strong Competencies) was designed to allow French-speaking adults with literacy needs to assess their own competencies so that they could find ways to leverage their strengths to become more productive individuals within their communities. This project aimed to promote these tools and provide training to practitioners so they could be applied by Western and Northern francophone organizations. This project contributed to making “Canada’s social, economic and political life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills”.

Project Sponsor Survey Evidence

As discussed in Section 4.4, the project survey indicated that projects funded by the NLS had improved literacy opportunities for a number of groups, including people with low incomes, practitioners/tutors, people with disabilities, and first generation Canadians.

Key Informant Evidence

Key informants also provided some support for the conclusions that NLS projects were contributing to the overall objectives of the NLS. For example, more than half of the 13 provincial and territorial key informants indicated that the projects and innovative activities funded by NLS are leading to increased opportunities for individuals at the community level to improve their literacy skills.

Regarding the NLS objective of *making Canada’s social, economical and political life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills*, the provincial and territorial key informants emphasized that literacy is a long-term issue involving generational change. The majority also indicated that the NLS is improving the economic and social life of people with weak literacy skills through its expansion of literacy to target workplace and family literacy.

The following findings from key informant interviews provide perceptions of how the NLS is achieving its objectives of building capacity, awareness and access through its five key program activities. These findings also identify the need for better sharing of information (discussed further in sections 6.1 and 6.4), and for program safeguards to ensure quality control in research and to reduce the potential for project duplication (discussed further in Section 6.5):

- ***Development of learning materials and methods:*** The NLS is viewed by the majority of the key informants as successfully developing and sharing learning materials for use throughout the literacy community;
- ***Improved access and outreach to increase uptake of improved literacy:*** The NLS is viewed as funding critical projects that are designed to support community-based outreach;
- ***Promotion and public awareness:*** The NLS is credited with having increased the awareness of literacy issues;
- ***Coordination and information sharing:*** The NLS is viewed by all as being helpful in this area. The National Adult Literacy Database that was established by the NLS is viewed as one of the most effective outputs from the NLS's activities, with one of the provincial representatives calling it a "virtual gold mine of information." The NLS was also given positive feedback on the electronic communications systems that it funds. The majority indicated that better systems were needed to track projects that have been funded, either through the NLS or the provinces and territories. In particular, there is a need to be able to identify at the proposal stage whether a similar project has been funded elsewhere in Canada to ensure that the funded projects either build on the existing literature/findings or take a new direction. The majority of the key informants indicated that they were unaware of the wide variety of projects funded by the NLS and felt that they would benefit if the NLS could better communicate on the funded projects and disseminate outputs that have passed through a peer review process;
- ***Applied Literacy Research:*** NLS funds three major types of research: (1) large-scale, national research projects, some of which are undertaken jointly with SSHRC and Statistics Canada; (2) research funded under the federal-provincial stream and; (3) needs assessment of literacy issues and needs in local communities. The majority of the key informants noted that the NLS has added to the knowledge base by funding applied research related to literacy. The International Adult Learning and Skills Survey (IALSS) is viewed as a landmark piece of work for describing the situation in Canada in comparison with other countries in the world. It was noted that the NLS also funds other less formal research, as well as applied research from the literacy community. About half of provincial and territorial key informants indicated that the key strengths of the NLS relate to research, data collection and dissemination. The majority of the key informants recommended that the NLS provide improved quality assurance (e.g., peer review) of all research. It was generally recognized that the provinces are not resourced for quality control, but that there is a need within the literacy community for this activity.

The majority of the key informants from organizations with funded projects indicated that the projects funded by NLS were more likely to support the first objective of the NLS.

Some differences were noted across the country. Key informants from Ontario generally indicated that program objectives are far removed from what happens at a project or community level. Those from other parts of Canada, particularly those located in Québec and on the East Coast, feel that NLS projects stimulate people to continue to learn, which ultimately increases their ability to participate more fully in society.

The key informants from organizations with funded projects credited the NLS with helping to disseminate research findings across Canada; approximately one-quarter of the key informants noted that the NLS often makes presentations and conducts briefing sessions on workplace education and tools for assessment. These tools are now being applied in virtually every province or territory and in private sector and labour organizations.

It should be noted, however, that some of the key informants felt that it was difficult to determine the extent to which the NLS is meeting its stated objectives:

- A few of the key informants from organizations with funded projects noted that overall objectives of the NLS are very similar to those of most literacy-based organizations, which makes direct attribution to the NLS difficult; and
- In relation to the objective centered on *increased literacy opportunities and take-up so people improve their literacy skills*, a majority of the provincial and territorial key informants indicated that this falls within provincial jurisdiction (i.e. direct programming), making it difficult to make attribution for success to the NLS. The majority of the provincial and territorial key informants found that it was even more difficult to make attribution for success related to the objective of *making Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills*.

Focus Group Evidence

The focus group of literacy experts maintained that the objectives of the NLS were important enough to be pursued and that the NLS is making a positive impact on the country, and that the provinces and territories benefit from the federal government's support in this way.

6. Program Implementation

This section examines the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) partnership model and the application process. It also examines the issue of monitoring and evaluation, and takes a closer look at the issues of dissemination of information, and overlap and duplication.

6.1 The NLS Partnership Model

The NLS pursues a partnership approach with the provinces, territories, voluntary groups and associations, and business and labour organizations. Rather than being involved in direct program delivery, the NLS works with and through its partners to enhance literacy in Canada.

The partnership model followed by the NLS for the Federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) funding stream has been functioning well.

The FPT funding stream supports literacy-based projects that address regional and local needs. The FPT stream involves an annual call for proposals through which organizations tender submissions directly to the province or territory.

Under the FPT funding stream, the NLS has structured a working partnership designed to fit with the specific needs of each province and territory. For example, some provinces, such as New Brunswick, have a matched funding program agreement with the NLS. Under these agreements, the province matches the program funding provided by the NLS and projects are therefore funded jointly. In other provinces, such as Manitoba, the province funds direct programming and the NLS funds projects related to research, development and innovation. In provinces such as Ontario and Alberta, the NLS and the province work together to fund specific areas of literacy; however, the provinces have a much larger funding envelope for literacy activities. In provinces such as Quebec, the province manages the funding envelope and makes recommendations to the NLS for project financing.

The majority of provincial and territorial key informants indicated that they work with the NLS on an annual cycle to establish funding priorities and to develop and extend calls for proposals. Four provinces felt that NLS's priorities were not always consistent with those of their provincial government.

In each province and territory, there is a joint review process, which varies from province to province to permit flexibility and to meet the needs of each jurisdiction.

All provincial and territorial key informants indicated that they are satisfied with the partnership model that is used under the FPT funding stream. There is agreement among all those consulted that the working relations between the NLS and their provincial and territorial counterparts are positive and productive. The majority believe that the processes related to this program are effective and the communications are good.

Communications with partners in relation to the selection and announcement of projects funded through the national funding stream was identified as an area for improvement.

The national funding stream provides support to organizations in addressing literacy issues that have a national scope. Proposals for this stream are accepted directly by the NLS on an ongoing basis and reviewed by a national committee in the NLS at regular intervals.

The majority of the provincial and territorial key informants expressed dissatisfaction with how the national funding stream functions. While provincial and territorial representatives recognize that the national funding stream falls within federal jurisdiction, they felt that decisions made by the NLS under this stream can have an impact at the provincial level. All provinces/territories felt that they were not adequately informed of funding and project decisions under the national stream. In one example, the province of Saskatchewan noted that the NLS had funded an organization within the province for a work place literacy project. The province was also funding the same organization, but had minimal input into the NLS decision. Thus the province and the NLS were not viewed as working in a complementary fashion with possible implications for problems of overlap and duplication. For further discussion of overlap and duplication see section 6.5.

The degree of ongoing interaction with the NLS varies by project.

The case study analysis found varying degrees of ongoing interaction between the funded organizations and the NLS. Four organizations that received funding through the FPT stream reported strong working relationships with the NLS. Of the remaining fourteen FPT organizations from the FPR funding stream, ten reported working closely with the province and four progressed independently throughout the proposal process and project implementation. The three nationally funded organizations funded through the national funding stream viewed the NLS as a valuable partner who provided ongoing feedback and support throughout their projects.

Half of the case study organizations did not consider the NLS to be an active partner. These organizations received funding through the FPT funding stream and therefore had more interaction with the province than with the NLS throughout the proposal and implementation stages of their projects. One of the case study organizations stated that the need to interact at the provincial level inhibits the development of what they believed would be a valuable relationship with the NLS.

Organization: Open Doors Adult Literacy Program

Project: *Journaling: A Resource Guide*

Location: Manitoba

As a project funded under the federal-provincial/territorial stream, Open Doors did not work with the NLS to develop its proposal, but rather worked with the provincial representative.

Organization: Ontario Literacy Coalition
Project: *Raising the Profile of Workplace Literacy*
Location: Ontario

This project was established to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote workplace literacy to the private sector. It involved the coordination of five regional projects focusing on marketing workplace literacy. This is a partnership with QUILL Network, Literacy Network of Durham Region, Mohawk College, CGPC and Metro Labour Education Centre.

The NLS proposal process is viewed as working well, primarily because it is a cooperative approach where all those involved work together to ensure that funds are fully leveraged to support a project. In most cases, the OLC develops concepts for projects based upon identified needs and then consults with the NLS for their views before drafting a full proposal. It can take a number of months to ensure broad consultation on both sides. Throughout the proposal/approval process, it was noted that for the most part, adequate and straightforward guidance is provided by NLS.

The NLS is viewed as being flexible when making funding decisions and innovative, a quality that has helped the literacy field to grow over time.

A majority of the key informants from the funded projects believe that the partnership approach employed by the NLS is key to the whole process, especially given that education and training is a provincial responsibility.

On Partnerships

'Partnerships must be considered in terms of continual relationships. You have to be able to clearly define your expectations and the expectations of your partners. Often you come in as a funder and partner, and they see you as a funder only'.

Focus group of like organization.

The focus group of literacy experts was very supportive of the NLS partnership efforts. They credited the NLS with providing the vision and support for the notion that those working in literacy need to share with each other through the creation of cross-sectoral and multi-dimensional projects. The focus group of like organizations discussed their experiences with partnership arrangements, noting that it is important that the partners be involved in setting priorities that complement a program's strategic objectives.

6.2 The NLS Application Process

There appears to be some confusion surrounding the role of the NLS in developing proposals for the FPT funding stream.

Organizations that qualify for the FPT funding stream generally consult with their provincial/territorial government office regarding proposal requirements, deadlines, application forms, and assessment procedures. Proposals are therefore submitted to these offices, which then work with the NLS to select funding recipients. While the NLS is available to assist and

support organizations throughout the proposal development phase, knowledge of the availability of NLS assistance among organizations that sought funding under the FPT stream was low.

Many of the successful applicants indicated that the application process and guidelines were clear, although some suggested that smaller organizations could benefit from more support.

The three case study organizations funded through the national funding stream and three of the eighteen case study organizations funded through the FPT stream (and who worked closely with the NLS prior to submitting their project proposals) reported a clear understanding of the NLS requirements and priorities. Representatives in these organizations felt that they were working in partnership with the NLS and valued its support and advice.

Three-quarters of the case study organizations found the proposal guidelines clear.

Two of the case study organizations were not satisfied with the proposal acceptance notification process. One organization felt that five months was too long to wait. Another was disappointed that it received word of its approval for project funding second-hand through the local media, rather than directly from the NLS or the provincial/territorial representative. The remaining organizations had no comment or were generally pleased with the notification process.

Unsuccessful applicants were much more critical of the application and notification process.

Key informants from the non-funded organizations were unhappy with the proposal process. All thirteen remained emphatic about the merits of their proposed idea and were unsure as to why their proposal was not accepted for NLS funding. All were also unhappy with how they were notified that their proposal was rejected. All had received a letter stating that they would not receive funding and wishing them good luck in their future endeavors. All expressed dismay that there was no constructive feedback, and three tried to seek out feedback (i.e. two sought feedback from their provincial coalition and one from the NLS). The one who sought feedback from the NLS was unable to obtain any feedback.

Approximately half of the key informants from the non-funded organizations commented that they would have benefited from further instructions and guidelines for completing their proposal.

The NLS needs to put in place program safeguards to ensure the quality of its research projects and project outputs.

About half of the provincial and territorial key informants and the majority of other key informants indicated that there was a need for the NLS to have some safeguards in place to ensure the quality of research and outputs from projects funded by the NLS. A peer review process was identified as a way to help ensure that NLS funded research projects and outputs meet the standards of the literacy community.

6.3 Monitoring and Assessment

Due to the nature of the grants process, as outlined in the Treasury Board Policy on Transfer Payments, the implementation of accountability checks and balances during the life of the project is limited to stringent proposal review and approval. By definition, a grant is not subject to being accounted for or audited. Proposals must only meet eligibility criteria or preconditions for entitlement to be verified. In keeping with this requirement, the NLS' accountability process of grants focuses on the development of the proposal and the capacity of the organization to deliver on its project commitments. The NLS further requires that each project submit a final (and sometimes interim) report to account for the project development and the use of NLS funds. The accountability process focuses on the development of the proposal and the capacity of the organization to deliver on its project commitments.

Organizations with funded projects welcome the flexibility of the NLS' reporting requirements and most set up project steering committees or working groups to monitor their project.

All twenty-one study organizations were satisfied with the flexibility of the NLS' reporting requirements. They welcomed the freedom to implement their projects as they deemed fit and to monitor projects internally. Half of these organizations reported conducting some form of post project results assessment with project participants. Only one organization noted it did not have the time or resources to effectively monitor its projects on an ongoing basis.

Over half of the case study organizations created some form of project steering committee, working group, or advisory board to monitor their project. These groups were generally appointed to provide assistance in keeping the projects on track and to provide advice, guidance, validation, and quality control of project outputs.

Over half of the case study organizations submitted some form of interim report(s) to the NLS⁵ which were reviewed as part of the evaluation. The projects were required to provide a final report within three months of project completion; however, only one-third of organizations had submitted these reports at the time of this evaluation. Approximately half of the case study organizations had received timeline extensions, and had recently or had not yet completed their projects at the time of the evaluation. One project was terminated prematurely and was unable to submit a final report.

One-quarter of the case study organizations reported that they had no contact with the NLS after project completion. All three of the case study organizations funded through the national funding stream indicated that the NLS was thorough and helpful. The NLS provided these organizations with ongoing feedback and advice to help guide the projects to successful completion.

⁵ The information contained in the interim reports did not allow for a determination of impacts on individuals. Rather, as required, they only contained process information with respect to activities that had been implemented to achieve project objectives. A review of the documentation pertaining to post project assessments also did not allow for a determination of impacts on individuals.

Organization: College of New Caledonia
Project: *Community Planning for Intergenerational Learning*
Location: British Columbia

In this community, no local agency had the mandate, staff, funds, or time to conduct a community wide, intergenerational assessment of literacy needs, challenges, and barriers to participation. Every social and educational agency in the community agreed that there are pressing literacy needs to be addressed, and that such needs could be better addressed if an approach was coordinated among all local service providers.

An Advisory Committee was established by the College of New Caledonia to provide guidance and direction to the project. This Advisory Committee is still intact with more than a dozen community groups represented. The Committee continues to meet several times a year, and the coordinator meets informally with many of the members on an ongoing basis to discuss local literacy needs, believing that “to keep the community involved in literacy issues, you need to meet on an ongoing basis”.

The project survey results as indicated in Table 6 below support the conclusion of the case study analysis that the majority of organizations with funded projects have set up steering committees or working groups and provided interim reports.

Table 6			
Survey of Funded Organizations			
Accountability Measures	Required as Part of Project		
	Yes	No	Project Incomplete
Interim or progress reports to NLS	72%	19%	1%
Final or financial report	85%	6%	8%
Ongoing monitoring	77%	19%	1%
Working group / steering committee	83%	8%	–
Summative evaluation	83%	8%	7%
Provincial or Territorial requirements	38%	51%	–

Source: Survey of Funded Projects

The need to put in place additional mechanisms for monitoring and accountability was identified as an area for improvement.

Departments are responsible for ensuring that effective financial and program controls are implemented and that departmental capacity exists to effectively deliver and administer the grants, including monitoring (Treasury Board Transfer Payments Policy). More than half of the provincial and territorial key informants felt that there is insufficient program monitoring and accountability on the FTP funding stream to ensure the quality of products. For example, regarding funded research, it was noted that there are no quality assurances that the research meets established standards.

Key informants from funded projects confirmed that monitoring by the NLS usually occurs during the proposal stage when organizations are asked to describe their evaluation method for determining the success of the project. It was noted by less than half of those consulted that the NLS followed up according to an agreed-upon evaluation plan as described in the proposal. In about half the cases, it was noted that the NLS followed up by phone to see how the projects are doing. In 25% of the cases, the NLS conducted on-site visits to the project sponsors.

The focus group of like organizations provided comments on evaluation and monitoring related to their experiences. They noted that graduated reporting requirements based on the size of the project can be helpful, and that certain sectors, such as the voluntary sector, often find the results-based model of accountability used by the federal government to be a foreign way of operating. They recommended that organizations such as the NLS should spend time educating and informing fund recipients and partners of the need to take this perspective of the results-based model of accountability and to move away from activity-based reporting.

6.4 Dissemination of Information

The dissemination of project results among stakeholders is an area where improvements have been made. There is a need to address this area further.

The need to improve information dissemination and its potential for increasing the possibility of overlap and duplication were highlighted in the 1995 evaluation. Case study and key informant interviews in the current evaluation confirm that there has been an improvement in this area in the intervening period. The Secretariat acknowledges that while it has undertaken several activities to improve information dissemination, more should be done.

Over all, one-third of the case study organizations felt the NLS could improve its efforts at coordinating and disseminating information and project results across the country. These organizations did not feel they had an adequate sense of literacy developments in other regions because information had not been effectively communicated, and therefore they had little insight into the NLS objectives and activities. Several of the organizations noted that they felt personally responsible for disseminating results and lessons learned to other literacy practitioners and interested parties and did not expect support from the NLS in this area.

Organization: Malaspina College University

Project: *How do Adults with Little Formal Education Learn?*

Location: British Columbia

Research studies indicated that current adult basic education and literacy programs serve only a small number of people perceived to be 'in need'. Literacy practitioners realize, that in spite of these statistics, adults do learn outside of the formal system. The question this project tried to answer was how? To answer this question, this project was designed to examine the when, where, what, and why these adults are learning. This information is expected to help literacy practitioners think of new and different ways in which to support learners.

One of the NLS's means of information sharing is through funding conferences. In the Malaspina College case, project representatives were invited to present the results of their project at several conferences, which they felt was helpful in sharing their lessons learned with the broader literacy community.

Organization: Northwest Territories Literacy Council (NWTLC)

Project: *Family and Community Literacy Development Project*

Location: Northwest Territories

The objective of the NWT Family and Community Literacy Development Project was to increase the NWTLC's relationships with its communities and to enhance the capacity of individuals and organizations to address literacy issues and needs within their communities. The NWTLC delivered a three-day workshop in four communities where participants identified the literacy needs of their community, created a plan for implementing a literacy initiative, and then developed their ability to access various sources of funding.

The NWTLC also developed and delivered 20 stand-alone workshops in seven NWT communities. The stand-alone workshops were used to create awareness surrounding the benefits of family literacy and to bring people together to explore possible literacy activities and build skills. The NWTLC also facilitated a conference in Yellowknife that brought together community workers from across the territory to discuss the possible links between family literacy and aboriginal language development.

Provincial/territorial key informants interpreted information dissemination in two ways:

- Passing on information to them; and
- Informing stakeholders and others of the results of projects.

As noted earlier (Section 5.2), the majority of these key informants indicated the need for better systems for tracking projects that have been funded, either through the NLS or the provinces and territories. At the proposal stage, for example, they emphasized that there was a need to identify whether a similar project has been funded elsewhere in Canada to ensure that projects selected for funding either build on the current literature/findings or take a new direction. Comments made by key informants from organizations with funded

projects suggest that the majority of the funded organizations consulted do not widely use the National Adult Literacy Database.

The majority of the provincial and territorial key informants indicated that communication across the country has increased significantly over the last five years through the activities of the NLS, leading to the dissemination of innovative ideas throughout the literacy community. In particular, provincial and territorial representatives highly value the FPT meetings that are funded and supported by the NLS and credit this initiative with increasing the sharing of information, best practices and lessons learned across Canada.

6.5 Overlap and Duplication

There were two dimensions of enquiry regarding the risk of overlap and duplication. One referred to the potential for overlap and duplication of projects, while the other referred to the potential for overlap and duplication in the role played by the NLS itself.

Program safeguards are needed to reduce the risk of project overlap and duplication.

Program safeguards for reducing the risk of overlap and duplication, such as better systems for tracking projects, improved dissemination of information and improved information sharing with NLS partners were identified by key informants as ways to help ensure that a research project in one part of the country is not duplicated in another. Some project safeguards are in place to reduce the risk of overlap and duplication, such as the requirement for project sponsors to explain the rationale for funding their project and to review the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) to ensure that the project is not duplicative; however, key informants from organizations with funded projects indicated that the majority of the funded organizations consulted do not widely use the NALD, suggesting that improvements can be made in this area (see Section 6.4). Key informants identified that the use of a peer review process during the application process would help ensure that NLS funded research projects and outputs meet the standards of the literacy community. Peer review processes were also discussed in Section 6.2 as a means of ensuring quality control of research projects.

The case study analysis and key informants suggest that there is lack of knowledge regarding the different projects funded by the NLS and the outputs/outcomes of these projects. As a result, a majority of key informants believe that there is a risk of overlap or duplication in projects. Case studies indicate that the risk arises from a current lack of formal or strategic dissemination of information regarding the results of previous projects and a lack of information sharing on project proposals under consideration (see Section 6.4).

Over half of the case study organizations stated that the NLS is not effectively communicating information about projects that have taken place, or those that are currently underway in various provinces among the funded projects. Consequently, it was difficult for them to comment on whether there is unnecessary duplication or overlap. One organization noted that even if similar projects were taking place in various provinces, each region and community is different and therefore this would not necessarily result in

overlap. One organization felt strongly, however, that the NLS was encouraging overlap because of its emphasis on new, ‘innovative’ ideas and developing new learning materials. This organization felt that efforts were being unnecessarily invested in developing new materials when there is a multitude of effective tools already available.

On the other hand, the focus group of literacy experts believed that the NLS was doing a good job of letting people know about what had been funded across the country.

In taking steps to address the risk of project overlap and duplication, the focus group of literacy experts warned that it would be important to bear in mind that, in a policy area such as literacy, one size does not fit all and that practitioners in different parts of the country doing similar projects does not mean there is duplication. For example, what some might see as duplication is more likely to be part of the ‘development’ process, with the replication of projects that have worked elsewhere providing value in its own right.

With respect to the potential for NLS-sponsored applied research to be duplicative, it should be noted that the large scale national research undertaken with SSHRC and Statistics Canada is subject to their review mechanisms. Thus, there is little risk that it is duplicative. Research undertaken in the federal-provincial stream, including proposals that address meeting regional and community-based issues and needs, is subject to review by a federal-provincial committee. Research undertaken in the federal-provincial stream has a risk of duplicating work undertaken in other regions or communities. Thus there is a need for program safeguards to guard against the potential that this research duplicates work done in other regions/communities. Also, a review should be undertaken of needs assessment projects to determine if they are truly “applied research”. If not, they should be separately identified as a separate NLS funding category.

The general view is that the NLS plays a unique role that is not being duplicated, although program safeguards are needed to demonstrate that projects and leveraged funds are incremental (i.e. would not have occurred without NLS support).

Almost all key informants and representatives of the case study projects indicated that, as a catalyst and funding organization that works in partnership to achieve its objectives, the NLS plays a unique role that is not being duplicated.

The project survey indicated that few (about 10%) of the organizations included in the survey considered there to be duplication between the NLS and other organizations in providing funds for literacy projects. Between one-quarter and one-third considered there to be overlap related to the other activities performed by the NLS (as shown in Table 7).

**Table 7
Overlap & Duplication**

Functions	Aware of any Duplication?			
	Yes	No	Overlap / Not really duplication	Don't know / no answer
Funding (Q.8)	8.7%	89.9%	0.7%	0.7%
Development of Learning Materials and Methods (Q.9a)	25.6%	60.3%	3.2%	10.8%
Access and Outreach (Q.9b)	22%	66.1%	2.5%	9.4%
Promotion and Public Awareness (Q9c)	33.9%	53.4%	2.2%	10.5%
Coordination and Information Sharing (Q.9d)	26.7%	62.5%	1.8%	9.0%
Applied Research (Q.9e)	23.1%	62.5%	0.7%	13.7%
The findings on duplication by NLS activity as presented in Table 7 above are based on a survey of funded project sponsors. As such, they indicate that there is a perception among project sponsors of duplication.				
Source: Survey of funded projects				

All provincial and territorial key informants considered there to be no overlap or duplication with provincial/territorial counterparts in terms of project funding. At the same time, however, the discussion on leveraging in Section 4.5 clearly indicates the need for the NLS to have program safeguards in place to demonstrate that NLS projects and leveraged funds are incremental (i.e. would not have occurred without the NLS). This is all the more important because of the limited evidence currently available and the ambiguity of such evidence.

7. Rationale and Relevance

This section examined the rationale and relevance of the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS).

The five activity/project areas used to guide NLS funding are still considered to be relevant.

Three-quarters of the case study organizations suggested that there will always be a need for project funding at a national level. All of the case study organizations considered the five activity/project categories to be still relevant. They also considered the five categories to be broad enough to encompass most projects that seek to improve literacy in Canada.

There may be an opportunity to develop a more strategic approach through the setting of focused priorities for the NLS.

Some case study organizations suggested that some literacy areas might deserve a more focused effort. For example, one organization indicated that the NLS should make the direct support of program delivery a greater priority than research, as research has a more indirect impact on the literacy field. One organization indicated that the NLS is ideally situated to support projects related to nationwide leadership in literacy. Two case study organizations mentioned the need to promote literacy on a political level. One organization felt the NLS could have a greater impact by influencing policy in areas such as moving adult literacy to the forefront of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) priorities. As well, one organization felt the NLS should have a more visible presence promoting literacy issues and liaising between literacy stakeholders and provinces.

In Quebec, the FPT agreement limits project funding to \$25,000, which is viewed as restricting the scope of projects that can take place throughout the province. One organization suggested that the NLS distribute more funding to fewer projects in order to ensure the greatest impact, and to focus more on building on past experiences and best practices in order to achieve sustainable results.

A majority of the provincial key informants felt that the NLS could assume a more strategic and national role in moving forward the literacy agenda and related priorities. They believe that the NLS should expand its leadership role of bringing together provincial and territorial counterparts to work together toward national goals and outcomes. In the years to come it was suggested that the NLS gives consideration to technological literacy, numeracy literacy, literacy among seniors, and Aboriginal literacy.

When asked about the continued relevance of the NLS, at least one third of provincial and territorial respondents indicated that, from their perspective, literacy had a limited profile in the federal skills and learning agenda. As a result, they questioned whether the NLS should play a larger role within this initiative.

The majority of the key informants from organizations with funded projects indicated that the NLS, as a government sponsored program, should lead a national campaign on literacy. It was also recommended that the NLS could be a more effective information conduit for individuals and organizations working in the literacy field across Canada.

The development of a more strategic approach to the NLS should include the consideration of ways to increase the sustainability of NLS funded projects and results.

Three-quarters of the case study organizations suggested that the NLS should consider providing ongoing core program funding. One organization from the national funding stream noted that it is much easier to raise funds from corporate sponsors for high profile projects than it is to obtain core funding.

All of the case study organizations expressed concern that restrictions in NLS funding related to one-year funding cycles and a directive to fund ideas that are innovative and at a development stage (i.e., not ongoing) was impeding the sustainability of literacy projects. While the focus on innovation is viewed in a positive light, the need to develop new ideas and project proposals annually is seen as cumbersome and redundant. Over three-quarters of the case study organizations feel that NLS funds would be best invested in promoting, expanding, and building upon past successes.

Organization: Comité Alpha Papineau

Project: *L'Alphabétisation par les pairs (Literacy by Peers)*

Location: Quebec

Consultations indicated that community members required assistance in filing their income taxes, which is a service CAP offers. However, these consultations revealed that the income tax specialist they hired in the past was often intimidating to clients. Therefore, CAP developed L'Alphabétisation par les pairs project, which was designed to hire an income tax specialist who could train a select group of clients in filing taxes, who would then in turn mentor their peers in developing the skills and knowledge to file their income taxes.

This literacy mentorship project received coverage in the local papers and on television, which CAP believes is linked to the increased number of volunteers it has received for other literacy related projects. While the L'Alphabétisation par les pairs project was viewed as very successful, CAP did not have the funding to implement the program on an ongoing basis. In fact, with the conclusion of NLS funding, the project was terminated, as there was no further funding to hire a trainer to continue it the following year. The termination of the project was viewed as diminishing the long-term impact of the project.

Organization: Street Haven Learning Centre
Project: *Street Reach: Building the Capacity to do Outreach*
Location: Ontario

This project was aimed at influencing literacy programs and social service agencies who work with people who are homeless, potential literacy learners who are homeless, and the literacy field by increasing the level of awareness of literacy issues in the social service field and developing tools and practices to assist outreach efforts.

An important aspect of sustainability is capacity building, either at the program level or among learners. One of the positive outcomes of this project has been the enhancement of effective partnerships, which have allowed for the sharing of resources and knowledge related to effective outreach practices. The referral protocols and marketing materials are expected to help sustain Street Haven's, and similar organizations', capacity to do outreach in the long-term. Throughout the project, the knowledge that has been gained and tools that were developed have been shared with the larger literacy community through AlphaPlus and NALD, as well as through more informal information requests generating from word of mouth.

The issue of sustainability of projects was also identified by the provincial and territorial key informants. All believe that there is a real need for NLS to consider funding in support of ongoing projects. The majority noted that provinces and other stakeholders do not have the capacity to provide all the necessary resources to sustain many projects after the start-up phase. They also noted that valuable start-up projects often do not reach their potential due to lack of ongoing NLS funding.

Representatives from approximately one third of provinces and territories suggested that one approach would be for the NLS to consider giving funds directly to the provinces and territories to distribute. However, one province noted that if the NLS withdrew from funding projects and provided money directly to the province, literacy spending would likely be discontinued within the province.

Future Directions

'There will always be literacy issues. The time has come to set objectives that call for a culture of continuous, life-long learning in Canada.'

Focus group of literacy experts.

The focus group of literacy experts noted that it is time to revisit the NLS mandate and objectives. It was argued that although they believed the NLS was doing a good job, the Secretariat must take into account that society has changed. With globalization, the creation of the knowledge economy and the changing patterns of immigration, there is now a need to focus on lifelong learning. There is also a need for the NLS to become more proactive in influencing policy in order to develop a national literacy agenda. The focus group of like organizations advised the NLS to identify and draw resources from across government and communities in order to increase its effectiveness.

8. Summary of Findings/ Areas for Improvement

8.1 Evaluation Findings

Impacts and effects: There is evidence that National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) funding has improved literacy opportunities for a range of groups.

The case study analysis and key informants indicated that the NLS has had an important impact in areas such as family and workplace literacy. The project survey indicated that NLS funded projects improved literacy opportunities for a range of groups including low income people, people with disabilities, first generation Canadians, and Aboriginal people.

A catalyst: The general view is that the NLS acts as a catalyst to increase awareness of literacy issues, bring people together and advance literacy.

Evidence from case studies, key informant interviews, and the focus group of literacy experts indicates that the NLS has raised the profile of literacy and helped to increase collaboration/partnerships within the literacy community. The available evidence also suggests that the NLS has advanced the literacy movement by promoting research and improving the ability to deliver successful literacy programs within the community.

Also, there is a high level of satisfaction with 70% of the organizations surveyed indicating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with NLS services.

Partnership model: Regarding the FPT funding stream, the partnership model has been functioning well in the Canadian inter-jurisdictional environment. The NLS should consider, however, improving communication with partners in relation to the selection and announcement of projects funded under the national funding stream.

All provincial and territorial stakeholders, as well as funded organizations familiar with the NLS and its activities, were satisfied with the functioning of the partnership model as it applied to the Federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) funding stream. For example, they cited that it facilitated flexibility and openness. While the NLS partnership model is viewed as working well under the FPT program, provincial and territorial partners would like to see better communications and working relations with the NLS in the case of the program's national funding stream.

Project funding: NLS funding is broadly dispersed across many organizations.

Over 1997-2002 period, 2,043 organizations received NLS funding for 2,853 projects. Most organizations (80%) had only one project during the period. In terms of funding support, 50% of all projects funded by the NLS received less than \$25,000.

8.2 Areas for Improvement

Areas for improvement identified in the 1995 evaluation included the need for clearly defined priorities concerning issues to be pursued and projects funded, a more active role in ensuring the quality of research and learning materials produced and improved dissemination of results in order to safeguard against project duplication. Although program enhancements have occurred since 1995, (e.g. improved communication) there is still room for improvement (e.g. monitoring of results).

Leveraging: There is some evidence that NLS support results in organizations being able to leverage further resources to support literacy efforts. However, there is a need for the NLS to be able to demonstrate that it has program safeguards in place to ensure that NLS projects and leveraged funds are incremental.

The majority of organizations that receive funding from the NLS also receive funding and/or in-kind resources from project partners and over time the share of total project funds accounted for by partners' contributions is declining. The program needs safeguards in place to protect against projects being funded that would have proceeded regardless of NLS funding. A potential safeguard could require sponsors to attest on the project application that the project would not proceed without NLS support.

Dissemination of information: While the NLS is credited for supporting the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) and International Adult Learning & Skills Survey (IALSS) as well as regular intergovernmental consultation, more attention should be given to ensuring dissemination of project results among stakeholders.

The majority of the provincial and territorial key informants indicated that communication across the country has increased significantly over the last five years through the activities of the NLS, leading to the dissemination of innovative ideas throughout the literacy community; however, evidence from the case studies and key informants indicate that there is a need to further improve the dissemination of information and results to stakeholders and partners.

The financial support for the NALD and the IALSS provided by the NLS reflects the commitment of the NLS to improve communication and sharing of data. At the same time, however, the evidence indicates that there is a need to further improve the dissemination of information and results to stakeholders and partners.

Overlap and duplication: The general view is that as a catalyst and an organization that works in partnership to achieve its objectives, the NLS plays a unique role that is not being duplicated. There is a risk, however, of duplication in specific project support.

There is a risk of project overlap and duplication, particularly in the application of the FPT funding stream. Evidence from case studies, key informants and survey respondents indicate a risk of duplication in specific project support. This risk arises from the current lack of formal or strategic dissemination of information regarding the results of previous projects, and a current lack of information sharing on project proposals that are under consideration.

Increased sharing of information with NLS partners was identified as a way to help ensure that a research project in one part of the country is not duplicated in another.

Program implementation: The NLS could simplify and streamline procedures to make it easier for smaller organizations less familiar with the grant process to obtain funds.

Groups familiar with the NLS and its application process feel that process and guidelines are clear and work well. Organizations that are less familiar with the NLS and its work find that application and notification procedures are cumbersome, that forms are complex, and that the need to develop new annual applications and approaches makes it difficult for smaller organizations to be successful in the competition for project funding.

Quality: The NLS should take steps to ensure the reliability and credibility of research projects.

While major research projects conducted through SSHRC and Statistics Canada ensure high quality and reduce the risk of being duplicative through peer review mechanisms, FPT research runs the risk of duplicating work done in other regions/communities. In addition, more than one-half of the provincial and territorial key informants felt that there is insufficient program monitoring and accountability on the FTP funding stream to ensure the quality of products. Furthermore, needs assessment projects funded under the FPT stream may lack the rigour necessary to be considered ‘applied research’. The application of a formal peer review process for all research conducted would help increase quality and help reduce the risk of duplication.

Monitoring performance: The NLS should put in place efficient data gathering and monitoring systems and consistent procedures for evaluating projects.

The monitoring of the results of projects by the NLS was identified as an area for improvement, even given the limitations imposed by the grant process. Also, there is a need to improve the data gathering and monitoring system (GMAX) used for the administration of grants. Coding limitations restrict its usefulness in providing an in depth perspective of NLS activities and outputs. Data collection and storage should be examined to ensure that data is available to conduct a future evaluation.

While the NLS is credited with being a catalyst in promoting literacy across Canada, it is unclear to what extent it has been successful in meeting its stated objectives, due in part to issues of attribution and measurement.

Relevance: While the NLS plays a unique role in promoting literacy across Canada, there may be an opportunity to develop a more strategic approach through the setting of focused priorities.

There is a concern as to what the organization’s role in the future should be relative to its current objectives and the needs of the literacy community. One approach is for the NLS to ‘stay the course’. This approach reflects the view that more work needs to be done in raising the profile of literacy, and that the NLS as a funding organization continues to play a unique role in supporting the attainment of its objectives through other

organizations. Another approach is for the NLS to consider developing a national approach to literacy that would involve the setting of Canada-wide priorities that would reflect the specific needs of today (e.g. focusing on technology, focusing on the needs of specific groups such as Aboriginals and families).

This suggests that there is an opportunity for the NLS to re-examine its role in order to determine how it could best meet its objectives in the changing environment. This could include a consultation process with stakeholders across the country to assess how the literacy challenge has evolved over the last fourteen years.

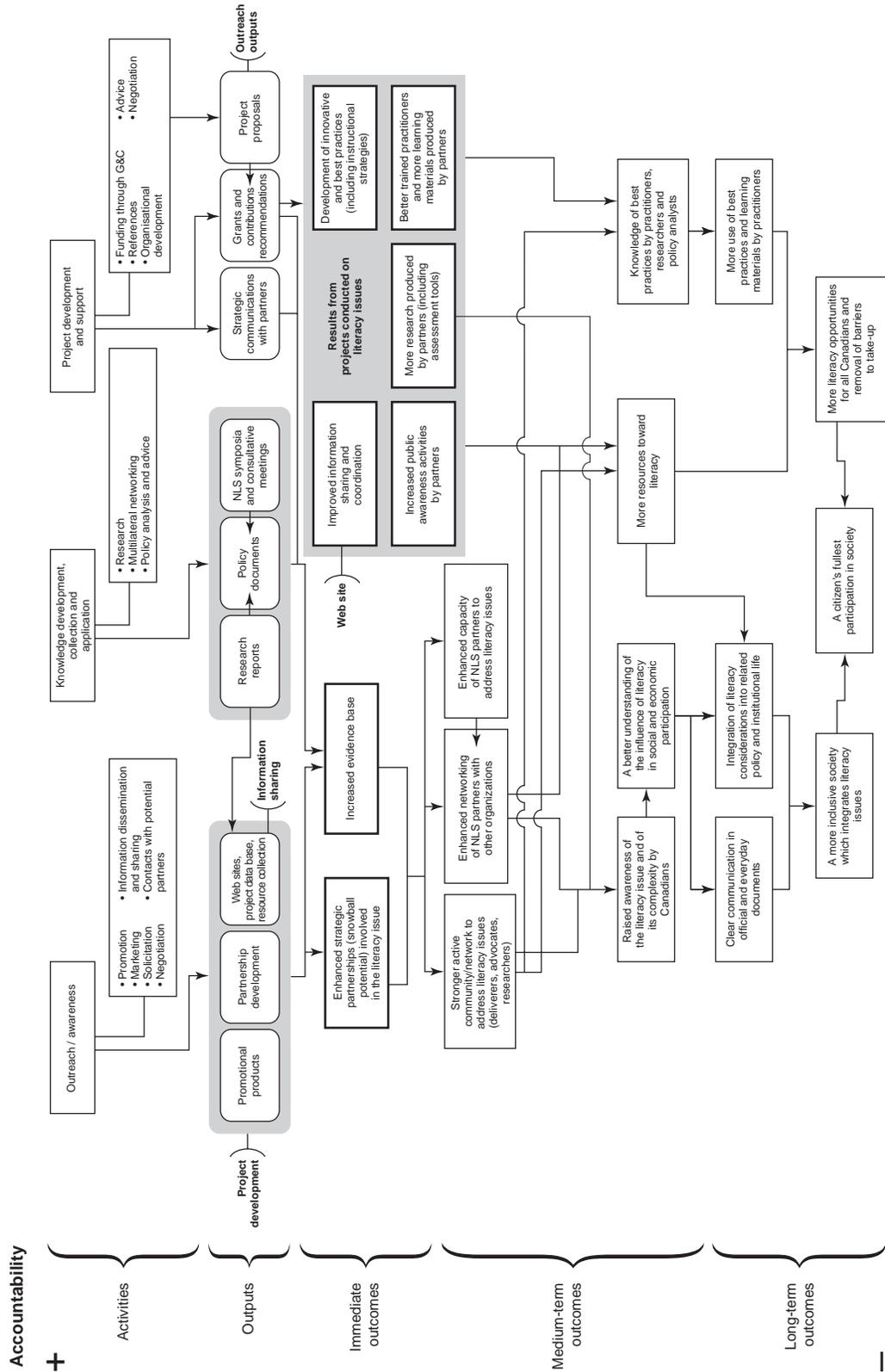
Sustainability and NLS Role: As part of developing a more strategic approach, the NLS may wish to look at ways to increase the sustainability of results and progress.

The NLS is the primary literacy organization in Canada which funds and supports first-time projects. More than half of the NLS funded projects continued after program funding expired, however, almost one-third of NLS funded projects were not sustainable. There are some pressures, however, for the NLS to consider providing longer-term funding in order to promote, expand and build upon past successes and to improve on project sustainability. While this could raise inter-jurisdictional issues, such an approach could be considered as part of a re-examination of the program's role.

National Literacy Secretariat Logic Model

Objectives

To increase literacy opportunities and take-up so people improve their literacy skills
 To work toward making Canada's social, economic and political life more accessible to people with weak literacy skills



Appendix II

Case Study Summary: National Literacy Secretariat

This appendix provides a brief summary of the activities and results of selected projects (those that are part of the case study analysis) funded by the NLS. The case studies reviewed 21 projects comprising: developing learning materials (6); improving coordination and information sharing (4); improving access to literacy programs and outreach (4); increasing public awareness of literacy issues (4); and research (3). For each case study the summary includes information from the Assessment Reports provided by funded organizations to the NLS. Specifically included are the participating organizations' comments regarding the funding stream, project overview, intended client groups, project objectives, degree to which project objectives were met, barriers / factors affecting objective achievement, expected impacts, and project status.

Information (on impacts and objectives achievement) is based on the participating organizations' self-assessments. Most projects ended or were scheduled to end by 2002.

The NLS funds projects that involve only intermediate outputs that are in support of direct literacy training. It does not itself provide funding for direct literacy instruction to individual user-clients. There are many factors that come into play at the level of individual instruction for the user-clienteles involved. The outputs accompanying NLS interventions are but a subset of these. Therefore, attribution on the basis of the program's interventions with respect to individual project/user-client impacts is very difficult, and in some cases, not feasible at all. In addition, there is the point that the evaluation found that, in many instances NLS interventions/support is funded through grant mechanisms rather than contributions. Data collection in these instances, particularly with respect to follow-up/outcomes analysis of program results, is virtually non-existent. As a result of all of the above, the evaluation was unable to utilize standard methodologies based on follow-up and attributions. Consequently, assessments of the program's impact in these circumstances is required to rely on indirect evidence which is only general and very approximate in nature.

Case Study Summary: National Literacy Secretariat			
Organization/Project	<i>ABC Canada Literacy Foundation (Toronto, ON)</i> —Numeracy Awareness	<i>Aide Pédagogique aux Adultes et aux Jeunes (St-Hyacinthe, PQ)</i> —s'outiller!	<i>Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (St. John's, NFLD)</i> —Literacy Development for Persons with Autism
Funding Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Grants Development and launch of advertising campaign to generate awareness across Canada of importance of numeracy skills. Development of numeracy learning tools and resources for the literacy field (e.g. website). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal—Provincial/Territorial Sought to develop a communications plan adapted to target market's characteristics and created with individual geographic regions in mind. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal—Provincial/Territorial Sought to develop province-wide model for delivering literacy training to persons with autism.
Target Population/Client Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General public, math-phobic adults, adult learners, youth, families, media and literacy providers in the field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> APAJ literacy volunteers General public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults working to develop literacy in persons with ASD.
Client Needs/Project Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To generate awareness among Canadians of the importance of numeracy skills to their daily lives and to sustained economic growth and development. To develop learning tools and resources for the literacy field. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a high quality communications plan and promotional materials for distribution to the general public, and a training guide for APAJ's educators (literacy volunteers). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase awareness that persons with ASD are capable persons and that literacy is an achievable goal for them. To provide parents/families of persons with ASD with effective strategies to enhance the literacy development of their family members with autism. To involve community partners in the promotion and development of literacy for persons with ASD.

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p>ABC Canada Literacy Foundation (Toronto, ON)—Numeracy Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campaign officially launched August 16th, 2002. ▪ Ads published in magazines and newspapers across Canada. ▪ Developed website for numeracy awareness. 	<p>Aide Pédagogique aux Adultes et aux Jeunes (St-Hyacinthe, PQ)—s’outiller!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communications plan was developed that helped guide the project. ▪ Pamphlets, magnets and promotional poster template developed. ▪ New organizational logo created. ▪ Training guide created to serve as a tool for volunteers. 	<p>Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (St. John’s, NFLD)—Literacy Development for Persons with Autism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate strategies and suitable resources being identified, compiled and incorporated into Autism Society’s library. ▪ Traveling package of the materials will also be made available for display purposes at conferences and training sessions.
<p>Degree to Which Project Objectives Were Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delays resulting from other opportunities requiring priority; creative licensing issues with advertising company; change in name of campaign; change in strategy to focus more on website development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficulty in preparing proposals, but after taking IFPCA training on proposal preparation, the process has become easier. <p><i>Note: Because APAJ exists under a non-profit organization charter of the Province of Quebec, it does not deal directly with the NLS and instead deals directly with the IFPCA (Federal Provincial Initiatives Concentrating in Literacy), which is a component of the MEQ (Ministry of Education of Quebec). NLS is primarily viewed as a partner of the IFPCA and the MEQ.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of existing literature for researchers to draw on. ▪ Traveling distances and accommodation costs preventing families outside of St. John’s area from participating.
<p>Barriers/Factors Affecting Achievement of Objectives</p>			

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p>ABC Canada <i>Literacy Foundation</i> <i>(Toronto, ON)</i>—Numeracy Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campaign’s impact has not yet been evaluated; mechanisms in place to measure reach over time. ▪ Reaction from publishing community has been positive and there is potential for increased media attention to issue of numeracy (e.g. article in leading Canadian Magazine. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<p>Aide Pédagogique <i>aux Adultes et aux Jeunes</i> <i>(St-Hyacinthe, PQ)</i>—s’outiller!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project only recently completed and overall impacts and effects difficult to measure at this time. ▪ APAJ feels they now possess proper tools to generate greater awareness of their programs and are better equipped to attract and retain volunteers. ▪ Able to recruit 15 new volunteers as a result of the project. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<p>Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador (St. John’s, NFLD)—Literacy Development for Persons with Autism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project scheduled to be completed in December 2002; not all impacts and effects have been realized, however it is felt that they are on target to achieving intended results. ▪ Increased awareness of the capabilities and potential of persons with ASD to become literate and productive members of society evidenced by: specific groups showing interest at libraries in books that would be appropriate for people with ASD and other learning disabilities; autism Society asked to present findings at an upcoming children’s literature conference; Provincial Teachers’ Association has asked for information on developing a module for a virtual professional development tool on autism. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation.
<p>Project Status/Timelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At time of evaluation the campaign had just begun and project timelines had been extended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ September 2001 to May 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March to December 2002

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p><i>Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) (West Prince, PEI)—Barriers to Literacy</i></p>	<p><i>Centre for Education and Work (Manitoba)—Articulating Workplace Education</i></p>	<p><i>Centre d'études, de recherches et de consultations lexicologiques en éducation (CERCLE) (Montréal, PQ)—Développement et mise à jour du vocabulaire de l'alphabétisation</i></p>
<p>Funding Stream</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Grants
<p>Project Overview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sought to identify adults experiencing mental illness who might be having difficulties tapping into local literacy services and determine the specific barriers they have been facing. In addition, to involve service providers and target group members in finding ways to remove those barriers to participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sought to design, develop and articulate a pilot system for articulation of Essential Skills within the workplace. ▪ Project broken down into 3 Phases: Phase 1 – Research and Development; Phases 2 and 3 – assessment system, guides, user manuals, final report (including recommendations for future research and program development). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Address need for common and uniform understanding of primary literacy terms and concepts used for research, teaching, exchange and representation purposes.
<p>Target Population/Client Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adults experiencing mental illness who reside in West Prince PEI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Literacy experts
<p>Client Needs/Project Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consult adults with mental illnesses to identify barriers to literacy programs and solicit input on how to remove these barriers. ▪ To share findings, and solicit recommendations on how to coordinate efforts to reduce literacy barriers for adults with mental illnesses. ▪ To develop and implement a strategic plan to address and reduce/remove these barriers for adults with mental illness, including a pilot program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To ensure that credit for Essential Skills work completed in the workplace is transferable and recognized in various education and employment settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To develop and update the vocabulary used in literacy and clarify the primary words used by practitioners and French researchers working in literacy.

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p><i>Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) (West Prince, PEI)—Barriers to Literacy</i></p>	<p><i>Centre for Education and Work (Manitoba)—Articulating Workplace Education</i></p>	<p><i>Centre d'études, de recherches et de consultations lexicologiques en éducation (CERCLE) (Montréal, PQ)—Développement et mise à jour du vocabulaire de l'alphabétisation</i></p>
<p>Degree to Which Project Objectives Were Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successfully achieved all objectives, and expanded reach to include anyone experiencing mental health issues. ▪ Raised public awareness of literacy-related issues and programs and services currently available ▪ Engaged field practitioners and target group through Steering Committee and consultations. ▪ Hesitation of potential participants to identify themselves as experiencing mental illness (CMHA expanded target population to include people with any variety of mental health disabilities, rather than focusing strictly on mental illness). ▪ Differing opinions on Steering Committee related to project direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Originally, the project was to be completed by October 2002. As of mid-October, however, Phases 2 and 3 are still underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identified and defined more than double the amount of planned words; over 100 words inserted into 14-page mini-dictionary. ▪ Interest levels and demand are exceeding expectations among literacy trainers and teachers.
<p>Barriers/Factors Affecting Achievement of Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Differing opinions on Steering Committee related to project direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Original outcomes for Phases 2 and 3 amended as a result of new requirements for teachers set by Workplace Education Manitoba during the initial stages of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None identified

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p><i>Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) (West Prince, PEI)—Barriers to Literacy</i></p>	<p><i>Centre for Education and Work (Manitoba)—Articulating Workplace Education</i></p>	<p><i>Centre d'études, de recherches et de consultations lexicologiques en éducation (CERCLE) (Montréal, PQ)—Développement et mise à jour du vocabulaire de l'alphabétisation</i></p>
<p>Impacts and Effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discovered unanticipated barrier to literacy and the need for co-ordination of community literacy programs (i.e. target group unaware of availability or accessibility of programs and resources). In some cases, programs had been shut down due to lack of participation. ▪ Participants gained direction to pursue avenues in literacy development. ▪ Reached beyond target population to other literacy stakeholders allowing for dialogue concerning barriers to literacy participation and contributed to awareness beyond intended project reach. ▪ Exposure through project led to increase in people interested in volunteering with CMHC. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formal forum consisting of Adult Learning Centres established within province. ▪ Province has invested in courses, and is supporting professional development efforts for educators. ▪ When completed, the project hopes to develop systems such that adult learners can get formal recognition for their efforts for the first time. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Definitions to be published in <i>Education Dictionary</i> and distributed to Francophone communities in Africa, America, and Europe. ▪ Dictionary expected to be translated into Portuguese. Similar dictionaries projects are being considered for Arab and Spanish. ▪ Project participants were called upon to highlight projects and outcomes within the literacy community. ▪ NLS critical to moving project into a network and enabling broader dissemination of information and outcomes. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation.
<p>Project Status/Timeline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May 2001 to March 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March 2001 to October 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Started early 1999 and received funding for Part 2 in 2000

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p><i>College of New Caledonia (Prince George, B.C.)—Community Planning for Intergenerational Literacy</i></p>	<p><i>Comité Alpha Papineau (Buckingham, Québec)—L'Alphabétisation par les paires</i></p>	<p><i>Community Literacy of Ontario (Ontario)—Strategies of Our Own: Learner Recruitment and Retention in Community-based Literacy Programs</i></p>
<p>Funding Stream</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial
<p>Project Overview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project addressed the need for a foundation, in the form of an Advisory Committee, to unify the community on the importance of literacy programs, provide direction for the future and begin establishing concrete priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project sought to implement a literacy mentorship program based on the needs of the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project sought to develop a toolkit based on a literature review, online discussion and six focus groups.
<p>Target Population/Client Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All community residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members of Le Centre Actu-Elle and Un Bel Été. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practitioners/Tutors
<p>Client Needs/Project Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To bring together a Community Literacy Advisory Committee to coordinate project activities. ▪ To review existing literacy services ▪ To determine community's literacy needs, establish priorities, and identify barriers to participation. ▪ To identify short-term projects. ▪ To develop a long-term community literacy plan addressing issues identified in the needs assessment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To train CAP clients, through a train-the-trainer approach, to understand steps required to complete and file an income tax return. These trainees were to become peer mentors to help others learn how to file an income tax return. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide community-based programs with information, strategies, and tools on learner recruitment and retention in Anglophone community-based agencies. ▪ To develop complementary Took-Kit Learner Recruitment and Retention Strategies to include practical strategies, best practices and resources for learner recruitment and retention.
<p>Degree to Which Project Objectives Were Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project proceeded successfully as planned. All objectives noted above were accomplished. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ While the project was viewed as successful, CAP did not have the funding to implement the program on an ongoing basis. The termination of NLS funding resulted in the termination of the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft tool kit was tested through community consultations. ▪ CLO facilitated two on-line discussions. ▪ CLO is currently developing the tool kit based on the literature review and on-line and focus group discussions.

Organization/Project	College of New Caledonia (Prince George, B.C.)—Community Planning for Intergenerational Literacy	Comité Alpha Papineau (Buckingham, Québec)—L'Alphabétisation par les paires	Community Literacy of Ontario (Ontario)—Strategies of Our Own: Learner Recruitment and Retention in Community-based Literacy Programs
Barriers/Factors Affecting Achievement of Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None identified
Impacts and Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved awareness through networking by committee members. ▪ Advisory Committee established during project still intact and representing more than a dozen community groups. ▪ Long-term plan was distributed to all members of the advisory committee and participants in the planning process (additional copies made available to other interested communities, groups, individuals). ▪ Student-tutoring program has been running, as a consequence of the plan, since February 2001. ▪ Volunteer reader program began in October 2001. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Participants reported being proud of their achievement and having improved self-confidence and self-pride due to the program. ▪ These changes are viewed as being long-term and will likely be maintained long after involvement in the project. ▪ Mentorship program received coverage in the local papers and on television, which CAP believes is linked to the increased number of volunteers it has received for other literacy related projects. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CLO has shared research results and is building on the work of the Ontario Literacy Coalition which is working on developing a marketing strategy. ▪ Project generated interest among community literacy groups. ▪ Created high expectations for the recruitment and retention tool. ▪ On-line discussions furthered the research base and allowed community-based practitioners to contribute to the development of tool kit strategies. ▪ Consultations allowed CLO to further explore current and emerging research focusing on goals, motivations and demographic status of learners. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation.
Project Status/Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ August 2000 to April 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ January 2001 to June 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ October 2001 to November 2002

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p><i>Dartmouth Literacy Network (Dartmouth, Nova Scotia—My front Yard and Math for All Ages)</i></p>	<p><i>Education, Resources and Support Services (St. John’s NFLD)—Writing for the Workplace—Writing Process with Workplace Content</i></p>	<p><i>Family Literacy Association of Nova Scotia (NS)—Modular Resource/Training package for Family Literacy</i></p>
<p>Funding Stream</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial ▪ Development of two workbooks to assist other adult learners at similar learning levels in reading, writing, comprehension, and math. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial ▪ Project sought to improve the writing skills of employees and address specific writing needs expressed by employees during earlier workplace literacy program pilots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial ▪ Intended to create a collaborative framework for family literacy, effective partnerships, relevant resources and sustainable infrastructure to support the development of family literacy throughout the province. Projects would build on 2 previous modules to create five-module approach to family literacy.
<p>Target Population/Client Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Level 1 and 2 learners recruited by DLN and other local literacy organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Literacy providers/facilitators. ▪ Workplace managers/supervisors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Families
<p>Client Needs/Project Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To create two learner-generated workbooks: one covering reading; the other covering math. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To prepare, print and distribute copies of the workplace literacy program and provide training for interested groups/individuals across the province (project objectives were amended to some extent). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide shared background and understanding to professionals in Nova Scotia of philosophy and practice of family approach to literacy development. ▪ To support development and sustainability of community partnerships. ▪ To identify best practices. ▪ To develop and compile curriculum ideas, resources, and activities. ▪ To provide a strategy/tool for building an on-going assessment process into the project framework. ▪ To develop on-going partnerships for family literacy.

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p><i>Dartmouth Literacy Network (Dartmouth, Nova Scotia—My front Yard and Math for All Ages)</i></p>	<p><i>Education, Resources and Support Services (St. John’s NFLD)—Writing for the Workplace—Writing Process with Workplace Content</i></p>	<p><i>Family Literacy Association of Nova Scotia (NS)—Modular Resource/Training package for Family Literacy</i></p>
<p>Degree to Which Project Objectives Were Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners were recruited to develop workbooks targeted at people of similar learning level and were thus engaged. ▪ Resulting content is diverse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two workshops, with 20 workers attending each workshop, were held in the St. John’s area using the final version of the literacy materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not successfully implemented. Project received funding from NLS and formed partnership with Xavier University, but funding was returned to the NLS.
<p>Barriers/Factors Affecting Achievement of Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keeping learner participants focused on goals and meeting deadlines. ▪ Lack of funds required scaling back of printing and distribution of products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient funding to conduct workshops outside St. John’s caused delays while alternatives were discussed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of cohesion on Board of Directors regarding vision and direction of association led to cancellation of project.
<p>Impacts and Effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students’ learning needs addressed directly in all stages of the development of the workbook, including research, writing, editing and publication skills. ▪ Project resulted in workbook that can be applied to the education setting nation-wide. ▪ Workbooks being distributed to public schools in Nova Scotia and other organizations and groups delivering adult basic education both nationally and locally. ▪ Feedback on the workbooks so far has been positive. ▪ Workbooks also provide a resource that is exclusively Canadian in content. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successful workplace writing program will be made available to workplace literacy providers across the province. ▪ With implementation of the program, workers at all levels of literacy have been helped in improving their writing skills. ▪ Evaluations completed after the two initial sessions held during this project were positive. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None; project was cancelled.
<p>Project Status/Timelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ September 2001 to October 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ February 2001 to November 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ September 2000 to September 2001

	<p>Institut Canadien d'Éducation des Adultes (Montréal, PQ)—Promotion, sensibilisation et formation auprès d'organismes canadiens francophones de l'ouest et du Nord—Nos Compétences Fortes (NCF)2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Grants ▪ Promotion and application of learning tool (NCF) aimed at improving the self-esteem of francophone adults with literacy challenges and increasing awareness of their competencies to become more productive within their communities. ▪ Francophone organizations located in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, B.C., and Yukon. ▪ To create awareness, promote and offer training to French organizations in Western and Northern Canada on the contents of NCF. 	<p>Maison des mots de Bases-Laurentides, LA (Sainte-Thérèse, PQ)—Le Coffre à outils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial ▪ Sought to develop new training and teaching techniques among teachers at Maison in order to improve their ability to meet the learning needs of their clients, who have serious learning disabilities. ▪ Practitioners and teacher/tutor employees. ▪ For teachers at Maison to improve their knowledge and competencies in teaching individuals with serious learning disabilities by exploring newly emerging adult education methods; developing expertise on the variety of learning disabilities and; making recommendations on how the school can effectively adapt its methods ▪ New learning methods identified and incorporated into course curriculum ▪ New approaches to be applied in Sept. 2002. 	<p>Malaspina College University (BC)—How do Adults with Little Formal Education Learn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial ▪ Sought to examine the when, where, what and why behind adult learning (outside the formal education system) in order to help literacy practitioners think of new and different ways in which to support learners. ▪ Learners and students ▪ To produce a formal research report by involving literacy learners, practitioners and academic researchers. ▪ To train literacy practitioners and literacy learners in research skills. ▪ To design and document a structure for collaborative research across regions/disciplines. ▪ Project has succeeded in bringing together academic and practitioner communities to produce valuable research and learning which has been shared with external stakeholders. ▪ Three presentations on findings were given and a published report was widely distributed.
<p>Organization/Project Funding Stream</p>			
<p>Project Overview</p>			
<p>Target Population/Client Groups</p>			
<p>Client Needs/Project Objectives</p>			
<p>Degree to Which Project Objectives Were Met</p>			

<p>Organization/Project</p> <p>Barriers/Factors Affecting Achievement of Objectives</p>	<p><i>Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes (Montréal, PQ)—Promotion, sensibilisation et formation auprès d'organismes canadiens francophones de l'Ouest et du Nord— Nos compétences fortes (NCF)2</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tension between partners led to implementation problems in Saskatchewan. ▪ Talks and negotiation with four western provinces delayed project 3 years from initiation in 1998. 	<p><i>Maison des mots de Bases-Laurentides, LA (Sainte-Thérèse, PQ)— Le Coffre à outils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None identified 	<p><i>Malaspina College University (BC)—How do Adults with Little Formal Education Learn</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encouraging people to attend interviews and research events was a challenge. This was addressed, however, by taking steps to create a more inviting atmosphere.
<p>Impacts and Effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved working relationship between partners and other stakeholders engaged with Francophones outside Quebec. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research and identification of new learning methods has led to the training of employees in Maison. ▪ Teachers developed new methods of dealing with adults with severe learning disabilities. ▪ New learning and training methods have been used to redesign the existing programs. ▪ Long-term impact and effect is not known because at time of the evaluation, the school had not begun delivering redesigned programs and courses to its clients. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information gathered helped literacy practitioners think of new and different ways to support learners. ▪ Increased the literacy skills for practitioners and learners. ▪ Enhanced participating partners' understanding of how best to facilitate collaboration. ▪ Unanticipated effects included the opportunity to share findings at 3 NLS-sponsored conferences and an NLS agreement to print the final report for distribution to the NLS and province. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation.
<p>Project Status/Timelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2001 to Spring 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ September 2001 to May 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ March 2001 to April 2002 (final deadline was extended).

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p><i>Meadow Lake Early Childhood Services (Meadow Lake, SK)—Come Read with Me: For Families of Children with Developmental Delays</i></p>	<p><i>Northwest Territories Literacy Council (Yellowknife, NWT)—Family and Community Literacy Development Project</i></p>	<p><i>Nunavut Literacy Council (Nunavut)—Literacy and Community Development Workshops</i></p>
<p>Funding Stream</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal—Provincial/Territorial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal—Provincial/Territorial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal—Provincial/Territorial
<p>Project Overview</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading program designed by province specifically for all families of pre-school children with developmental delays in order to better meet the needs of their children and to enhance literacy within the home environment. Families of children with, or at risk of, developmental delays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sought to increase the NWTLC’s relationships with its communities and enhance the capacity of individuals and organizations to address literacy issues and needs within their communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project sought to deliver three workshops aimed at various players involved in literacy in Nunavut.
<p>Target Population/Client Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To encourage optimal child development through family literacy. To support parents in becoming leaders in their children’s learning. To increase community literacy in Meadow Lake, the rural area served by its schools, and the Flying Dust First Nation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community groups and families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy experts, educators and practitioners.
<p>Client Needs/Project Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase optimal child development through family literacy. To support parents in becoming leaders in their children’s learning. To increase community literacy in Meadow Lake, the rural area served by its schools, and the Flying Dust First Nation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase capacity of individuals and organizations to address literacy issues and needs. To create opportunities for face-to-face contact between stakeholders to facilitate discussion and assist communities in developing skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase awareness and understanding of promoting literacy and the importance of developing literacy initiatives in communities To improve teaching techniques and assist NLC in formulating a sound business plan for the next fiscal year project.
<p>Degree to Which Project Objectives Were Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapted and piloted a “come read with me program” and provided training to facilitate the ‘come read with me’ sessions. <p><i>Note: ECIP considers the project to be more successful than originally planned because they were able to deliver the program beyond the original 20 families on their waiting list for services.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total of 23 Workshops delivered to 11 NWT communities. Facilitated conference in Yellowknife for community workers to discuss links between family literacy and aboriginal language development. Developed website, resource materials and maintained and promoted the Literacy Resource Centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 workshops delivered had desired impact and were deemed highly successful 1 workshop was not delivered due to bad weather but made valuable contacts during the recruitment process. Plans for a future research project impact and the organization’s literacy promotion and advocacy have begun.

Organization/Project	<i>Meadow Lake Early Childhood Services (Meadow Lake, SK)—Come Read with Me: For Families of Children with Development Delays</i>	<i>Northwest Territories Literacy Council (Yellowknife, NWT)—Family and Community Literacy Development Project</i>	<i>Nunavut Literacy Council (Nunavut)—Literacy and Community Development Workshops</i>
Barriers/Factors Affecting Achievement of Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small scale of program did not allow for delivery to more than 10 families at time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bad weather forced the cancellation of one workshop.
Impacts and Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved community capacity to offer further sessions. ▪ Assisted parents of children with developmental delays to understand and meet the needs of their children and led to enhanced literacy within the homes of participants. ▪ Demonstrated how parents can impact their children's further development through reading together. ▪ Enabled parents to gain confidence and become more comfortable reading to their children. ▪ Supported development of new skills in children. ▪ Promoted benefits of literacy in participant families and the community. ▪ Facilitated discussion of child development with parents. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased awareness in community-based family literacy activities. ▪ Provided mechanisms for sustainable literacy programming (e.g. tools and training). ▪ Mobilized four communities to identify literacy needs, develop and implement programs and write proposals to funding agencies. ▪ Lessons learned shared with other literacy organizations nationally and internationally. ▪ Developed network of rural communities. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large number of people, including educators and community animators, exposed to educational principles and practices. ▪ Principles and practices were received positively by most participants. ▪ Workshops created new avenues for the Councils' future work. ▪ NLC made strong connections with individuals participating in workshops and those who could not attend the cancelled workshop. ▪ Overwhelming demand for NLC services seen as a direct result of the workshops that were delivered. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation.
Project Status/Timelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ October 2000 to November 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ July 2000 to June 2001 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ February 2001 to April 2001

Organization/Project	Ontario Literacy Coalition (Toronto, ON)—Raising the Profile of Workplace Literacy	Open Doors Adult Literacy Program (Winnipeg, MB)—Journaling: A Resource Guide	Street Haven Learning Centre (Toronto, ON)—Street Reach: Building the Capacity to do Outreach
Funding Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial ▪ Project sought to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote workplace literacy to the private sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial ▪ Project sought to create a guide for journaling to support new and existing teachers in the field of literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal—Provincial/Territorial ▪ Sought to increase awareness amongst social service agencies working with the homeless, potential literacy learners who are homeless, and the literacy field. ▪ Develop tools to assist outreach efforts.
Target Population/Client Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Literacy field in general, workplaces and employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community members over the age of eighteen who have literacy needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Homeless and street involved learners (particularly women and youth)
Client Needs/Project Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To develop comprehensive and multi-dimensional marketing strategies and products for workplace literacy programming. ▪ To identify and reach common agreement on best practices in workplace literacy. ▪ To determine and select the best strategy for marketing messages about workplace literacy, based on the language of the target audience and the most effective vehicles for delivering the key messages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To gather information regarding methods of journaling from practitioners in literacy programs. ▪ To develop a handbook encompassing types, benefits, use and applications of journaling for all four literacy levels that may be used in the classroom. ▪ To distribute handbook to programs throughout the province. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To identify and assess effectiveness of outreach tools from TSEC member agencies. ▪ To develop an effective outreach model and work with the advisory committee and staff in referring agencies to evaluate model. ▪ To produce marketing materials for outreach purposes. ▪ To develop literacy awareness workshops for social service providers working with homeless adults and youth.

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p>Ontario Literacy Coalition (Toronto, ON)—Raising the Profile of Workplace Literacy</p>	<p>Open Doors Adult Literacy Program (Winnipeg, MB)—Journaling: A Resource Guide</p>	<p>Street Haven Learning Centre (Toronto, ON)—Street Reach: Building the Capacity to do Outreach</p>
<p>Degree to Which Project Objectives Were Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marketing materials are presently being developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed about 75% of the project's objectives including: survey of literacy practitioners; outline for the Guide and examples for its content; piloted guide with clients to judge effectiveness and solicited feedback for revisions ▪ Handbook not yet completed or distributed due to implementation delays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successfully researched and evaluated outreach tools used by partner agencies. ▪ Developed best outreach practices. ▪ Produced communications to market literacy services for the homeless. ▪ Developed an information and referral protocol for social service agencies
<p>Barriers/Factors Affecting Achievement of Objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staffing vacancies at OLC put project on hold shortly after start-up. ▪ Partnership arrangement has created some confusion in terms of roles, responsibilities and reporting requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implementation delayed six months as result of previous NLS funded project being redesigned by Open Doors. ▪ Lower response rate on survey than expected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inability to find qualified program manager forced internal restructuring, delayed project start date by three months.

<p>Organization/Project</p>	<p>Ontario Literacy Coalition (Toronto, ON)—Raising the Profile of Workplace Literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Best practices for Workplace Literacy Project Report” has been prepared for wider distribution. ▪ Workplace Literacy Strategy is set up to assist in creating a positive environment for workplace literacy. ▪ Expected outputs include a Provincial Workplace Literacy Marketing Plan, a Workplace Literacy Marketing Kit and Promotional Marketing Materials. ▪ Project is expected to have a direct impact on the five pilot Network sites, meet the needs of employers who have identified literacy issues, and result in the development of a consistent and integrated marketing approach. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<p>Open Doors Adult Literacy Program (Winnipeg, MB)—Journaling: A Resource Guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successfully tapped into the literacy community in Manitoba. ▪ Generated valuable insight into the needs of literacy practitioners and current best practices in journaling. ▪ Expected that once developed, the guide will be shared with the larger literacy community through distribution to programs. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation. 	<p>Street Haven Learning Centre (Toronto, ON)—Street Reach: Building the Capacity to do Outreach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Centre has been contacted by several literacy workers in smaller communities that are witnessing more homelessness and looking for ways to reach this group of learners. ▪ Initial feedback is indicating that the project is assisting in sensitizing social service agencies to literacy issues of homeless adults and youth. ▪ Enhancement of effective partnerships has allowed for sharing of resources and knowledge related to effective outreach practices. ▪ Knowledge gained and tools developed have been shared with the larger literacy community through AlphaPlus, NALD and informal information requests. ▪ Individual-level data were not available for the purpose of an NLS evaluation.
<p>Impacts and Effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deadline extended to March 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ October 2001 to April 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ September 2001 to October 2002
<p>Project Status/Timelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deadline extended to March 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ October 2001 to April 2002 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ September 2001 to October 2002