

Horizontal Evaluation of the Initiative to Take Action Against Gun and Gang Violence

Evaluation Report
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The purpose of this Treasury Board required evaluation was to examine issues of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, including Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) considerations, with a focus on the immediate and intermediate outcomes as the Initiative is only in the fourth year of implementation. The evaluation covered the period from 2018-19 to 2021-22 and considered data from 2022-23, where available, for a more fulsome assessment of the Initiative.

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Évaluation horizontale de l'Initiative de lutte contre la violence liée aux armes à feu et aux gangs

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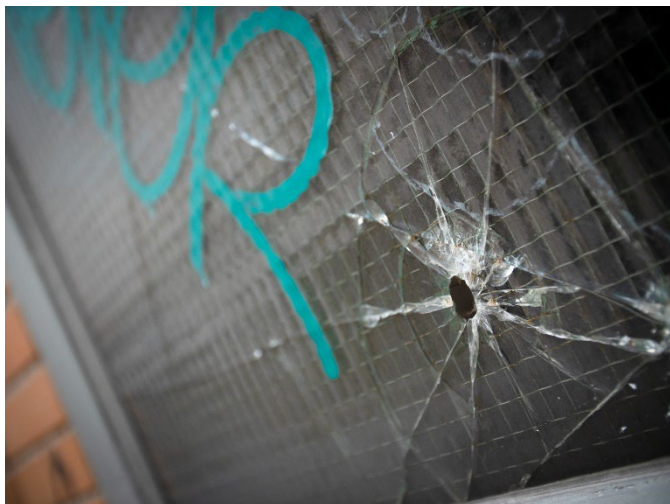
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Annex A

Background



Overall crime rates in Canada have been decreasing over the past several decades. Despite this, there has been a marked increase in recent crime trends involving gun and gang violence (GGV). For example, between 2013 and 2020, Canada experienced a 91% increase in firearm-related homicides. At Canada's borders, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) has reported an overall increase in firearms seizures over the last five years.

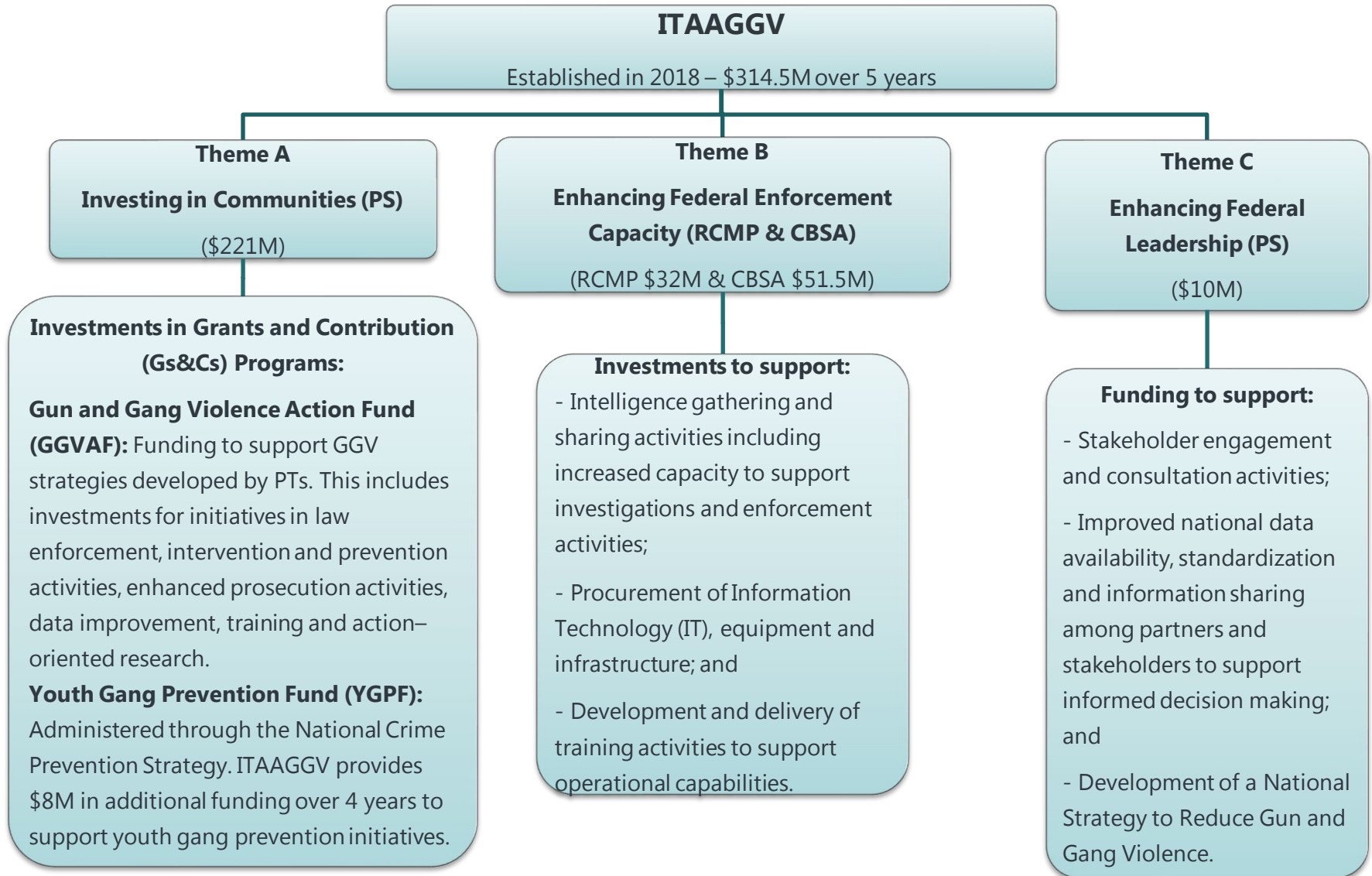
GGV-related issues are complex, cross-jurisdictional and multi-sectoral. Given the nature of gang violence and the knowledge that organized crime groups are involved in a variety of criminal activities and illegal

commodities, interventions must be comprehensive and include activities across the spectrum of prevention, intervention, and enforcement. While provinces and territories (PTs) are responsible for the administration of justice, including policing, in their jurisdictions, there is also a federal role for supporting a multi-faceted coordinated approach to address GGV.

To respond to these increased crime trends, the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada was mandated to work with provincial, territorial and municipal counterparts to develop a strategy for the federal government to best support communities and law enforcement in their ongoing efforts to make it tougher for criminals to secure and use handguns and assault weapons and to reduce GGV in communities across Canada. From this, Budget 2018 committed funding over five years to establish the Initiative to Take Action Against Gun and Gang Violence (ITAAGGV). This horizontal initiative supports Public Safety Canada (PS) (as the lead agency), the CBSA, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) with investments across three themes.

Background

Overview of investments and activity areas supported by the Initiative:



Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine issues of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, including Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) considerations, with a focus on the immediate and intermediate outcomes as the Initiative is only in the fourth year of implementation (see Logic Model in Annex A). The evaluation covered the period from 2018-19 to 2021-22 and considered data from 2022-23, where available, for a more fulsome assessment of the Initiative. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) Policy on Results and the Directive on Results.

Interviews



Fifty-one interviews were conducted with horizontal partner agencies (n=26), representatives from provincial and territorial governments (n=11), and funded recipients (n=14).

Literature and Program Document Review



Program documents and literature (e.g., government reports, articles, academic research) were reviewed and analysed.

Performance and Financial Data



Performance data and financial data from horizontal partner agencies was reviewed and analysed.

Limitations

The availability of data for some performance indicators related to the Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity and Enhancing Federal Leadership themes, was limited. This was due to:


- internal organizational restructuring;
- COVID-related and other unexpected delays;
- performance indicators deemed too specific or insufficient to adequately measure results; and
- planned annual stakeholder surveys that were not undertaken by PS.

In addition, as the ITAAGGV enhances capacity for existing activity areas within the RCMP and CBSA, results could not be uniquely and conclusively attributed to the Initiative.

Where data was limited or unavailable, program documents and interviews were used to triangulate the evaluation findings.

Relevance

Continued Need and Alignment with Federal Roles

 **Finding:** The ITAAGGV is aligned with federal priorities and the mandates of partner organizations. Increased trends in gun and gang-related crimes in Canada indicate there is a continued need for the Initiative to support partners and stakeholders' responses to these ongoing issues.

Crime-related data from Statistics Canada indicates that GGV in Canada remains a pervasive issue across the country. Since 2016, shootings have become the most common type of homicide and in 2021, gang-related homicides continued to account for nearly one-quarter of all homicides in Canada; 74% of these homicides are committed with a firearm.

While these crime rates show increased trends in, the causes and nature of these crimes manifest differently throughout Canada which requires varied approaches across jurisdictions and regions. ITAAGGV stakeholders reported that the Initiative has helped them to combat GGV by supporting tailored PT government response strategies or by providing enhancements to federal enforcement capacity within the CBSA and the RCMP. Stakeholders indicated that the absence of ITAAGGV funding would negatively impact their efforts.



Given its focus on crime prevention and law enforcement, the ITAAGGV is aligned with the mandates, roles and responsibilities of the horizontal partner organizations and over the evaluation period, the federal government has prioritized addressing GGV. In addition to investments made through ITAAGGV and other PS programs to address GGV, new legislative initiatives related to the regulation of firearms were introduced in 2020 and 2022.

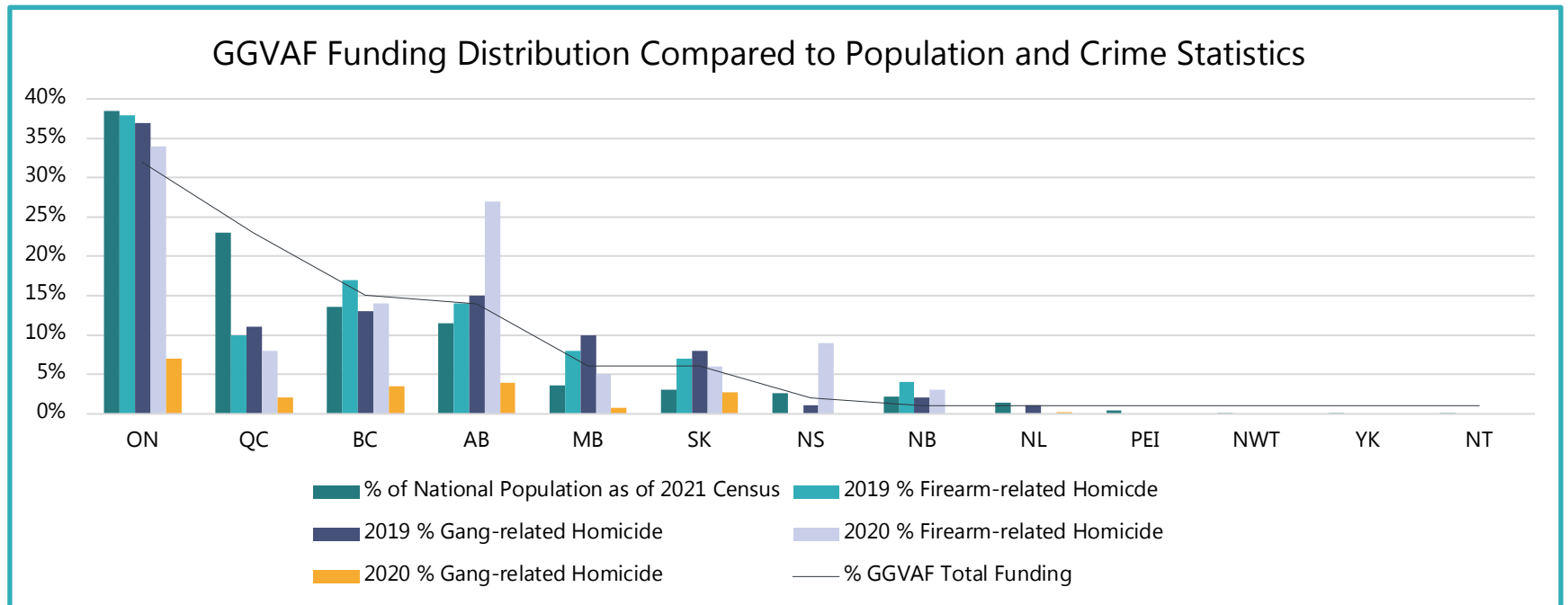
Relevance

Program Coverage



Finding: The GGVAf funding formula is designed to ensure funds are distributed proportionally to PTs. However, gaps in coverage were identified. This included the ineligibility of the RCMP to access funding through the GGVAf as well as limitations in the coverage of some program objectives and the reach of the GGVAf into rural, remote and Indigenous communities, despite the presence of GGv in these areas.

The GGVAf funding formula considers specific crime statistics, the population of each PT and a minimum funding amount that is provided to every jurisdiction. As illustrated in the chart below, GGVAf funding was generally aligned with this criteria and distributed accordingly across jurisdictions.



Relevance

Program Coverage


Under the TB Policy on Transfer Payments, federal government departments are ineligible to receive funding from Gs&Cs programs. As such, GGVAF resources are not available to provincial or territorial police services where the RCMP is the service provider. This was viewed as a significant gap in the GGVAF's overall coverage in every PT jurisdiction except for Ontario and Quebec and hindered PT governments' abilities to support GGV-related law enforcement initiatives for their provincial or territorial police service providers.



The reach of the GGVAF into rural, remote and Indigenous communities was limited, despite the presence of GGV in these areas. Several PS stakeholders indicated that Indigenous communities, in particular, were underrepresented in GGVAF-funded projects. There were also concerns raised that some program objectives (i.e., law enforcement initiatives) were prioritized over others (i.e., prevention or intervention initiatives).

Relevance

Program Coverage

 **Finding:** PS input on the distribution of GGVAF funding by provincial or territorial stakeholders is minimal and the program is therefore unable to ensure funds are reaching all areas or populations at-risk of experiencing GGVA.

The GGVAF terms and conditions require PT jurisdictions to submit a strategy to PS that includes a plan for using program funds to support initiatives that reduce GGVA, and which includes descriptions of proposed funded projects and funded-project recipients (e.g., law enforcement agencies, municipal governments and Indigenous communities). PT governments also need to demonstrate how these projects support their GGVA strategies and align with GGVAF objectives and expected results.

Despite this requirement, the gaps in GGVAF coverage previously described suggest that sufficient oversight or input was not provided on these proposed strategies and PS could improve this process in order to ensure GGVAF funds are distributed in a manner that more fully aligns with program objectives and reaches populations and communities affected by or at risk of encountering GGVA.




PS' Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) appears to respond to some of these identified gaps. Launched in March 2022, the BSCF provides \$250M over three years for direct funding to municipal and Indigenous governments across Canada to support community-based prevention and intervention initiatives related to GGVA.

PS is also developing a Rural Crime Pan Canadian Strategic Framework to further address crime in rural areas.

Relevance

Overlap and Duplication

 **Finding:** Overlap and duplications were found between the GGVAF and other related programs administered by PS.

Overlaps were identified between PS' GGVAF programs: the GGVAF, YGPF and BSCF. This includes similar program objectives to provide funding for prevention, intervention and data collection initiatives that address gun and/or gang violence. There is also duplication among potential recipients eligible for project funding, such as:

- Regional, municipal, local, and Indigenous levels of government;
- Provincial (i.e., Ontario and Quebec), municipal or Indigenous police services;
- Community or professional organizations and societies that are not-for profit associations; and
- Canadian universities and educational institutions or boards of education.

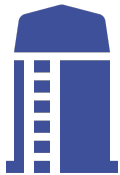
In addition, the GGVAF and BSCF both target capacity building at the community level and the implementation of informed initiatives to respond to GGVAF for different age groups in their immediate and intermediate expected results, respectively.

However, while overlaps and duplications were identified, the GGVAF's additional objective to address GGVAF by funding law enforcement initiatives is unique among these programs. Also, while PT governments are eligible for GGVAF and YGPF program funding, the BSCF is distinct in its direct targeted funding to municipal and Indigenous governments and is intended as short-term funding.

Relevance

Overlap and Duplication

Several PT stakeholders and some PS stakeholders raised concerns with respect to the roll-out of the BSCF. As the program funds municipal and Indigenous governments directly, PT stakeholders reported limited opportunities for consultation and input beforehand in order to ensure alignment between BSCF-funded initiatives and provincial or territorial GGVA strategies supported through the GGVA. Stakeholders perceived minimal coordination between these programs that could lead to the duplication of efforts between GGVA and BSCF-funded activities in their jurisdictions. Further, the similarity of expected results between the two programs suggests that while the BSCF could be addressing limitations in the achievement of GGVA outcomes, there is also a risk of duplication.




Internal PS stakeholders suggested that PS' various GGVA-related programs are siloed and there are no formal governance structures in place to improve implementation and overall efficiencies across the programs. This lack of coordination means that opportunities to streamline delivery of its programs, including the GGVA, develop synergies, and reduce potential overlap and duplication are not being sufficiently explored or leveraged.


It was suggested that PS could bring these programs under the same umbrella to promote a cohesive vision and approach to combatting GGVA. One PT stakeholder suggested that PS should look holistically at its GGVA programs to ensure the objectives and outcomes of each are aligned and complementary.



Effectiveness

Investing in Communities (PS)

 **Finding:** Despite limitations in the program's reach to populations or communities considered at-risk of encountering GGV, the GGVAf has enabled PT governments to better respond to GGV within their jurisdictions and positive results have been reported at the project level.

 All PT stakeholders reported that GGVAf funding has provided necessary support for the implementation of strategies or to undertake initiatives to tackle GGV. As previously noted, this funding is largely proportional to the provincial/territorial population size. A breakdown of GGVAf funding into eligible activity areas between 2019-20 and 2020-21 is illustrated in the chart below.

While it remains too early to provide a results-based assessment of the impacts of GGVAf-funded initiatives, many recipients qualitatively reported that their projects were producing positive impacts relative to their objectives and to the communities, populations or stakeholders served by their project.

Distribution of GGVAf Funding to Eligible Activity Areas between 2019-20 and 2020-21



"GGVAf funding is the backbone of our strategy to fight gun violence [which] allows us to better understand the different phenomena and to intervene from different angles."

Effectiveness

Investing in Communities (PS)

While stakeholders from PT governments agree that GGVAF funding is providing necessary support to their efforts to address GGVA, program funding may not have reached all target populations or communities considered vulnerable or at-risk of encountering GGVA within PT jurisdictions.

Despite this, given the singular focus of the YGPF, funded projects were found to be reaching targeted populations via youth gang prevention initiatives.

The separate, targeted, direct funding to municipalities and Indigenous governments to support GGVA-related intervention and prevention initiatives, facilitated through the BSCF, suggests that some priorities, populations or communities cannot be served by the GGVAF alone.



Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (RCMP and CBSA)



Finding: Although there were some delays in the implementation of Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity activities, there is some evidence that the Initiative enhanced the capabilities of both the RCMP and the CBSA to take action against GGV.

The objectives of the Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity theme are to augment the RCMP's investigation, firearms support, enforcement, training, intelligence and anti-gang capacity, and to enhance the CBSA's capacity to stem the flow of inadmissible travellers and illegal firearms entering Canada at vulnerable points of entry.

To support these objectives, three main areas of ITAAGGV investments were identified and assessed. These areas covered: intelligence gathering and sharing; procurement of IT, equipment and infrastructure; and development and delivery of training activities to support operational capabilities. There is consensus among stakeholders from both the RCMP and the CBSA that federal enforcement capacity has been enhanced as a result of the ITAAGGV.

Summaries of ITAAGGV-supported activities and sub-initiatives for both organizations' progress made towards their implementation and performance highlights will follow. It should be noted however that an assessment of results reporting was limited. For example, as baselines and benchmarks needed to be established in 2018-19 and 2019-20, reporting of actual results for some key performance indicators did not commence until 2020-21. As well, some key performance indicators were deemed too qualitative or insufficient to measure the impacts of implementation activities and these were amended in year five of the Initiative when the committee responsible for approval was established.

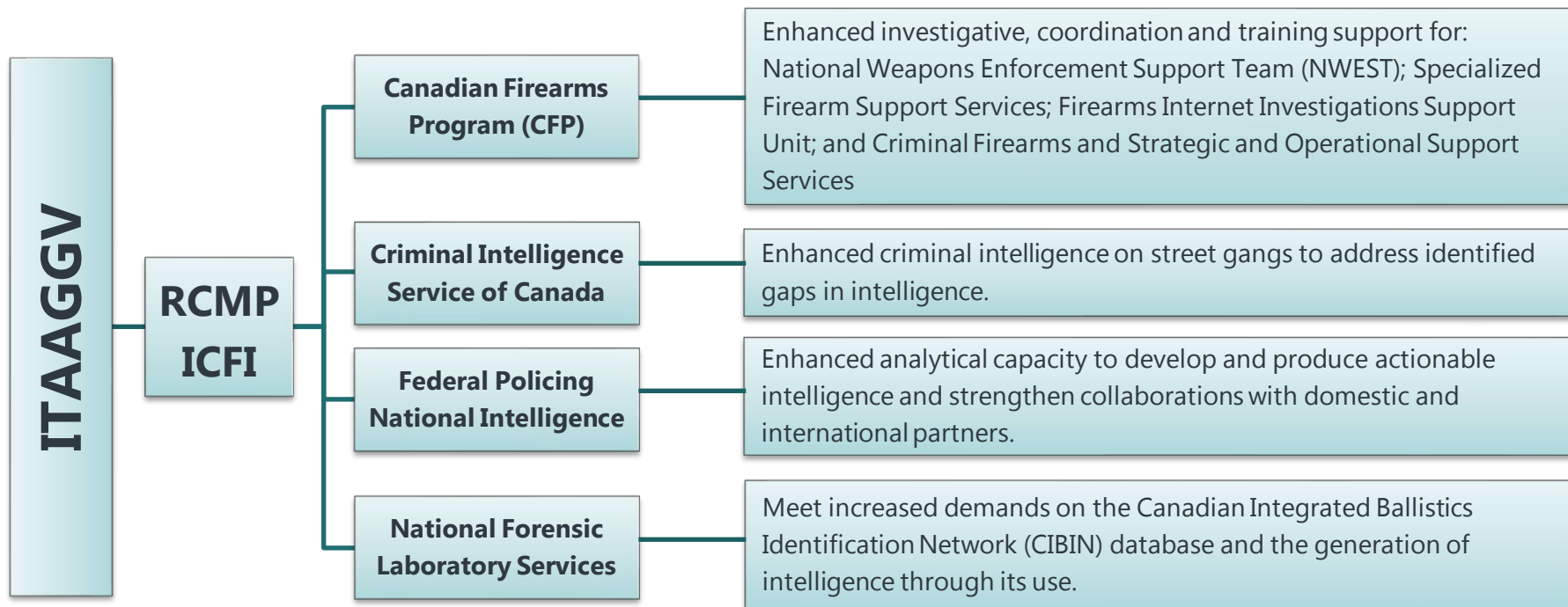
Reporting challenges were also encountered due to organizational restructuring, staffing issues, COVID-related and other unexpected delays.



Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (RCMP)

Through the support of ITAAGGV, the RCMP established the Integrated Criminal Firearms Initiative (ICFI) to expand the services available to law enforcement by enhancing capabilities to better combat the use of illegal firearms and improve the national collection, analysis and sharing of firearms-related intelligence and information. The ITAAGGV supported the ICFI by allocating 45 resources to support stakeholders in the RCMP as illustrated in the chart below.



Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (RCMP)

RCMP Enhancements to Intelligence Gathering and Sharing

ITAAGGV-funded enhancements to the RCMP's GGV-related intelligence gathering and sharing activities yielded positive results. RCMP stakeholders indicated that the additional resources have had a beneficial impact on their operational capabilities to respond to GGV. Stakeholders highlighted the establishment of dedicated intelligence capacity focusing on GGV-related issues that have assisted intelligence gathering and the development of technical expertise on emerging trends such as:



3-D printing of illegal firearms.



The purchasing of firearms by individuals legally permitted to do so on behalf of individuals who are not (also known as straw purchasing).



The manufacturing of illegal firearms.

Several RCMP stakeholders reported that the ITAAGGV has also supported their efforts to coordinate and promote outreach, collaboration and intelligence sharing with stakeholders in the wider law enforcement community. To this end, the RCMP also developed the first annual Firearms Analysis and Strategic Summary (FASS) report in 2020 with support from their partners and stakeholders under the ITAAGGV. The report is a compilation of information from various sources with the objective of providing a strategic overview of the current national firearms landscape with special interest in criminality, gangs, and organized crime. The second annual FASS report had not yet been published at the time of the evaluation engagement.

Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (RCMP)

RCMP Enhancements to Intelligence Gathering and Sharing

Available data on performance indicators generally supports the stakeholder perceptions described previously.



Following the establishment of benchmarks in the previous fiscal year, in 2020-21, the CFP created 289 open-source intelligence reports exceeding the target of 225 by 28%. In 2021-22, the CFP created 188 open-source intelligence reports which missed (by 16.5%) the target of 225.



In 2020-21, 159 Firearm investigations were initiated by intelligence products developed by the CFP, exceeding (by 218%) the target of 50. The performance indicator was amended in 2020-21 to reflect the way pertinent investigations on the criminal use of firearms are initiated by intelligence products. In 2021-22, the target was exceeded by 356% with 228 firearm investigations initiated by intelligence products.



In 2019-20 the RCMP developed and shared 60 intelligence products with partners falling short (by 14%) of the target of 70. Performance data was unavailable for 2020-21 due to organizational restructuring and resource constraints and information continued to be unavailable in 2021-22 as the performance indicator was amended. Formal adoption of the amended performance indicator is pending approval.



The number of intelligence products developed by Firearms Intelligence Analysts that identified or contributed to identifying possible criminal entities related to firearms, including smuggling, was developed to replace an original indicator that was deemed too qualitative to establish a viable target. In addition, resources were not fully in place due to a restructuring of positions within Federal Policing during the early stages of the initiative. This performance indicator is in the process of being formally adopted to reflect this program change and is pending approval.

Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (RCMP)

RCMP Enhancements to IT, Equipment and Infrastructure

Through the ITAAGGV, the RCMP procured software and advanced technologies to assist in evidence collection and analysis and information management. This included the purchase of:



Updated computers and monitors.



3-D printers to support research and development on illicit manufacturing techniques as well as for inspection services in support of firearms investigations and to increase training capacity and a new digital camera for ITAAGGV-related inspections.



Vehicles to transport members to calls for service received by NWest, supporting frontline investigations involving firearms, delivering firearms related training, and meeting with and engaging law enforcement partners and other stakeholders.



Various software to support strategic analysis and intelligence gathering activities.



Forensic analysis equipment for reviewing potential matches from CIBIN entries and correlations. In 2020-21, the percentage of cartridge cases and bullets from Gun and Gang files uploaded to CIBIN within 90 days met the established target of 75% within 90 days. This target was exceeded in 2021-22 with 81% of files uploaded to CIBIN within the 90-day standard.

Stakeholders indicated the new equipment and IT acquired via the ITAAGGV has supported their intelligence gathering activities and capacity. The resulting intelligence assists in identifying crime trends and hotspots to support strategic and tactical analysis. It has also enabled the RCMP to have a better understanding of the national threat landscape.

Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (RCMP)

RCMP Enhancements to Training Activities to Support Operational Capabilities

The ITAAGGV supported the RCMP's development and delivery of various training activities including courses on firearm familiarization, identification and inspection, illicit firearms manufacturing and trafficking, as well as special-purpose training to support Organized Crime and gun trafficking investigations.

Stakeholders reported that despite the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the RCMP has been able to use the ITAAGGV funding for resources to oversee training requests, course development and course delivery. Training activities were provided to RCMP personnel, online and in-person, and to law enforcement partners outside the RCMP as well. From April 2018-19 to June 2022, the Specialized Firearm Support Services team has trained over 400 law enforcement officers on firearm classification and emerging trends. Additionally, over 900 law enforcement officers have successfully completed one or more of three available online firearms training courses. An RCMP stakeholder noted that training activities have had positive impacts on the decision-making of other stakeholders on emerging trends related to the evaluation of items awaiting import clearance, the conduct of police searches under warrant and investigations into suspected illicit activities.

While training activities were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, between 2019 and 2021, the NWEST firearm enforcement support specialists responded to 86% more calls and delivered specialized training to 116% more police officers. This training was seen to have a direct and positive impact on firearm-related investigations. With the alleviation of COVID-19 restrictions, 5,021 individuals received training from NWEST in 2021-22, exceeding (by 11%) the target of 4,500.

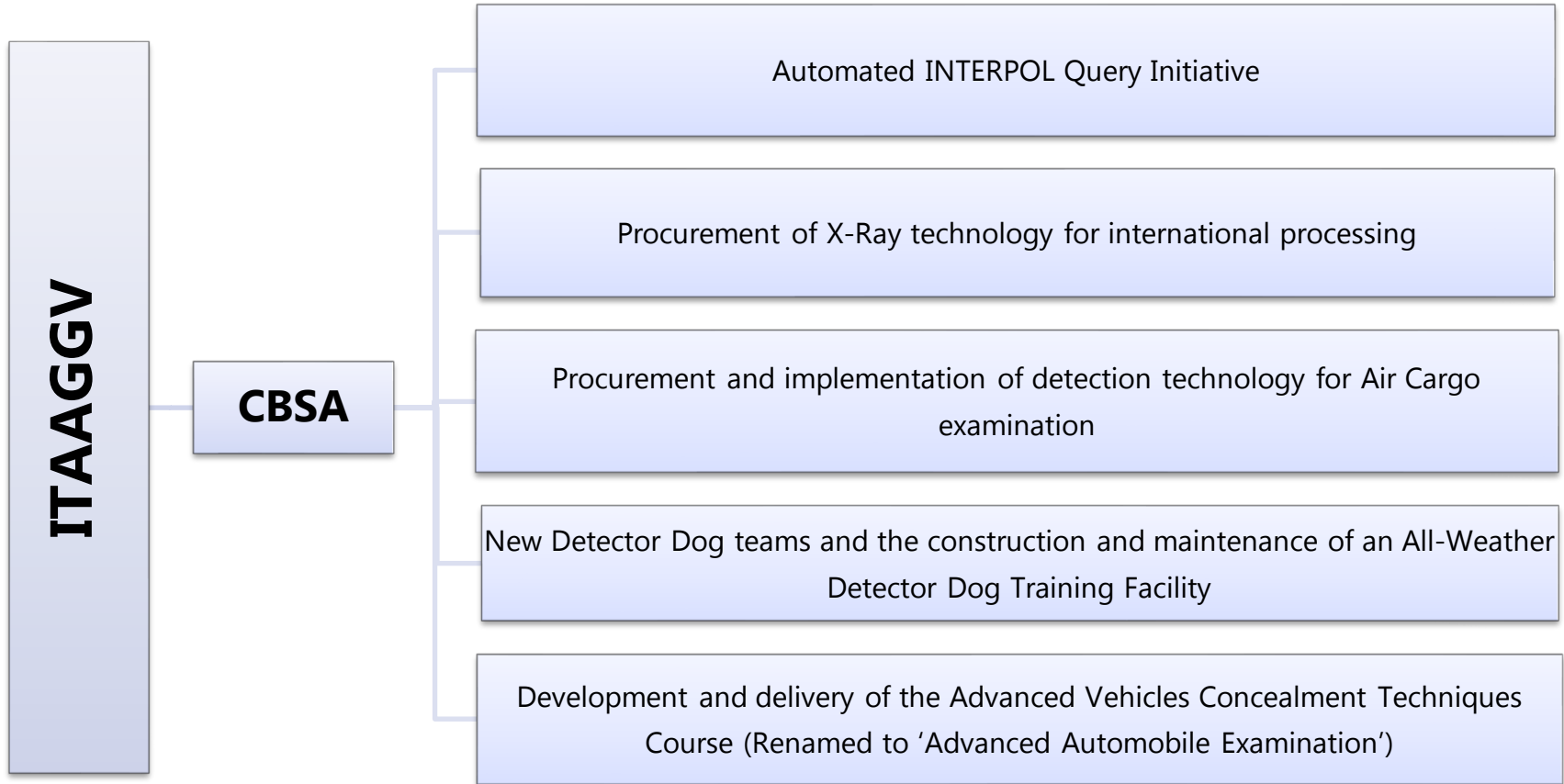


NWEST members also developed an instructional video and attended trade shows and industry associations to introduce the video and provide further training to retailers. This initiative has proven successful as retailers have called NWEST directly to report straw purchasers attempting to buy firearms on behalf of someone unable to do so, who were subsequently identified and prosecuted.

Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (CBSA)

Through the ITAAGGV, the CBSA has invested in new technologies, infrastructure and specialized training to better restrict illicit trafficking across the border. ITAAGGV funding was allocated to support the following activities and sub-initiatives detailed in the chart below.

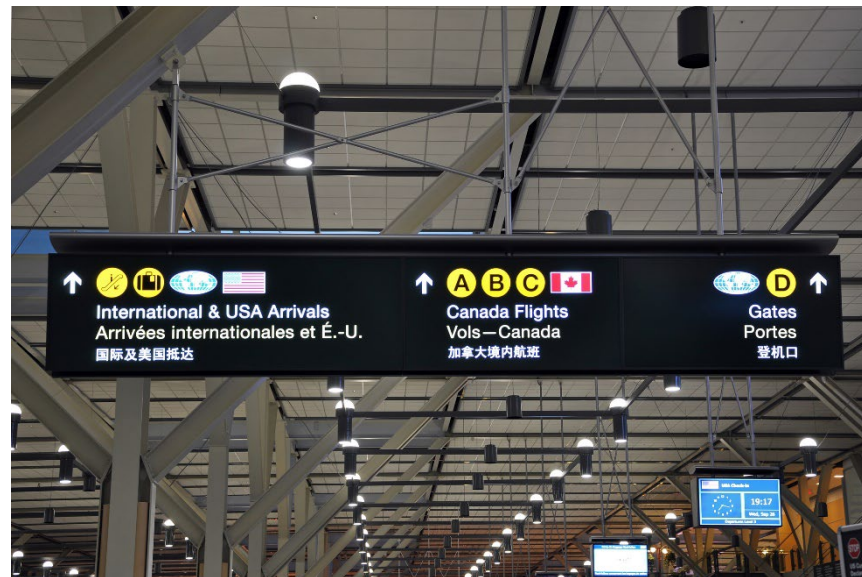


Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (CBSA)

CBSA Enhancements to Intelligence Gathering and Sharing

The Automated INTERPOL Query Initiative, where all inbound air travellers would be queried against the INTERPOL database, was to account for the majority of CBSA's ITAAGGV-supported intelligence gathering activities. However, implementation was impeded due to complexities (e.g., RCMP involvement and resourcing requirements) that were not considered during original program design. As an alternative approach the CBSA, in partnership with the RCMP, is seeking to undertake an internally funded pilot project that would help determine financial and resourcing viability for future program design consideration.



Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (CBSA)

CBSA Enhancements to IT, Equipment and Infrastructure

All six of the Dual View X-ray machines (purchased to screen increased volumes of mail items at postal facilities) have been delivered. While five of the six units are operational, one unit's installation is presently delayed.



The percentage of mail items screened by the detection technology to assess whether they were high-risk items requiring an in-depth examination was 65% in 2020-21 and 46% in 2021-22, which exceeded the target of 33%.



Reporting data for the indicator measuring the percentage of international postal shipments examined using Dual View X-ray technology which resulted in a seizure specifies that 35% of these shipments were examined in 2020-21 but it was not specified how many were seized. The equipment was installed in December 2019, 2020-21 data was used to establish a baseline however due to COVID-19 response measures in place there was an opportunity to clear all backlogs which generated a higher than normal seizure volume for that year. Once a steady state is determined, CBSA will set an appropriate baseline to measure against.

Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (CBSA)

CBSA Enhancements to IT, Equipment and Infrastructure

Through the funds provided by the ITAAGGV, 28 Handheld X-Rays, 14 Small tool kits, 14 Ion Mobility Spectrometers, 14 Contraband outfitted examinations trucks (COMETS) have all been purchased and deployed. Of the 14 COMETS, six units are awaiting fit-up and this is expected to be completed by the end of fiscal year 2022-23.



In 2019-20, 35% of the identified high volume and high-risk airports were equipped with detection technology, which was higher than the initial year 1 target of 20%. In 2020-21, this percentage increased to 36% and in 2021-22, 100% of the identified airports were equipped with detection technology.



The CBSA's purchase and installation of Pallet Large Scale Imaging (PLSI) equipment has encountered significant delays. An alternative vendor will need to be selected to supply this equipment which will require a new procurement and prototype development processes. As well, much work remains to be completed with airport authorities to secure the space necessary for the eventual deployment of PLSIs. It should be noted that the development and testing stages may exceed the timelines and funding for this sub-initiative.

Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (CBSA)

CBSA Enhancements to IT, Equipment and Infrastructure



As of 2018-19 five new ITAAGGV-funded Drugs and Firearms Detector Dog teams were deployed, which contributed to a CBSA-wide increase of 28% in firearm seizures (including parts, magazines and ammunition).

The CBSA's Detector Dog Service Program reported an average of 24,834 examinations per year (2017-18 to 2021-22) by all Detector Dog teams with the Drugs and Firearms Detector Dog teams representing about 71% of those searches.



Construction of the All-Weather Detector Dog Training Facility (AWF) encountered delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting supply-chain impacts and associated increase in construction-related costs.

The official opening of the AWF took place in October 2022, and the project end date is scheduled for March 2023 although an extension was approved to conclude some project elements in early 2023-24.

Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity (CBSA)

CBSA Enhancements to Training Activities to Support Operational Capabilities



The CBSA developed the Advanced Automobile Examination (AAE) course, as well as a “Train the Trainer” course. Although the rollout of the course was initiated, it was subsequently put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. The course has since been delivered in the Southern Ontario Region and a delivery plan is in place for the three remaining hubs where training is expected to be rolled out by the end of fiscal year 2022-23. It was also noted that while opportunities for virtual training are increasing within the CBSA, in-person training is the primary format for specialized training like the AAE course.

Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Leadership (PS)



Finding: PS was unable to implement key deliverables under the Enhancing Federal Leadership theme, resulting in significant gaps in engagement, information sharing and strategic planning.

Progress towards the implementation of activities under the Initiative's Enhancing Federal Leadership theme was significantly delayed. Staffing issues, the reallocation of resources to other prioritized areas within PS and COVID-related impacts affected the implementation of these deliverables.



TBS requires a senior management -level oversight committee in place for horizontal initiatives. This mechanism was established in year 4 of the Initiative (2021-22) when it was added as a standing item to the semi-annual meetings of the Firearms Steering Committee. Two meetings that included ITAAGGV oversight were held in 2022-23.

Although efforts to advance work on these items were made by the program area, the issues cited above as well as limited senior-management governance over most of the evaluation period hindered their implementation. Descriptions of these activities and implementation considerations are provided below:



National Strategy to Reduce Gun and Gang Violence

The development of a National Strategy is intended to clarify PS' direction and approach to coordinating GGV response that will serve as a roadmap for future anti-gang programming and investments for all Canadian jurisdictions and identify collective actions. As of September 2022, the Strategy has received Ministerial consent to advance and is in the preliminary development stages. Implementation activities are expected to occur throughout 2023.

Effectiveness

Enhancing Federal Leadership (PS)



Facilitating stakeholder engagement and consultation through activities such as a National Summit on GGV

The 2018 National Summit was viewed as a success in terms of community building across a broad spectrum of stakeholders. A GGV Summit that was planned and organized for 2020 had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has not been rescheduled.



Annual stakeholder engagement surveys

Stakeholder surveys are intended to provide valuable input for the ITAAGGV to inform ongoing implementation, policy decisions and the development of a national strategy. Survey data is also required for results reporting on the overall performance of the Initiative. The survey was intended to be conducted on an annual basis beginning in 2020, but its development and launch were delayed due to shifting priorities within the department and the COVID-19 pandemic. Survey planning and preparations have been undertaken and formal approval for its launch was requested in November 2022.



Facilitating information sharing among partners and stakeholders to support informed decision-making

The Horizontal Working Group (HWG) and the FPT WG on Crime Prevention were considered positive spaces for information sharing. However, it was noted that PS could provide a stronger national coordination role by collecting and sharing knowledge to facilitate an awareness of best practices, models and strategies that are addressing GGV among partners and stakeholders.



Citing these gaps in the implementation of its Enhancing Federal Leadership theme responsibilities, stakeholders suggested that PS needs to improve upon its overall coordination, engagement and information sharing activities in order to provide the leadership required to respond to GGV at the national level.

Efficiency

Gender-Based Analysis Plus



Finding: While GBA Plus factors have informed the design of the ITAAGGV, some gaps remain in the delivery, including the levels of support available to Indigenous and smaller communities. More focused data collection and analysis would strengthen ongoing implementation of the ITAAGGV and future policy decisions.

GBA Plus considerations were reflected in the design of the ITAAGGV although gaps were identified in the implementation of the GGVAF.

As previously described, Indigenous and rural communities are not receiving the same level of support as other areas served by the Initiative. It was noted that these communities may lack awareness of, or the capacity to engage in, government programs available to them. Increased outreach and support is needed to improve program accessibility to these underserved areas.

Stakeholders also suggested that improvements to the collection and analysis of intersectional data could better assist program delivery in determining whether the Initiative is reaching communities and populations at increased risk of encountering GGV or if it is meeting their needs appropriately. While funding recipients are required to report on funded initiatives, it is not clear how this information is used to inform ongoing implementation or policy decisions for ITAAGGV.



Efficiency

Program Administration – Utilization of Allocated Resources



Finding: The administration of the Gs&Cs programs under the Investing in Communities theme has been well managed. Despite this, the efficiency of the Initiative’s administration was hampered by challenges encountered in utilizing allocated resources; limited governance and oversight; and minimal results reporting and engagement activities to monitor progress of implementation and inform policy decisions.

Horizontal reporting data, provided in the table below, identified variances between planned and actual spending across all themes between 2018-19 and 2020-21.

Variance Between Planned and Actual Spending (%)					
	Investing in Communities	Enhancing Federal Leadership	Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity		Total Horizontal Variance
Fiscal Year	PS		RCMP	CBSA	
2018-19	Reprofiled	N/A	-57	-44	N/A*
2019-20	-16	-13	-30	-5	-16
2020-21	-1	-57	-26	-19	-26

Several issues were found to contribute to this variance including: the launch of the Initiative late in the 2018-19 fiscal year; barriers encountered during implementation that were unanticipated during program development; organizational restructuring; staffing challenges and/or the reallocation of resources to other prioritized areas; and challenges to implementation arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

* FY 2018-19 Total Horizontal Variance Average not calculated due to reprofiled funds and unavailable data

Efficiency

Program Administration – Utilization of Allocated Resources

ITAAGGV Theme		Challenges Encountered in Utilizing Allocated Resources
Investing in Communities (PS)		Due to the late launch of the Initiative in fiscal year 2018-19, PS reprofiled GGVAF funds to 2019-20 to ensure PT jurisdictions could fully utilize their available funding allocations over the duration of the Contribution Agreement.
Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity	CBSA	Funds were reprofiled in 2020-21 for three sub-initiatives: the Automated INTERPOL Query Initiative, construction of an AWF and procurement of PLSI equipment. For two of these sub-initiatives (the AWF and PLSI), the COVID-19 pandemic was a key barrier to implementation. The Automated INTERPOL Query Initiative was not able to be implemented as designed and a pilot project is being proposed as an alternative way forward.
	RCMP	Delays encountered during implementation were attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, organizational restructuring and human resourcing challenges (e.g., obtaining timely security clearances for new hires and staffing allocated positions).
Enhancing Federal Leadership (PS)		Resource availability was a concern as there were staffing shortages and resources were reallocated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic response and to address other prioritized areas within PS.

Efficiency

Program Administration – Governance and Oversight



Stakeholders noted that effective governance mechanisms were in place to support the Initiative at the working level. This included the ITAAGGV HWG as well as working groups within PS to support GGVAF and YGPF implementation. The FPT Crime Prevention Working Group was also seen as a positive forum for information sharing. However, some PS and PT stakeholders indicated that PS should consider implementing a stronger governance structure to support this relationship and improve coordination.



Despite having working-level governance structures in place, horizontal partners noted the absence of an oversight mechanism at the Senior Management-level, which is a TBS requirement for horizontal initiatives, throughout much of the evaluation period. In addition to the implementation challenges presented in the Effectiveness: Enhancing Federal Leadership section, the late implementation of a Senior Management-level Oversight Committee also impacted results reporting as formal processes for amending and approving performance indicators were not in place until year five of the Initiative.



Stakeholders suggested that this gap in oversight could hinder PS' credibility as a horizontal partner and lead agency.

Efficiency

Program Administration – Information Gathering and Sharing



While ITAAGGV performance data was collected and reported in a consistent manner, the availability of data was delayed, and baselines and benchmarks were being established for certain performance indicators. In addition, formal processes to amend performance indicators were not in place until year five which negatively impacted results reporting on some of the Initiative’s activities. Furthermore, performance data for the Enhancing Federal Leadership theme was unavailable as annual stakeholder surveys were not conducted.

Collection of recipient reporting for the Investing in Communities theme was consistent, stakeholders noted however that PS’ sharing of relevant information among stakeholders appears to be limited and is an area for improvement. Strengthened collection and analysis of intersectional GBA Plus data was also suggested to better assist program delivery and policy decisions. PS’ information gathering and sharing activities under the Enhancing Federal Leadership theme were also cited as limited and requiring improvement.

Some stakeholders noted improved information sharing between the RCMP and CBSA resulting from the Initiative. Additionally, RCMP stakeholders stated that the ITAAGGV funding has improved RCMP data collection practices which is helping to create a national landscape of GGV.

Efficiency

Program Administration – Grants & Contributions

Overall, Contribution Agreements under the Investing in Communities theme were found to be administered soundly and with appropriate flexibility to meet the needs of both PS and recipients.

For example, the early implementation of the GGVAF proved to be adaptive and flexible as 2018 (year one) funding was rolled out late in the fiscal year, which created a situation where the PTs would have to spend funding without fully developing their project, or risk lapsing funds. In order to support the PTs, \$9.7M was reprofiled to year two based on discussions with PT stakeholders. This allowed PT recipients time to properly engage with their stakeholders and develop responsive funding agreements.

As well, the GGVAF was designed with a 20% carry-over which one internal stakeholder noted provided a flexibility for recipients to manage program funding. The stakeholder considered this a best practice for other PS Gs&Cs programs to emulate.



Suggested areas for improvement in the administration of Contribution Agreements included the following:



Increased effort from PS on data collection of the initiative;



Knowledge sharing among stakeholders to share the multiple activities being undertaken across Canada to inform future policy decisions; and



Consistent and ongoing engagement with GGVAF recipient stakeholders to inform program design and the implementation.

Conclusions



GGV-related crime continues to be a serious issue in Canada and the ITAAGGV is making a difference in helping PTs and horizontal partners tackle GGV. Stakeholders

strongly agreed that their efforts to combat GGV would be significantly impacted without the Initiative's support.

Although many of the deliverables for the Investing in Communities and Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity themes were implemented and demonstrated positive results, some aspects of the ITAAGGV program design led to unexpected delays or gaps in implementation which impacted the Initiative's ability to fulfil all its objectives. This included consideration of the program's availability to Indigenous and rural communities as well as to provincial or territorial police service providers for the majority of PT jurisdictions.

Most of the activities planned for the Enhancing Federal Leadership theme were unable to be delivered due to limited resources and the reallocation of resources to other prioritized areas within PS.

While delays were encountered by all horizontal partner agencies, overall implementation was not adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Notable exceptions included pandemic-related delays that prevented the delivery of training activities under the Enhancing Federal Enforcement Capacity theme as well as the CBSA's implementation of two sub-initiatives under this theme.




GBA Plus factors informed the design of the ITAAGGV although some gaps were found in its delivery. This included the levels of support available to Indigenous and smaller communities and the collection and analysis of intersectional data to better assist ongoing implementation or policy decisions.

Insufficient governance, oversight and resource limitations impacted implementation of the Enhancing Federal Leadership theme. This included the collection of data and sharing of information with partners and stakeholders to monitor implementation and inform future policy decisions. In addition, formal processes for amending and approving performance indicators were not in place until year five of the Initiative.

A holistic and coordinated response to GGV requires leadership at the national level and PS should meet this demand.

Recommendations

The PS's Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of the Crime Prevention Branch and Assistant Deputy Minister of the Emergency Management and Programs Branch, should:

-  1. Explore opportunities to strengthen the overall coordination and governance of PS gun and gang violence-related programs to improve synergies and minimize overlap.
-  2. Review the GGVAF program design to improve:
 - access to funding opportunities for police of jurisdiction as well as communities and populations encountering, or at risk of encountering, GGV; and,
 - collaboration with PT governments to ensure GGVAF funds support all program objectives.
-  3. Ensure appropriate oversight mechanisms are in place to:
 - clarify processes for amending performance indicators and determining their appropriateness in measuring results;
 - strengthen data collection and information sharing activities among stakeholders; advance the development of a National Strategy to Reduce Gun and Gang Violence and stakeholder engagement activities; and,
 - ensure oversight of the Initiative is aligned with TBS requirements for horizontal initiatives.

Management Action Plan

Recommendation	Action(s) Planned	Planned Completion Date
<p>1. Explore opportunities to strengthen the overall coordination and governance of Public Safety Canada (PS) gun and gang violence-related programs to improve synergies and minimize overlap.</p>	<p>Management will examine the Anti-Gang Programming Assessment and ensure greater coordination occurs between program areas to ensure PS gun and gang-violence related programs experience improved synergies with minimal overlap.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
	<p>Management will utilize the Initiative to Take Action Against Gun and Gang Violence (ITAAGGV) oversight committee to continue to strengthen the overall coordination and governance of PS gun and gang violence-related programs, with semi-annual meetings to discuss priorities, strategic consideration, and opportunities for collaboration and increased engagement.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
	<p>Management will approve and implement an annual stakeholder engagement survey to gather input from stakeholders to better inform program and research development and gaps to better respond to stakeholder needs.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
	<p>A national strategy to reduce gun and gang violence will be developed and published to provide stakeholders with a framework to address gun and gang violence related issues. The strategy will be a strategic policy tool that supports the Minister’s mandate commitments while also allowing Public Safety to continue in its federal leadership role as part of the ITAAGGV.</p>	<p>June 2024</p>

Management Action Plan

Recommendation	Action(s) Planned	Planned Completion Date
<p>2. Review the Gun and Gang Violence Action Fund (GGVAF) program design to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to funding opportunities for police of jurisdiction as well as communities and populations encountering, or at risk of encountering, gun and gang violence; and, • collaboration with provinces and territories (PT) governments to ensure GGVAF funds support all program objectives. 	<p>Management will work with community stakeholders in jurisdictions serviced by the RCMP to determine the impact this has on funding distribution; opportunities will be explored to adjusting programming to other types of eligible ultimate recipients potentially under-serviced (potentially a percentage of funding to intervention or capping the amount of funding that can be spent on enforcement). Once assessed, a path forward including a possible program adjustment could commence to reduce gaps in funding to law enforcement and intervention initiatives in these jurisdictions.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
	<p>Increased stakeholder engagement, including through activities such as stakeholder engagement surveys will allow PTs additional opportunities to communicate their needs and will allow PS to better understand these needs in relation to PS program objectives. This will help ensure that PTs are effectively spending GGVAF funds on activities that support their goals and broader program objectives.</p>	<p>March 2024</p>
	<p>Revise the GGVAF Annual Performance Review (APR) to collect more data on the activities undertaken by ultimate recipients and to improve Gender-based Analysis Plus focused data collection with the aim of better informing ongoing program implementation and policy decisions. To support improved data collection and analysis, the full-time equivalent capacity gap should be documented and a plan for additional resources will be developed.</p>	<p>June 2024</p>

Management Action Plan

Recommendation	Action(s) Planned	Planned Completion Date
<p>3. Ensure appropriate oversight mechanisms are in place to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarify processes for amending performance indicators and determining their appropriateness in measuring results; strengthen data collection and information sharing activities among stakeholders; advance the development of a National Strategy to Reduce Gun and Gang Violence and stakeholder engagement activities; and, ensure oversight of the Initiative is aligned with Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) requirements for horizontal initiatives. 	<p>Management will utilize the oversight committee to clarify the process to amend performance indicators and determine their appropriateness in measuring results. The ITAAGGV is currently under renewal and an assessment of the appropriateness of indicators has begun, with new proposed indicators from horizontal initiative partners under review by Treasury Board.</p> <p>Increased stakeholder engagement including through the stakeholder engagement survey, and other activities will strengthen information sharing among stakeholders, advance the development of a National Strategy to Reduce Gun and Gang Violence and further support PS’s federal leadership role. In addition, a data collection strategy will be implemented to strengthen data collection and information accessed and shared between stakeholders.</p> <p>Terms of reference of the oversight committee for the ITAAGGV ensure and outline how it is aligned with TBS requirements for horizontal initiatives. This committee will continue meeting several times per year to meet TBS requirements. The committee will continue to ensure the initiative is properly managed, reporting is timely and accurate, that it reports issues including performance indicator-related issues to TBS, and seeks to resolve conflicts within the horizontal initiative or refer them to TBS for support.</p> <p>The planned actions have the potential to be impacted by the impending Treasury Board Decision on the renewal of the ITAAGGV.</p> <p>Management to ensure that the data is aligned with the PS Data Strategy.</p>	<p>March 2024</p> <p>March 2024</p> <p>March 2024</p> <p>March 2024</p>

Annex A

Logic Model

