SSHRC≡CRSH

Evaluation of the Joint Initiative (JI) Program Mechanism

Final Report

January 22, 2007

PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EVALUATION OF JOINT INITIATIVES PROGRAM MECHANISM

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is the federal agency that promotes and supports research, training and knowledge mobilization in the social sciences and humanities. As expressed in *Framing Our Direction*, research in the social sciences and humanities advances knowledge and builds understanding about individuals, groups and societies – what we think, how we live, and how we interact with each other and in the world around us. Through its programs and policies, SSHRC contributes to the highest level of research excellence in Canada, and facilitates knowledge mobilization across disciplines, universities and all sectors of society.

SSHRC's Joint Initiative (JI) program mechanism was launched in 1989-90. Since 1989, SSHRC has entered into 44 JIs with more than 32 distinct partners and has generated over $40 million in additional funding for social sciences and humanities research. Programs that result from the JI mechanism include those administered by SSHRC's Strategic Programs and Joint Initiatives (SPJI) Division, and those developed through the Initiative on the New Economy (INE). Its aim is to encourage key stakeholders (e.g., universities, community, private and public sector organizations) to work in partnership in defining and supporting research programs of benefit to Canadian society.

The evaluation was completed by an independent team from R.A. Malatest & Associates in partnership with Circum Network Inc., contracted by SSHRC's Corporate Performance, Evaluation and Audit (CPEA) Division. Staff of SSHRC's CPEA Division also participated in conducting parts of the study. The evaluation focused on whether the JI program mechanism continued to be relevant and effective in terms of governance, design and delivery. It was also expected that the evaluation would shed light on overall results/impacts of the mechanism.

As part of SSHRC's Risk-Based Evaluation Plan for 2006-2007 to 2008-2009, this evaluation is intended to assist SSHRC senior management decision-making with respect to potential continuation and improvement of the Joint Initiatives program mechanism. Several evaluation issues were highlighted including the mechanism's relevance, governance, design and delivery, outputs and immediate outcomes, risks and opportunities, and alternatives.

The evaluation evidence suggests that SSHRC's JI program mechanism is highly pertinent in building connections to maximize the impact and quality of social sciences and humanities research. The evaluation also reveals that it has yielded positive benefits in terms of creating and maintaining partnerships at the federal and international levels, leveraging funds, and developing capacity for social sciences and humanities research.

Four recommendations were put forth by the evaluation team of which the primary suggestion was continued support for the Joint Initiatives program mechanism. In order to get the most out of this strategic investment, other recommendations proposed enhancements to the JI program mechanism related to management, delivery and governance. SSHRC management has agreed to many of the proposed improvements. These are contained in the *Summary Management Response*.

The views expressed in this evaluation are those of the external team. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of SSHRC. These can be found in the above-mentioned summary management response. At this time, I would like to thank the external team from R.A. Malatest & Associates (Heather MacDonald, Suzanne Bélanger), as well as Benoît Gauthier of Circum Network Inc*.* Their professional expertise, dedication and hard work on this evaluation assignment were most appreciated.

The efforts of the consulting team were ably supported over time by various contributions from members of SSHRC's Corporate Performance, Evaluation and Audit Division. These included Courtney Amo, France Landriault, Robert Lalande, Jocelyne Manseau-Mandeville, Rafika Amira, and Michael Bazant.

Special thanks also goes to the executive and staff associated with SSHRC's JI programs - Gisèle Yasmeen, Marc Fonda, Craig McNaughton, Murielle Gagnon, Tariq Bhatti, Laurent Messier, Gordana Krcevinac, Éric Bastien, Jacques Critchley, Garry Pinard, Luc Lebrun and Les MacDonald. Their familiarity and cooperation, especially in providing program documentation and administrative data, were instrumental to this study.

Members of the Evaluation Advisory Committee should also be acknowledged for their guidance and advice provided during the study. Members included Patricia Dunne, Marc Fonda, Denis Croux, Gordana Krcevinac, Sylvie Paquette, Hélène Régnier, Les MacDonald, and Rafika Amira. The knowledge and insights provided by members helped ensure that momentum was maintained throughout the evaluation process.

Finally, while too numerous to acknowledge individually, I would also like to thank the many researchers and partners involved in the Joint Initiatives programs who contributed valuable time and opinions. In a world filled with many demands for data and information, their input greatly contributed to the success of this evaluation initiative.

Taken together, the conscientious and respectful collaboration of all made this evaluation possible.

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Final Evaluation Report

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For:
The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
(SSHRC)

January 22, 2007

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Executive Summary

Background

An evaluation of the JI program mechanism is part of SSHRC's Evaluation Plan for 2003-04 to 2005-06, which was approved by Council at its June 2004 meeting, and updated early in the 2005-06 fiscal year. The evaluation study was conducted between January and August 2006 by R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, in partnership with Circum Network Inc. Staff of SSHRC's Corporate Performance, Evaluation and Audit Division also participated in conducting parts of the study. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess whether the program mechanism continues to be relevant and whether it is effective in terms of governance, design and delivery. It was also aimed at providing insights into the overall results/impacts of the mechanism. The timing of this evaluation coincides with the implementation of SSHRC's Strategic Plan for 2006-11, as well as the appointment of a new President and the appointment of a new Vice-President Partnerships at SSHRC.

The Report will be presented to SSHRC's Standing Committee on Research Support in January 2007, and will be submitted to SSHRC's Council, along with a full Management Response, in March 2007.

Objectives of the Joint Initiatives Program Mechanism

SSHRC's Joint Initiative (JI) program mechanism was launched in the 1989-90 fiscal year to encourage government agencies, universities, the private sector, the voluntary sector and community organizations to work with SSHRC in defining and funding programs for research in areas of particular interest to initiative partners and to society. The *explicit* objectives of the JI program mechanism are to:

➢ help integrate strategic research results with policy making and socio-economic development by ensuring rapid and effective communication of new knowledge to users;

➢ encourage communication between researchers and users of research, and in particular, promote consultation on the definition of needs within a sector and the most appropriate mechanisms to meet these needs; and

➢ encourage multi-sectoral consultation and promote the development of global and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of contemporary issues.

In addition, the following *implicit* objectives were identified during the framework phase of the evaluation:

➢ to increase the profile of SSHRC and of SSHRC-funded research;

➢ to build research capacity in thematic research areas of relevance to partners;

➢ to leverage additional funds for research in the social sciences and the humanities; and

➢ to develop strategic partnerships between SSHRC and government, private, and not-for-profit partners.

Evaluation Methodology

The following five methods were used in the study: 1) review of documentation/reports and administrative data, 2) review of 5 similar initiatives nationally and internationally, 3) interviews with 26 key informants, 4) five web-based surveys of key stakeholder groups and 5) case studies of 8 individual JI programs. Further details on the evaluation methodology can be found in section 1.3 of the report.

Context and Limitations

The study was constrained by the following challenges that need to be taken into consideration when reviewing the results:

➢ *Availability of corporate records:* Corporate files for some JI programs were either not available at the time of the file review, were incomplete, or contained inconsistent information. It was therefore difficult to re-create the lifecycle of JI programs, and to describe and analyse the JI program mechanism as a whole. When documentation was missing, alternate data sources (e.g. surveys and interviews) were accessed but, in some cases, key stakeholders could not be reached for comment, and anecdotal evidence from sources such as interviews could not be confirmed through documentation. **The overall lack of consistent and complete corporate records for many SSHRC programs is an issue that should be addressed but is beyond the scope of this evaluation.**

➢ *Difficulty aggregating results from individual JIs*: Due to the diversity of JI programs – in terms of funding mechanisms, objectives, size, and duration – aggregating results of individual JIs to the program mechanism level presented significant challenges.

➢ *Turnover at SSHRC and partner agencies*: Turnover of staff at SSHRC and JI partner organizations has caused some difficulty in locating individuals familiar with JI programs, particularly for lapsed programs. In addition to staff turnover, SSHRC has recently experienced significant management turnover (e.g. four Directors in the SPJI Division over the past five years, with the current Director still acting on an interim basis).

Key Findings by Evaluation Issue

Relevance

➢ *Need for the mechanism:* The program mechanism is expected to meet a number of specific and continuing needs both internally and externally to SSHRC. Support for this type of programming is high to moderate across all stakeholder groups, with partners, students and recipients showing highest levels of support (88, 83 and 77 per cent expressing high support, respectively). However, both SSHRC and JI partners have expressed concerns with regards to the demand for specific JI programs as evidenced by the number of applications. This can however be in part explained by difficulties in communicating opportunities to potential applicants – 66 per cent of potential applicants surveyed stated lack of awareness as the main reason for not applying to JI programs. Although partners report having similar joint-funding arrangements with other organizations, in 5 of the 8 case studies, partners indicated that their partnership with SSHRC addressed a need for high quality research, which was supported by a peer review process of research applications.

- **Relevance of objectives**: Overall, there is strong support for the objectives of the JI program mechanism, with the exception of the objective of encouraging multi-sectoral consultation and multidisciplinary approaches. This is consistent with the above findings related to the limited impact the mechanism has had in these two areas. Although the JI mechanism's objectives are highly consistent with SSHRC's Strategic Plan, the role the mechanism is expected to play in the implementation of SSHRC's new vision is not explicitly stated.

- **Link to similar programs:** The objectives of the JI program mechanism are consistent in varying degrees to comparable international and Canadian programs, with capacity development being a universal aim in all partnership programs reviewed.

Management, Design and Delivery

- **Program Costs**: The total grants expenditures for the JI program mechanism (including INE-JIs and partner funds transitioning through SSHRC) in 2004/05 were $9.2M, or 4.6 per cent of SSHRC's total grants expenditures. Although the actual cost of operating the whole SPJI division in 2004/05 was $0.8M, the total cost to SSHRC of administering the JI program mechanism[1] was estimated at $0.7M, and the cost of administering a single JI program was estimated at $53,000. Comparable data on operating costs for similar programs internationally were not available. A review of MOUs indicates the provision for operating costs for individual JI program vary – only 39 per cent of the MOUs reviewed specified a budget for operating costs.

  SSHRC was found to invest less of its overall budget in partnership programs (3.5 per cent excluding INE-JIs, 4.6 per cent including INE-JIs) compared to NSERC (21.5%) and the New Zealand FRST program (7.7%).

- **Workload:** Currently, 14 JI programs (11 active – i.e., competitions are being held) are being administered by 6 program officers within the SPJI division. This represents an average of 2.3 JI programs per officer, which excludes other strategic program responsibilities (overall average of 3.5 programs per officer). While this level of resources was considered sufficient by program staff to administer program competitions, they were not considered sufficient to consistently meet partner timelines, conduct reviews, mobilize knowledge, or to foster, expand, and pursue new partnership opportunities.

- **Management Framework:** Stakeholders identified a number of impediments to the smooth management of the JI program mechanism – including the need to establish an improved, integrated framework for managing the mechanism and guiding strategic investments at SSHRC, the need for greater capacity (including senior positions), and the need for clearer reporting requirements to assist in management and decision making.

Governance

- **Ambiguity of process:** Although the process to approve new JI programs allows wide latitude to SSHRC management in negotiating and initiating JIs, the extent to which the process has worked in practice is not clear: the four research priority areas under which a program can be developed and launched by SSHRC management are very broad, and the process does not incorporate risk as a formal consideration.

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[1] Including costs incurred outside of the SPJI division.

- *Guidelines and competing priorities:* No clear guidelines exist for the preparation, submission and approval of new partnership proposals through SSHRC's Standing Committee for Research Support. This is compounded by the turnover in Committee membership, as well as by the competing demands placed on the Committee given the need for increased focus on more resource-intensive programs such as the Standard Research Grants Program.

- *Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs):* MOUs were identified as a means to mitigate potential risks (e.g. to SSHRC's reputation, financial and operational risks). However, concerns were raised with the extent to which MOUs were sufficiently vetted.

  Also, MOU provisions for partner contributions have not always been followed. Challenges include ambiguity as to the ultimate responsibility for billing partners and changes in timelines for JI programs.

  Performance measurement and evaluation/review requirements have not been consistently implemented to date. However, a document entitled "Procedures in Establishing and Approving Memoranda of Understanding and Programs with External Funding Contributions", prepared by staff in 2005, is expected to address some of the above issues.

Mechanism Results/Impacts

- *Partnerships.* Since 1989, SSHRC has engaged in over 44 JI programs and has partnered with over 32 distinct organizations, the majority of which (72 per cent) are within the federal government. In all but a few cases, JIs were initiated by partner organizations, and 15 out of the 16 partners surveyed reported having similar partnerships with other organizations. Given the number and value of partnerships with CIHR, NSERC, HRSDC, Canadian Heritage and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, these were deemed to have the highest potential in terms of large-scale strategic partnerships. However, consultations done in the context of SSHRC's Strategic Planning exercise point to a wider range of potential partners that could be explored.

- *Leveraging.* Since 1989, SSHRC and its JI partners have each contributed approximately $40 million in research funding and fellowship supplements through JI programs. Since only those partner funds that flow through SSHRC are included in this total, it is likely an underestimate of partners' contributions. In addition, close to 16 per cent of JI program recipients who responded to the survey reported receiving further research funding from JI program partner organizations, outside of what was received through the JI program.

- *Multi-disciplinarity.* While researchers from a wide variety of disciplines have participated in JI programs, the majority (55 per cent) of applications represented a single discipline or researcher. Only 6 per cent of funded applicants were from the humanities, thereby confirming that humanities disciplines are underrepresented in JI programs.

- *Capacity Development.* A total of 257 students were supported by the JI programs directly as program recipients (either through fellowship supplements or access to data). Further, researchers reported hiring an average of five highly qualified personnel (HQP) as a result of their award. In addition to reporting a range of impacts on their research skills, a fair number of students surveyed reported that participating in JI programs resulted in continuation of their education as part of their original goals (45 per cent), increased contact with employers (43 per cent) and employment during (34 per cent) or after (26 per cent) their studies. In

addition, partners reported increases in their ability to access research expertise (80 per cent) and to apply research to decision-making (44 per cent).

➤ *Policy Impacts.* Five out of the 16 partners surveyed stated that the research produced through JI programs had resulted in impacts on specific policy documents or practices, and were able to provide concrete examples of this. In addition, half of the case studies conducted showed evidence (from partners' perspective) of policy impact. Most researchers however were not aware of whether their research had contributed to specific policy documents (55 per cent), had contributed to specific reports or research publications produced by the partner (55 per cent) or had been generally used by the partner (75 per cent). This can be linked to the fact that most researchers reported no interaction with the partner while designing or conducting the research (84 per cent) or in disseminating the research (59 per cent). Although most funding recipients (66 per cent) were aware that the program they received funding from was a joint initiative between SSHRC and a partner, fewer (36 per cent) were aware of their role in helping to achieve the goals of the program.

➤ *Knowledge transfer.* Analysis of Final Research Reports for JI funded researchers and for researchers funded under the Standard Research Grants (SRG) program shows that JI funded researchers reported a significantly higher average number of presentations, newspaper/magazine articles, policy and other reports, website content, etc. than SRG funded researchers (4.64 and 1.93 per award respectively). SRG funded researchers reported a higher average number of accepted/published academic articles, book chapters and books than JI funded researchers (2.89 and 1.63 per award respectively). This difference however was not found to be statistically significant. Despite JI funded researchers' high production of non-academic research outputs, both researchers and partners suggest that greater communication and interaction would be beneficial in helping achieve the knowledge transfer goals of the JI program mechanism.

➤ *SSHRC's profile.* Although most partners surveyed were familiar with SSHRC and its objectives prior to initiating a joint initiative, participation in a JI program did cause a small change in the degree of familiarity (moderate to very) as well as a small change in partners' assessment of the quality of social sciences and humanities research. Generally, partners surveyed were positive about their relationship with SSHRC – 14 of the 16 partners stated they would probably or definitely participate in another partnership and 13 stated they would recommend such a partnership to other organizations, and 5 stated they would be interested in expanding the scope of the partnership with SSHRC.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Overall, the evaluation has demonstrated that SSHRC's JI Program mechanism is highly relevant, particularly in the context of SSHRC's new Strategic Plan which emphasizes "building connections to maximize the impact and quality of humanities and social sciences research"[2]. Defining the JI mechanism's place in the implementation of the Strategic Plan will be a crucial step in ensuring that SSHRC gets the most out of its strategic investments in this area. Although the evaluation points out a number of areas for improvement in terms of management, delivery and governance (which will need to be addressed in the short term), it also points out positive impacts in terms of developing partnerships, leveraging funds for social sciences research, and developing capacity. However, those elements that distinguish a JI program from other research

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[2] Knowledge Council: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Strategic Plan 2006-2011, July 2005.

granting programs (i.e., ensuring partner satisfaction, fostering partnerships, encouraging communication between researchers and users, etc.) appear to suffer most from lack of operational resources – suggesting that impacts could be much greater if more resources were invested <u>or</u> if fewer JI programs were pursued. The following set of recommendations was developed in order to help SSHRC better position this resource in the context of its Strategic Plan, and to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the JI program mechanism.

Recommendations

1. **Continue to support the JI program mechanism in the context of SSHRC's Strategic Plan**

   It is recommended that SSHRC continue to support the JI program mechanism in the context of its Strategic Plan by:

   → defining the mechanism's place in implementing the vision set out in the Strategic Plan;

   → clarifying what is a joint initiative and defining its parameters;

   → identifying and ensuring the subsequent selection of highly relevant and engaged partners; and

   → ensuring the proper human and financial resourcing of the mechanism in light of SSHRC's current and future expectations with regards to this strategic resource.

2. **Examine JI program mechanism objectives**

   On the whole, the objectives of the JI program mechanism continue to be of relevance and importance. However, the evaluation has identified a number of implicit objectives the mechanism is expected to achieve. As such, it is recommended that:

   → the mechanism's objectives be examined in the context of recommendation 1; and

   → that particular attention be given to assessing the relevance of the following objective given evaluation findings: "encourage multi-sectoral consultation and promote the development of global and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of contemporary issues".

3. **Develop JI program mechanism management and accountability framework**

   It is recommended that a framework[3] for the management and accountability of the JI program mechanism (including the selection, design, and delivery of JI programs) be developed in the context of recommendation 1. The framework should:

   → fit within a larger framework guiding SSHRC's strategic investments – in particular, consideration should be given to creating a separate standing committee of Council to oversee strategic programs;

   → balance the need for a flexible approach against the risks inherent to this type of investment; and

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[3] This framework could draw from, but expand on, Treasury Board's guidance on Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks (RMAFs)

→ provide clarity in roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities in terms of governance, partnership development/maintenance, mechanism and program management, financial management, day-to-day operations, follow-up, etc.

The framework should also include:

→ indicators for tracking and reporting on mechanism activities, outputs and results; and

→ incorporate relevant evaluation findings in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the mechanism.

4. Revisit ratio of JI programs/staff and desirable number of JIs

It is recommended that ratio of JI programs to staff, as well as the desirable number of active JIs (i.e., JIs for which competitions are being held) be revisited in the context of recommendation 1, and that the particular nature of administering JI programs (i.e., partnership development and maintenance, ensuring ongoing communication and coordination between researchers and users, follow-up activities, etc.) be acknowledged as different from other SSHRC programs and at the same time crucial to the mechanism's ability to achieve its objectives.

1. Introduction and Evaluation Methodology

1.1 Program Mechanism Description

1.1.1 Background

SSHRC's Joint Initiative (JI) program mechanism was launched in the 1989-90 fiscal year. Its intent was to encourage "government, private sector or community organizations to join in partnership with SSHRC to co-develop and co-fund thematic research in areas where there is deemed to be a shared interest and need for social sciences and humanities research"[4]. Since 1989, SSHRC has entered into 44 JIs[5] with more than 32 distinct partners, and has generated over $40 million in additional funding for social sciences and humanities research[6]. Over the past five years, SSHRC has been involved in 24 JIs[7], and has awarded an average $8.6 million in grants and/or fellowship supplements per year over the course of this period (see Exhibit 1.1).

The programs that result from the JI program mechanism are administered by SSHRC's Strategic Grants and Joint Initiatives (SPJI) Division, with the exception of those JI programs that have been developed through the Initiative on the New Economy (INE)[8].

According to SSHRC's Program Activity Architecture (PAA), the JI program mechanism, along with the Strategic Research Grants programs, the Social Economy Suite of programs, and programs under the INE, falls under the program activity titled "Targeted Research and Training Initiatives" [9]. Targeted research - research in which the theme area and subject are defined by SSHRC in consultation with the research community and decision makers from the various sectors, its partners, and/or the federal government - contributes to SSHRC's strategic outcome of creating new knowledge based on excellent research in the social sciences and humanities[10].

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[4] Discussion Paper on the Future of Strategic Research, presented at the 2nd meeting of the Interim Standing Committee on Research Support, January 2002.

[5] It should be noted that SSHRC does not have a formal definition of a joint initiative program. As such, some programs may have been excluded from this evaluation.

[6] Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Performance Report for period ending March 31, 2006.

[7] Including JIs under the Initiative on the New Economy.

[8] During the course of this evaluation, a new Joint Initiative program was negotiated between SSHRC and the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), to be administered by SSHRC's Research Grants Division – thus extending the responsibility for managing JIs beyond the SPJI Division.

[9] Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Performance Report for period ending March 31, 2005. http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/est-pre/20052006/SSHRC-CRSHC/SSHRC-CRSHCr5602_e.asp

[10] For more details with respect to the history of the JI program mechanism, please see the Evaluability Assessment conducted in 2005: Evaluability Assessment for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)'s Joint Initiative Program Mechanism, Corporate Performance, Evaluation and Audit (CPEA) Division, SSHRC, Final Report: 13 June 2005.

EXHIBIT 1.1: Grants Expenditures (in $000s) by Joint Initiative Program, 2001/2002-2005/2006[11]

Joint Initiative Program	Partner(s)	Fiscal Year				
		2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006*
Immigration and the Metropolis	Citizenship and Immigration Canada	1,083	1,445	1,554	1,627	1,627
Official Languages Research and Dissemination Program	Canadian Heritage	-	-	-	990	1,027
Multiculturalism Issues in Canada	Canadian Heritage	-	-	967	850	891
Canadian Initiative on Social Statistics (including INE Data and Statistics Seminars)	Statistics Canada / CIHR	450	535	535	535	750
BIOCAP Research Node Grant	BIOCAP Canada Foundation	-	-	67	767	618
Chairs in the Management of Technological Change	NSERC	372	290	310	198	213
Homelessness and Diversity Issues in Canada	National Secretariat on Homelessness, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)	-	-	280	683	380
Intellectual Property Mobilization Program	NSERC and CIHR	50	-	-	-	130
Research Partnership Programs	CFS; NSERC; private sector	88	76	-	71	105
Society, Culture and Health of Canadians II	CIHR, National Health Research and Development Program	3,208	2,798	1,910	309	67
Virtual Scholar in Residence	Law Commission of Canada	50	200	150	75	100
Essential Skills	HRSDC	-	-	438	530	100
Canadian Tobacco Research Initiative	National Cancer Institute of Canada, Canadian Cancer Society, Health Canada, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada	601	416	551	-	30
Relationships in transition	Law Commission of Canada	182	220	143	72	50
Valuing Literacy in Canada	National Literacy Secretariat, HRSDC	471	508	497	140	5
Federalism and Federations	Intergovernmental Affairs, Privy Council Office	544	863	453	18	-
Ocean Mgt National Res. Network	Department of Fisheries and Oceans	382	382	304	276	-
The Non-profit sector in Canada	The Kahanoff Foundation	670	266	-	-	-
Reducing the Health Disparities of Vulnerable Populations	CIHR	-	191	-	-	-
Community-University Research Alliances in Housing	Canada Mortgage and Housing (CMHC) Corporation	635	635	217		
INE Crossing Boundaries	Crossing Boundaries National Council Inc.				350	530
INE Skills Research Initiative	Industry Canada and Human Resources Development Canada				705	
CESC-SSHRC Education Research Initiative	Canadian Education Statistics Council and Statistics Canada		307	690	427	36
INE The Canada Project	Conference Board of Canada				605	250
Total Joint Initiatives		8,786	9,132	9,066	9,228	6,909

*2005-06 budgets are from the Fall Budget Review

Source: Joint Initiatives – Expenditures: SSHRC and Partners, PPIA, 12.06.2006

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[11] Amounts include partner contributions that transit through SSHRC.

1.1.2 Program Mechanism Objectives

The broad purpose of the JI program mechanism is to *encourage government agencies, universities, the private sector, the voluntary sector and community organizations to work with SSHRC in defining and funding programs for research in areas of particular interest to initiative partners and to society.* More specifically, the explicit objectives of the JI program mechanism are to[12]:

➢ help integrate strategic research results with policy making and socio-economic development by ensuring rapid and effective communication of new knowledge to users;

➢ encourage communication between researchers and users of research, and in particular, promote consultation on the definition of needs within a sector and the most appropriate mechanisms to meet these needs; and

➢ encourage multi-sectoral consultation and promote the development of global and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of contemporary issues[13].

Although these explicit objectives have changed very little over the years, SSHRC stakeholders interviewed as part of the framework phase of this evaluation identified a number of implicit objectives associated with the JI program mechanism – objectives that were not explicitly stated in program documentation, but that nonetheless reflect expectations held with regards to the JI program mechanism, such as:

➢ to increase the profile of SSHRC and of SSHRC-funded research;

➢ to build research capacity in thematic research areas of relevance to partners;

➢ to leverage additional funds for research in the social sciences and the humanities; and

➢ to develop strategic partnerships between SSHRC and government, private, and not-for-profit partners.

Both explicit and implicit objectives are illustrated in the JI program mechanism logic model (Exhibit 1.2), which was developed during the framework phase[14] of the evaluation, and which outlines the inherent logic by which the mechanism is expected to achieve its results.

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[12] SSHRC's Joint Initiatives, Marc Fonda, January, 2005 (internal working document).

[13] Program management has noted that 'global' was meant as holistic, multi-perspective, and not 'international'. This nuance is not however explicitly present in program documentation.

[14] The JI program mechanism logic model was endorsed by the members of the Evaluation Advisory Committee. Please see Appendix C for the membership and mandate of this committee.

EXHIBIT 1.2: JI Program Mechanism Logic Model

The broad purpose of the JI Program Mechanism is to encourage government, private sector and/or community organizations to work with SSHRC in developing and co-funding new programs for thematic research in areas of particular interest and need.

Objectives

Explicit

- Promote the development of global and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of contemporary issues
- Help integrate strategic research results with policy making and socio-economic development
- Encourage communication between researchers and users of research

Implicit

- Increase the profile of SSHRC and of SSHRC-funded research
- Capacity development in thematic areas of relevance to JI partners
- Leverage additional funds for research in the social sciences and humanities
- Develop strategic partnerships between SSHRC and government, private, and not-for-profit partners

Inputs

SSHRC
- Investment in Joint Initiatives

Partner
- Investment in Joint Initiative

Activities

Partnership Development (SSHRC & Partner(s))
- ➔ Identification of partnership opportunity
- ➔ Establishment of research needs, priorities
- ➔ Negotiation of roles and responsibilities

JI Program Development (SSHRC & Partner(s))
- ➔ Involvement of potential audiences and/or researchers in definition of research area and program objectives
- ➔ Decisions re. program objectives, scope, grant sizes, funding mechanisms, target audiences, etc.

Award Administration (SSHRC)
- ➔ Management of Peer Review Process
- ➔ Awards Administration
- ➔ Ongoing Program Monitoring

Post-Award Activities (Funded researchers, SSHRC & Partner(s))
- ➔ Post-award activities
- ➔ Program review and/or evaluation activities

Outputs

- ➔ Strategic research funding partnership(s) formed (Development and signature of MOU)
- ➔ New Joint Initiatives Program(s), specific to the needs of partners, audiences, and targeted clients, are launched
- ➔ Awards are made
- ➔ research partnerships are forged
- ➔ research is conducted and knowledge produced
- ➔ Review/evaluation reports are prepared

Immediate Outcomes

Leveraging and Profile
- ➔ Strategic research funding partnership(s) are maintained (at SSHRC – JI Partner level, and at research project level)
- ➔ More funds are available for research in the SSH

Capacity
- ➔ Researchers, students and community organizations develop expertise in a targeted area
- ➔ Partners develop receptor capacity for research results

Knowledge Mobilization
- ➔ Research, relevant to partners needs, is communicated through publications, presentation, workshops, etc.)

Strategic Management
- ➔ Findings of reviews or evaluations are applied to decision-making
- ➔ Process of reviewing or evaluating programs results in more strategic investments in future programming

Intermediate Outcomes

- ➔ Profile of SSHRC and of SSHRC-funded research is increased
- ➔ Knowledge, expertise, receptor capacity and research capacity on important social, cultural and economic issues is increased
- ➔ Knowledge generated is mobilized to partners and broader audiences

Final Results

Increase in SSH research capacity on issues of national importance

New knowledge about issues of relevance to SSHRC's partners, based on excellent research in the social sciences and humanities, is generated and made available for decision making

1.1.3 Rationale for the Current Evaluation

An evaluation of the JI program mechanism is part of SSHRC's Evaluation Plan for 2003-04 to 2005-06, which was approved by SSHRC Council at its June 2004 meeting, and updated early in the 2005-06 fiscal year. Three main reasons prompted the inclusion of this study in SSHRC's Evaluation Plan:

➢ the centrality of the JI program mechanism to SSHRC's key corporate risk[15]; that is, the capacity to respond to the federal government's evolving priorities and policy needs and more specifically to meet the needs of partners;

➢ SSHRC Council's concerns over time regarding the process of establishing JI programs; and

➢ a recognized need to improve management controls and to standardize protocols.

The timing of this evaluation coincides with the implementation of SSHRC's Strategic Plan for 2006-11[16], as well as the appointment of a new President and new Vice-President Partnerships at SSHRC.

In order to assess the need and rationale for this evaluation, an evaluability assessment was conducted by SSHRC's CPEA Division in 2005. This assessment documented issues raised in program files, by program staff, and by both the Standing Committee on Research Support and SSHRC's Council. Examples of issues raised include:

➢ whether SSHRC Council members should have more say in the development of new JI programs;

➢ what guidance should be provided by Council in seeking out new partnerships; and

➢ the organizational impact of administering a large number of smaller, individual JIs.

1.1.4 Objectives of the Evaluation

Given the range and priority of issues identified, the evaluability assessment recommended that an evaluation of the JI program mechanism as a whole be conducted to examine the rationale, delivery, governance, and impacts of the program.

As such, the objectives of the current evaluation are:

➢ to examine whether the objectives of the JI program mechanism are still relevant;

➢ to assess the effectiveness of the process, design and delivery of JI programs;

➢ to examine the governance of the JI program mechanism; and

➢ to examine the results/impacts of the JI program mechanism; specifically identifying how the mechanism facilitates results.

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[15] Corporate Risk Profile, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, October 2003.
[16] Knowledge Council: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council – Strategic Plan 2006-2011, July 2005. http://www.sshrc.ca/web/about/publications/strategic_plan_e.pdf

SSHRC commissioned R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, in partnership with Circum Network Inc., to design and conduct this study. Staff of SSHRC's CPEA Division also participated in conducting parts of the study.

1.2 Description of Evaluation Issues

For the purposes of designing the study, evaluation issues were grouped into four categories, as follows:

- ➤ *Relevance issues* pertaining to the continued need for the JI program mechanism, ongoing relevance of the program mechanism's objectives in the current environment, and the perceived need for JI program mechanism funding;

- ➤ *Design and delivery issues*, which include:

  - ▪ program management issues - perceived impediments to the delivery of JI programs, perceived consistency of the process to deliver the program mechanism with SSHRC's objectives, etc.; and

  - ▪ issues associated with the current program mechanism budget and cost-effectiveness.

- ➤ *Governance issues*, including consideration of the following:

  - ▪ use of a clear and consistent process to approve and renew JI programs;

  - ▪ clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the various elements of the governance structure;

  - ▪ identification and assessment of risk in decision making;

  - ▪ assessment of what has occurred in JI programs against what is stated in the MOUs.

- ➤ *Program results*, including achievement of both explicit and implicit objectives as described in Section 1.1.2. The risks associated with the program mechanism, as well as unintended impacts were also addressed.

During the design phase of the evaluation, the list of evaluation issues, associated indicators, and expected data sources were refined based on feedback provided by key informants, a document review, as well as program evaluation theory and federal practice. A matrix of evaluation issues, data sources and indicators is presented in Appendix B.

1.3 Evaluation Methodology

Multiple lines of evidence were employed to address each evaluation issue. The data collection methods used to gather evidence are described below.

1.3.1 Documentation/Reports and Administrative data

Administrative data and documentation from the JI program mechanism were reviewed, including the following:

- ➤ Review of 41 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).
- ➤ Administrative data (59 final research reports, 1,222 applications, 62 SSHRC partner invoices, financial reports).

> ➤ Minutes from the Standing Committee on Research Support and SSHRC Council.
> ➤ JI corporate files containing internal communication documents, program descriptions, press releases, etc.

A list of documents reviewed for the current evaluation is provided in Appendix A.

1.3.2   Review of Similar Initiatives

Five initiatives in the social sciences and humanities were selected as part of this review, including 2 Canadian initiatives and 3 international initiatives. The list of initiatives included:

> ➤ NSERC – Research Partnership Agreements (RPA);
> ➤ Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture (FQRSC) – Programme des Actions Concertées (Joint Research Initiatives);
> ➤ Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) – Joint Funding Opportunities (United Kingdom);
> ➤ STEVIN, an independent bi-national research program funded by the Dutch and Belgium/Flanders governments.; and
> ➤ Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST) – Research Consortia and International Investment Opportunities Fund (New Zealand).

Secondary data was gathered for each initiatives and interviews with representatives from NSERC RPA (2 informants), FQRSC (1 informant), STEVIN (1 informant), ESRC (1 informant), and FRST (2 informants) were completed.

1.3.3   Interviews

Exhibit 1.3 illustrates the number of interviews completed with key stakeholders and partner representatives.

EXHIBIT 1.3: Key Informant Interviews Completed by Subgroup

Subgroup	Number of Interviews Completed
SSHRC Staff (includes program officers and other staff members)	6
SSHRC Management (includes EX level staff within SSHRC as well as members of the Standing Committee on Research Support)	7
Current and lapsed JI Partners	13*
Total	**26**

*Twelve of these interviews were completed as part of the case study research. Please see Section 1.3.5 for a description of the case study methodology.

1.3.4 Surveys

Five web-based surveys were administered between May 10, 2006 and July 15, 2006. The number of survey responses, sample size and response rate of each survey is detailed in the table below.

EXHIBIT 1.4: Survey Responses, Samples Sizes and Response Rates

Respondent Group	Valid *Sample Size* / Population[1]	Number of Completed Surveys	Response Rate	Margin of Error
Successful JI applicants (all active[2] JI programs from 2000-2006). This group is referred to as "recipients" for the purpose of the current report.	608	249	41.0%	±4.8%
Partners (all partners since 1989)	*64*[3]	16	25.0%	±21.4%
Unsuccessful JI applicants (all active JI programs from 2000-2006)	520	114	21.9%	±8.1%
Potential Applicants[4]	1,747	281	16.1%	±5.4%
Student Recipients of fellowship supplements or access to data (all active JI programs from 2000-2006)	172	47	27.3%	±12.2%

[1]excludes those individuals for whom invalid contact information was available.
[2]competitions held within that year
[3]includes 5 lapsed and 11 current partners.
[4]potential applicants were identified if their primary field of study as recorded in applications to the Standard Research Grants program (between 2000-2006) were related to JI programs active in the year of application (as indicated by the most frequent fields of study reported by applicants to these programs).

Because of the wide range of JI programs under consideration, surveys were customized to include program, partner and application information as appropriate. Each survey was pre-tested prior to administration to the full sample. Reminder emails were sent to all survey respondent groups, with successful JI applicants receiving a telephone call to increase the response rate for this group. Although response rates are within acceptable limits given the nature and timing of these surveys, it should be noted that the margin of error associated with the partner surveys exceeds 20% - decreasing the confidence with which overall conclusions can be drawn from this survey. However, it should also be noted that 11 of 15 current partners were successfully surveyed, therefore increasing the confidence that the survey results are representative of the experience of more recent partners.

1.3.5 Case Studies

Eight case studies of specific JI programs were completed as part of the current evaluation, including:

- ➤ *Federalism and Federations - Intergovernmental Affairs, Privy Council Office*
- ➤ *INE-CESC-SSHRC Education Research Initiative - Canadian Education Statistics Council (CESC)*
- ➤ *Canadian Initiative on Social Statistics (CISS)- Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research*

> ➢ *Canadian Forest Service (CFS) Graduate Supplements - Canadian Forest Services*
> ➢ *Chairs in the Management of Technological Change - NSERC*
> ➢ *National Research Network on the Human Dimensions of Biosphere Greenhouse Gas Management - BIOCAP Canada Foundation*
> ➢ *Relationships in Transition and Virtual Scholar - Law Commission of Canada*
> ➢ *Canadian Tobacco Research Initiative - National Cancer Institute of Canada, Canadian Cancer Society, Health Canada, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada*

Case studies were selected to include a mix of large and medium/small budget JIs, as well as a mix of current and lapsed JIs. Further, case studies were selected to include a mix of delivery models (including grants, fellowship/supplements, Chairs, and research centres).

The case study interview protocols were pre-tested and modified accordingly. A file review and 26 interviews with 29 informants (partners, researchers, students) were completed for the case study research. SSHRC staff and management involved more closely with the JI programs under study were also asked questions specific to these programs as part of their interviews. Administrative data and survey data also fed into the preparation of case study reports.

1.4 Context and Limitations of the Evaluation Approach

The following contextual factors and methodological challenges/limitations should be kept in mind when reviewing the results of the evaluation.

Availability of Program Mechanism Resources
It was noted during the framework phase of the evaluation that most SPJI program officers are responsible for administering several JI programs, in addition to other strategic program responsibilities. As a result, the evaluation included an analysis of available staff resources to administer the complement of JI programs. This analysis is presented in Section 3 of this report, and should be taken into account when interpreting results of the evaluation.

Turnover at SSHRC and partner agencies
The evaluation methodology called for consultation with lapsed as well as current JI partners. Turnover of staff at SSHRC and JI partner organizations has caused some difficulty in locating individuals familiar with JI programs, particularly for lapsed programs. However, the evaluation team managed to get partner contacts for nearly all of the JI programs launched since 1989.

In addition to staff turnover, SSHRC has recently experienced significant management turnover. Over the past five years, the SPJI Division has had four Directors – the current Director occupying the position on an interim basis (acting). This should also be taken into account when interpreting the results of the evaluation.

Difficulty aggregating results from individual JIs
Due to the diversity of JI programs – in terms of funding mechanisms, objectives, size, and duration – aggregating results of individual JIs to the program mechanism level presented significant challenges. Throughout the evaluation, data collection instruments were customized to reflect each distinct joint initiative; however, due to the diversity of programs, some questions in the surveys did not apply to some respondents. This was taken into account in the analysis.

Availability of corporate records

Corporate files for some JI programs were not available at the time of the file review. The corporate files that were available did not provide consistent documentation of decisions concerning JI programs (i.e., decisions concerning approval, funding, renewal, etc.). Although some electronic files were made available by program staff, **the overall lack of consistent and complete corporate records had a significant impact on the evaluation team's ability to re-create the lifecycle of JI programs, and to describe and analyse the JI program mechanism as a whole.** In cases where documentation was missing, alternate data sources such as data from surveys and interviews were accessed. However, it should be noted that in some cases, key stakeholders could not be reached for comment, and anecdotal evidence from sources such as interviews could not be confirmed through documentation.

EVALUATION RESULTS

2. Relevance

The evaluation examined two key issues related to the relevance of the JI program mechanism:

> ➢ Is there still a need for the JI program mechanism?
> ➢ Are the objectives of the JI program mechanism still relevant?

Detailed findings concerning the relevance of the JI program mechanism are presented below.

2.1 Need for the JI Program Mechanism

2.1.1 Perception of Needs being Addressed by Program Mechanism

In surveys and in interviews, stakeholders were asked to comment on which needs were being met by programs (such as JIs) that fund applied research, in partnership with government or other agencies. In addition, SSHRC stakeholders (staff, management) and JI partners were asked to comment on the needs being met through the partnership with SSHRC. The Exhibit below presents the most common descriptions of needs being met by stakeholder group.

EXHIBIT 2.1: Needs Met through Applied Research Funding Programs / JI Partnerships by Stakeholder Group

Respondent Group	Partners	SSHRC	Potential applicants	Unsuccessful applicants	Recipients	
					Researchers	Students
Top reason	Knowledge for decision- & policy-making (56%)	Knowledge for decision- & policy-making (82%)	Relevant research (31%)	Relevant research (32%)	Relevant research (51%)	Resources* (30%)
Second reason	Collaboration (25%)	Knowledge mobilization (18%)	Improved policy / practices (18%)	Resources* (25%)	Resources (35%)	-

Source: Survey of partners (n=16), potential applicants (n=280), unsuccessful applicants (n=114), recipients (n=249), and students (n=47), SSHRC interviews (n=13)
*funding or data

That stakeholders report a diversity of needs being addressed by the JI program mechanism is exemplified in the following statements:

> "There is an increased recognition in government and beyond that there is a depleted capacity for policy, and a need for help. JIs can be a tool for SSHRC and the research community to be relevant and to assist government agencies and departments who deliver services to Canadians." (SSHRC stakeholder)
>
> "[This type of partnership provides] links to academic and other research expertise on real issues of current or prospective concern to [departments] and

public [organizations]. - source of ideas, approaches, comparative knowledge, building networks of expertise - links to potential recruits." (JI partner)

"[This type of program] makes connections with government and other agencies possible by focusing them on a joint project. This enables researchers to have impact on practice, and profession as well as work on issues that have practical significance." (Funded researcher)

In addition to the needs raised by partners as part of the survey, in five of eight case studies, partners also indicated that their partnership with SSHRC addressed a need for high quality research, which was supported by a peer review process of research applications.

The degree to which the needs identified by stakeholder groups are being met is discussed in the Results Section of the report (Section 5).

2.1.2 Support for Joint Funding of Applied Research /Access to Data

In order to gauge support for joint funding of applied research/access to data, researchers, students, and partners surveyed were asked to assess to degree to which they felt a need existed for such programs. Overall, survey respondents showed a moderate to high level of support for applied research funded jointly by SSHRC and other organizations, as can be seen in Exhibit 2.2.

EXHIBIT 2.2: Perceived Need for Targeted Research
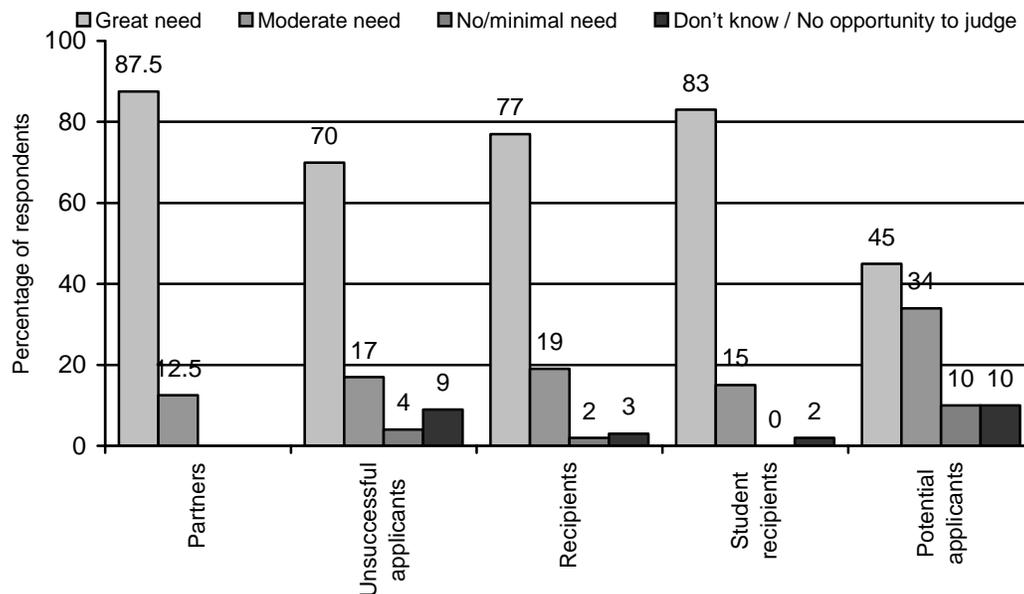

Source: Survey of potential applicants (n=280), recipients (n=249), unsuccessful applicants (n=114), students (n=47)

Although support on the part of program applicants can be expected, even SSHRC researchers who have never applied to a JI program reported moderately strong support for applied research funding programs (79% reporting a great or moderate need). Within this group, support was

higher among researchers who had held their position for five or fewer years (56%) compared to those that had their position for more than 10 years (38%). In addition, student recipients showed a high level of support for targeted research (83%), second only to partners (87.5%).

EXHIBIT 2.3: Percentage of Respondents Expressing a Great Need for Targeted Research, according to Seniority
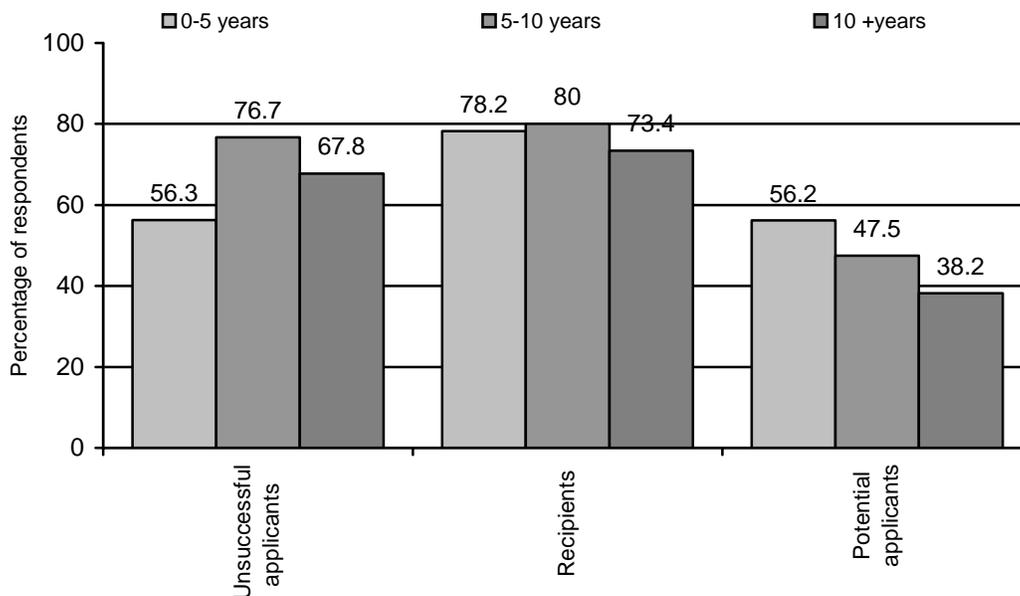
Source: Survey of potential applicants (n=280), recipients (n=249), unsuccessful applicants (n=114)

Although overall support is strong, some respondents reported minimal or no need for applied research funding programs. This position was most commonly held among potential applicants (10%). The most common rationales presented for this position included the opinion that:

a) there was a greater *relative* need for curiosity-driven research compared to targeted research (16 out of 29 researchers),
b) that other sources of funding could be found for targeted research (12 researchers), or
c) that applied research can compromise the objectivity of researchers due to political pressure exerted by partners (9 researchers).

One potential applicant who stated that there was a minimal or no need for applied research gave the following explanation:

> "I am concerned that too much research money is being funnelled into superficial policy analyses, conducted within strict time guidelines and taking funding away from more fundamental research. If the government wants this type of research done, I would prefer that they operate through consulting contracts, rather than through SSHRC." (Potential Applicant)

2.1.3 Demand for JI Programs

Although support for such JI programs appears to be strong, both SSHRC and JI partner respondents have expressed concern with regards to the demand for JI programs as evidenced by the number of applications. As can be seen in Exhibit 2.4, although the overall number of applications to JI programs has increased over the past five years, and a number of program reflect a closed competition (*italicized* data in the table), success rates across JI programs are often higher than those of other SSHRC programs.

EXHIBIT 2.4: Applications and Awards by JI Program[17]

JI Program (Year of Implementation[18])	2001-02			2002-03			2003-04			2004-05			2005-06		
	Applications	Awards	S.R.	Applications	Awards	S.R.	Applications	Awards	S.R.	Applications	Awards	S.R.	Applications	Awards	S.R.
	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%	#	#	%
Inter-Council Programs (SSHRC/NSERC/CIHR)															
Intellectual Property Mobilization Program[19] (2002)	1	1	100.0										?[20]	?	?
Reducing the Health Disparities of Vulnerable Populations[21] (2003)				2	2	100.0									
SSHRC/NSERC Initiatives															
Chairs in the Management of Technological Change (1989)	4	2	50.0	3	3	100.0									
Joint Initiatives under the Initiative on the New Economy (INE)															
INE - The Canada Project (2003)										10	3	30.0			
INE Skills Research Initiative (2003)										36	29	80.6			
CESC-SSHRC Education Research Initiative (INE) (2004)				20	9	45.0	20	10	50.0						
Networks															
Federalism and Federations (1998)	25	13	52.0	62	25	40.3	12	10	83.3						
Immigration and the Metropolis (1995)				*4*	*4*	*100.0*	*1*	*1*	*100.0*						
Ocean Management National Research Network Initiative (DFO) (2000)							*4*	*4*	*100.0*						
SSHRC/BIOCAP Research Node Grants (2002)				11	6	54.5	2	1	50.0						
Other															
Canadian Tobacco Control Research Initiative (CTCRI) (1999)	18	7	38.9	9	7	77.8									
Essential Skills (2003)							11	7	63.6	*1*	*1*	*100.0*	?	?	?
Homelessness and Diversity Issues in Canada (2003)							15	6	40.0	17	11	64.7			
Multiculturalism Issues in Canada (2003)							64	21	32.8	67	18	26.9	?	?	?
Official Languages Research and Dissemination Program (2004)										48	22	45.8	?	?	?
Relationships in Transition (LCC) (1999)	16	5	31.3	12	9	75.0	12	4	33.3				4	3	75.0
Research on Canadian Children and Youth (2003)							4	3	75.0	2	2	100.0			
Research Partnership (CFS/NSERC/SSHRC) (1998)										3	3	100.0			
The Non-Profit Sector in Canada (Kahanoff Foundation) (2000)	17	11	64.7												
Valuing Literacy in Canada (1999)	42	19	45.2	14	7	50.0	7	5	71.4						
Virtual Scholar in Residence Program (LCC) (1999)	8	1	12.5	11	4	36.4	9	3	33.3				8	2	25.0

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[17] Table does not include application and awards data on CISS program (including INE Data and Statistics Seminars), Society, Culture and the Health of Canadians II, CURA in Housing, and INE Crossing Boundaries.

This inconsistency between support and demand may be evidence of an overall lack of awareness on the part of the broader research community that these funding opportunities exist. Further discussion of researchers' awareness of JI programs is presented in Section 3 of the report.

2.2 Relevance of JI Program Mechanism Objectives

2.2.1   Perceptions of Relevance of JI Program Mechanism Objectives

As shown in Exhibit 2.5, the majority of SSHRC informants interviewed felt that all but one of the objectives of the JI program mechanism were important. The most highly rated objective was the integration of strategic research results with policy making. The objective that was viewed as least important was the encouragement of multi-sectoral consultation and multi-disciplinary approaches. According to one informant:

> "The multisector aspect is critical. Having multidisciplinary, however, is less important for me. I think we can have very important disciplinary contributions through JIs – e.g., bringing economists to work in a very narrow way on things of importance to government stakeholders. So multidisciplinarity should not be what this is all about." (SSHRC staff)

EXHIBIT 2.5: Rated Importance of JI Program Mechanism Objectives

Objective	High Importance	Medium/Low Importance
➢ integrate strategic research results with policy	9	2
➢ develop strategic partnerships	7	1
➢ build research capacity in thematic research areas	7	2
➢ communication between researchers and users of research	7	3
➢ increase the profile of SSHRC	7	4
➢ leverage additional funds	6	4
➢ multi-sectoral consultation and multi-disciplinary approaches	4	4

*Source: SSHRC Informant interviews, n=11

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[18] As identified in AMIS corporate database (program "start date") and in the Discussion Paper on the Future of Strategic Research (2002).

[19] Program managed by NSERC. Formerly called the "Intellectual Property Management Program".

[20] ? = competition results not available at the time of report preparation.

[21] Program managed by CIHR. Applications and awards reflect SSHRC's contribution to the program (overall number of applications was 46).

2.2.2 Consistency between Mechanism Objectives, SSHRC Strategic Plan, and Objectives of Similar Programs

Knowledge mobilization plays a key role in SSHRC's Strategic Plan, as well as SSHRC's general goals. According to SSHRC's 2003/2004 Report on Plans and Priorities, an important objective of SSHRC is "the mobilization of knowledge and communication of research results from the academic world to Canadian society." In addition, SSHRC's Strategic plan calls on the organization to "work with partners to identify critical research gaps." When examined in light of SSHRC's general objectives of supporting and promoting research capacity, knowledge creation, and knowledge mobilization (Exhibit 2.6), the objectives of the JI program mechanism are consistent but perhaps more clearly aligned with the directions outlined in SSHRC new Strategic Plan. This is due to the new focus on collaboration, communication and partnership in the Strategic Plan, which emphasizes a new vision of SSHRC.

EXHIBIT 2.6: Comparison of Objectives for JI Program Mechanism with Objectives of SSHRC and SSHRC's Strategic Plan

Objective	JI Program Mechanism	SSHRC (General)	Strategic Plan
Capacity	✓ -To build research capacity	✓ -A first class research capacity	✓ -Promote Canada's research strengths and working with partners to identify critical research gaps
Knowledge creation		✓ -substantial pool of knowledge	
Knowledge Mobilization (KM)	✓ -Ensuring rapid and effective communication of new knowledge to users	✓ -The mobilization of knowledge and communication of research results from the academic world to Canadian society	✓ -Mobilizing knowledge
Communication	✓ -Encourage communication between researchers and users of research		✓ -Connecting people through international collaboration
Multi-sectoral	✓ -Encourage multi-sectoral consultation		
Partnerships	✓ -To develop strategic partnerships between SSHRC and government, private and not-for-profit partners		✓ -Working with partners to identify critical research gaps

Source: Program documentation

Although the JI program mechanism appears well aligned with SSHRC's Strategic Plan, the role the mechanism is expected to play in meeting the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan is not explicitly stated. Views expressed by SSHRC stakeholders help to provide further insight into this connection:

> "[The JI program mechanism is] an example of earlier development of an idea that was emphasized in the strategic plan (e.g., dissemination and outreach). If the JI's are successful, then they are the prototype for the direction that SSHRC is moving in." (SSHRC management)

> "The JIs were captured in the Core in the strategic plan. There is a need to use the JI program mechanism more strategically – need the program mechanism to

be more purposeful to get a full return on investment. SSHRC needs to look at where we need to be at present." (SSHRC management)

In addition to a comparison of the similarity of JI program mechanism objectives with those of SSHRC and its strategic plan, a comparison of JI program mechanism objectives to those of partnership programs in other jurisdictions was also completed. Among programs considered in other jurisdictions, capacity development was universally identified as a significant motivator for partnership programs, as illustrated in Exhibit 2.7. Multi-sector collaboration and the development of strategic partnerships were also identified as common objectives. Three programs reviewed identified knowledge transfer as a goal, and two programs referenced leveraged funds and increased profile as rationales for the program.

EXHIBIT 2.7: Needs Identified Among Similar Partnership Programs

Program	Capacity Development	Multi-Sector Collaboration/ Partnerships	Knowledge / Technology Transfer	Leveraged funds	Profile
NSERC: Research Partnership Agreements	✓	✓	✓	✓	
FQRSC – Joint Research Initiatives	✓	✓	✓		✓
STEVIN	✓	✓	✓		✓
ESRC – Language Based Area Studies (LBAS)	✓				
FRST - International Investment Opportunities Fund	✓	✓		✓	

Source: Review of Similar Partnership Initiatives

2.3 Conclusions: Relevance

Based on the evaluation team's consideration of the relevance of the JI program mechanism, the following conclusions may be drawn:

➢ A need for the JI program mechanism, both internally and externally to SSHRC, does not appear to be in question. Expectations with regards to the needs being addressed by the JI program mechanisms varied between stakeholder groups, but are consistent with what would be expected of each stakeholder group – partners and SSHRC express a need for knowledge to improve decision- and policy-making, researchers express a need to increase the relevance of their research and a need for resources in the form of funds and access to data, and students express primarily a need for resources.

➢ Partners, researchers and students all expressed a moderate to high level of support for targeted research funding programs, such as those resulting from the JI program mechanism.

➢ The support expressed by survey respondents for applied research funding programs contrasts with low application rates in some JI programs. This issue is further discussed in Section 3 of the report.

➢ Overall, the objectives of the JI program mechanism are seen as important, with the possible exception of the objective related to the encouragement of multi-sectoral consultation and multi-disciplinary approaches.

➢ The goals of the JI program mechanism are highly consistent with SSHRC's strategic plan, however the role the mechanism is expected to play in the implementation of the strategic plan is not explicitly stated.

➢ The objectives of the JI program mechanism objectives are consistent in varying degrees to comparable international and Canadian programs, with capacity development being a universal aim in all partnership programs reviewed.

3. Management, Design and Delivery

The evaluation addressed three specific issues with regards to the management, design and delivery of the JI program mechanism:

➢ Is the budget of the JI program mechanism appropriate for meeting the mechanism's objectives?

➢ What are the main impediments to the smooth selection, design and delivery of individual JI programs?

➢ Are there other cost-effective alternatives to achieving the expected objectives?

The findings of the evaluation with respect to the management, design and delivery of the JI program mechanism are summarized below.

3.1 Appropriateness of Program Mechanism Budget

### 3.1.1 Proportion of JI Grants Expenditures Relative to SSHRC's Overall Grants Expenditures

Total grants expenditures for the JI program mechanism in 2004/2005 were $9.2M[22]. In comparison, SSHRC total grants expenditures[23] in 2004/2005 were $200.2M. JI program expenditures therefore represent 4.6% of SSHRC's total grants expenditures. As illustrated in the Exhibit below, Fellowships, Scholarships and Prizes and Standard Research Grants have nearly doubled in size between 1998/1999 and 2005/2006. In comparison, while JI program mechanism expenditures have increased to $6.9M in 2005/2006 from $2.7M in 1998/1999, JI expenditures as a percentage of SSHRC total grants expenditures have varied over the years – from a low of 3.1% in 1998-99, to a high of 7.2% in 2001-02.

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[22] Including INE JIs, and partner funds transiting through SSHRC.
[23] Excludes Network of Centres of Excellence, Canada Research Chairs, and Indirect Costs program funding.

EXHIBIT 3.1: Grants Expenditures (in $000s) by Major SSHRC Programs/Program clusters, 1998/1999 to 2005/2006
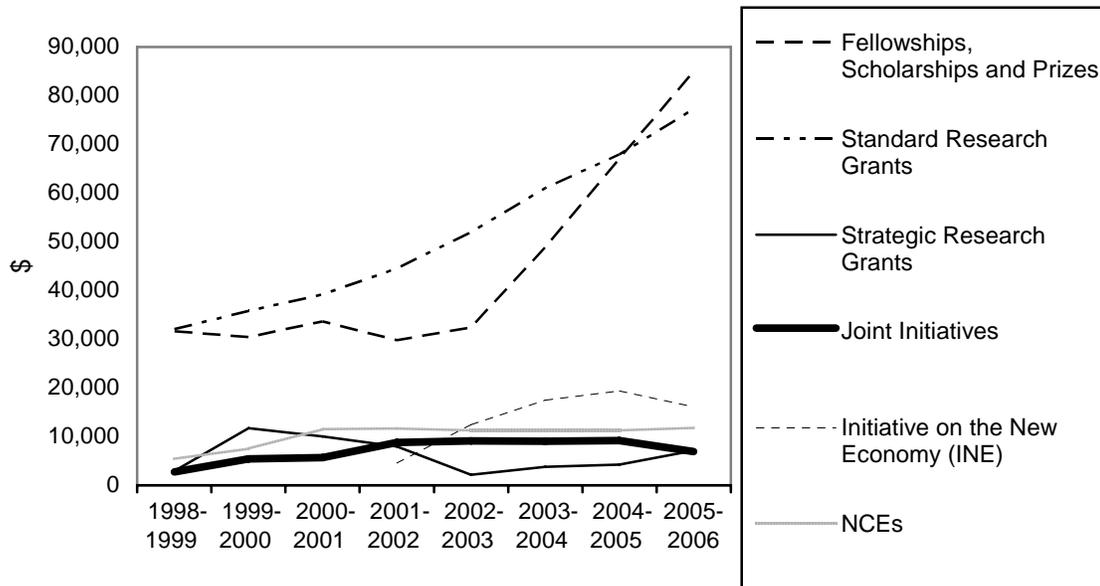
Source: The Year in Numbers, Corporate Policy and Planning, 2004-05. Note the peak in fellowships is due to the Canada graduate scholarships program introduced in 2003.

3.1.2 Assessment of Operating Budget Appropriateness[24] for Meeting Mechanism Objectives

The SPJI Division operating expenditures for 2004/05 were $821,114[25], and for 2005/06 were $1,062,751. It should be noted that, given the way in which operational expenditures are tracked, it is impossible to tease out the proportion of this money that was spent specifically on joint initiative programs. It is equally impossible to determine the proportion of this money that was contributed by partners[26].

A costing exercise that was completed in 2004 estimated that the overall cost to SSHRC in administering the JI program mechanism (excluding INE-JIs, but including expenditures of other divisions) was $745,030, representing approximately 9% of the value of awards under the mechanism[27]. Comparable data on operating costs for similar programs internationally were not available.

A review of MOUs indicates that provisions for operating costs for individual JI programs vary widely. For instance, the Relationships in Transition Joint Initiative provided for operating budgets was worth 8.9% of the research budget, compared to 1.1% for the Ocean Management

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[24] In order to draw from the costing exercise completed in 2004 by Finance, numbers from the 2004/05 fiscal year are used for the analyses in this section.

[25] Source: C. Paterson, CASD – Finance and Awards Administration – Planning, Reporting & Systems (05.05.06)

[26] Meeting Report. Financial Information: Evaluation of the Joint Initiatives Program Mechanism. (10.11.05)

[27] This costing exercise estimated that the typical cost to administer a Joint Initiative was $53,000.

National Research Initiative. In total, administrative data for 41 JI program MOUs were reviewed to identify grant and operations budgets. Sixteen MOUs specified a budget for operating expenses of the Joint Initiative, or 39% of JIs reviewed[28].

Currently, 14 JI programs (11 with competitions) are being administered by 6 program officers[29] within the SPJI division. This represents an average of 2.3 JI programs per officer, which excludes other strategic program responsibilities (overall average is of 3.5 programs per officer[30]). On the whole, SSHRC staff did not feel that they had sufficient resources to administer all aspects of JI programs successfully. Five of seven SSHRC staff interviewed reported that the operational resources were adequate to administer existing JI program competitions - however, the following concerns were evident:

- ➢ *Timely delivery of programs.* Only one in four SSHRC staff reported that they were able to administer the program along partners' timelines. In part, this was thought to be due to insufficient planning. According to one SSHRC staff member, "Sometimes the Joint Initiatives are not thought through. SSHRC sometimes tries to bring programs online when staff aren't available."

- ➢ *Performance measurement, review, follow-up.* Two staff indicated that there were insufficient resources to follow-up concerning the results of JI programs, and to complete performance measurement and review activities.

- ➢ *Achieve the objectives of the program.* Three of 5 staff felt that there were sufficient resources to achieve the goals of the JI programs.

- ➢ *Foster, expand, and pursue partnerships.* Only one of six staff felt that SSHRC had the human resources to be able to pursue new partnership opportunities. According to one informant, "Networking capacity [to build new relationships] does not exist now." Indeed, the survey of 16 partners indicated that in only one instance had the program been initiated by SSHRC. While three stakeholders (SSHRC management) reported a need for a more proactive stance in establishing new JIs, staff did not feel that sufficient resources existed for this.

SSHRC management that were consulted were somewhat more likely to state that all the above activities associated with the JI program mechanism could be achieved. However, even SSHRC management stakeholder stated that "we can't deliver as well as we would like. If we wanted to deliver at the same level of quality as the SRGs, we would need only one program per officer."

3.1.3 Comparison with Budgets of Other Similar Programs in Other Organizations

A review of other partnership funding programs in Canada and in New Zealand, the UK, and Europe indicated that SSHRC's JI program mechanism has a lower level of funding compared to other organizations on average. For instance, NSERC's Research Partnerships Directorate had $142.2M for 2004/05 for Research Partnerships. The total organization budget was $660.7M. This means that 21.5% of the organization's budget is positioned for Partnership Agreements[31],

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[28] When separated into pre- and post-2000 categories, the average operating budgets as a percentage of the total research budgets are approximately the same. However, a small percentage of JI's had operating budget information available.

[29] 1 GR09, 3 GR08, 2 GR07

[30] Average based on 28 JI and strategic grants programs, divided by 8 program officers

[31] http://www.sfu.ca/ors/Events/NSERCResearchProjects05.ppt

compared to 3.5% at SSHRC[32]. Considering the programs included in the international review falling under New Zealand's FRST, a total of NZ $25.7M (CAN $17.55M) was budgeted for FRST partnership programs. According to the annual report, the organization budgeted for approximately NZ $332M (CAN $226.8M) in total in 2004/05. Thus, the organization contributes at least 7.7% of its budget towards partnership programs. Budget data was not available for the other initiatives considered as part of the review of Canadian and international partnership programs.

3.2 Impediments to the Selection, Design and Delivery of Individual JI Programs

3.2.1 Program Communication

As previously mentioned, concerns were expressed by SSHRC stakeholders and partners regarding the number of applications to JI programs. Specifically, 6 out of 16 partners surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with the level of publicity around their program (with a further 8 stating that they were satisfied, and 2 stating no opinion), and half (8/16) of partners surveyed did not feel that sufficient consideration was given to communication during the design phase of their program. In order to assess this issue, researchers who applied for JI program funding/data access were asked in the survey how they became aware of the opportunity. Researchers were most likely to hear about the programs through SSHRC's website (36%), from their institution (31%) and from a colleague (30%).

EXHIBIT 3.2: How Applicants Learned of the Programs
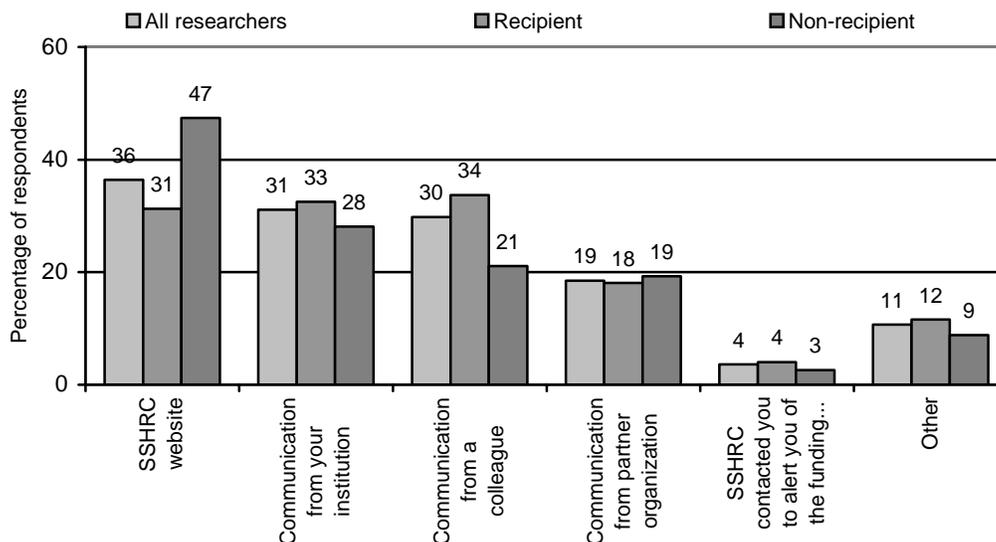
n (recipient) = 249, n (unsuccessful applicant) = 114. Multiple responses were possible; as a result, percentages may add to more than 100%.

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[32] According to SSHRC representatives, partnership programs (defined as programs co-funded by other organizations as well as SSHRC), fall under the JI program mechanism.

Examples of reasons that researchers gave for applying to the program are provided below:

> *A colleague and I saw the program as an opportunity to conduct research in an area that we had not previously worked in. Without the program, it is not likely that we would have come up with this particular research idea.*

> *I had to access the RDC to gain access to the data to complete my research.*

> *The program appeared to offer an opportunity for a number of faculty with common interests to collaborate on a useful project.*

In order to assess how effectively JI programs are marketed to potential applicants, the evaluation team identified 1,995 researchers conducting research in a field related to one or more of the JI programs which ran competitions between 2000-2006, but who had never submitted an application to a JI program. Although the method employed in identifying this sample will result in an overestimate of potential applicants, this exercise nonetheless points to a substantial number of academics conducting research related to JI programs that are not taking advantage of potential funding opportunities.

When these researchers were asked why they had not applied to the JI program, they noted an overall lack of awareness of JI programs as the main reason. Among potential applicants, the majority (66%) were <u>not</u> aware of the JI related to their research field. Among 27% of potential applicants who were familiar with the program[33], the greatest number indicated that the timing of the program was such that they could not apply to the program (10% of all potential applicants). Other researchers felt that their research interests did not fit within the program themes (9%), or had concerns about what would be expected from SSHRC or the partner as a result of the program (7%).

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[33] 7% of potential applicants were unsure as to whether they knew of the program prior to the survey.

EXHIBIT 3.3: Why Researchers Do Not Apply to the Joint Initiative Program Mechanism

Bar chart showing percentage of respondents:
- Not aware of the program: 66
- Timing of the program was not conducive: 10
- Specific research interests did not fit with program themes: 9
- Concerns about what would be required: 7
- Not aware that you were a potential candidate: 5
- Other: 5
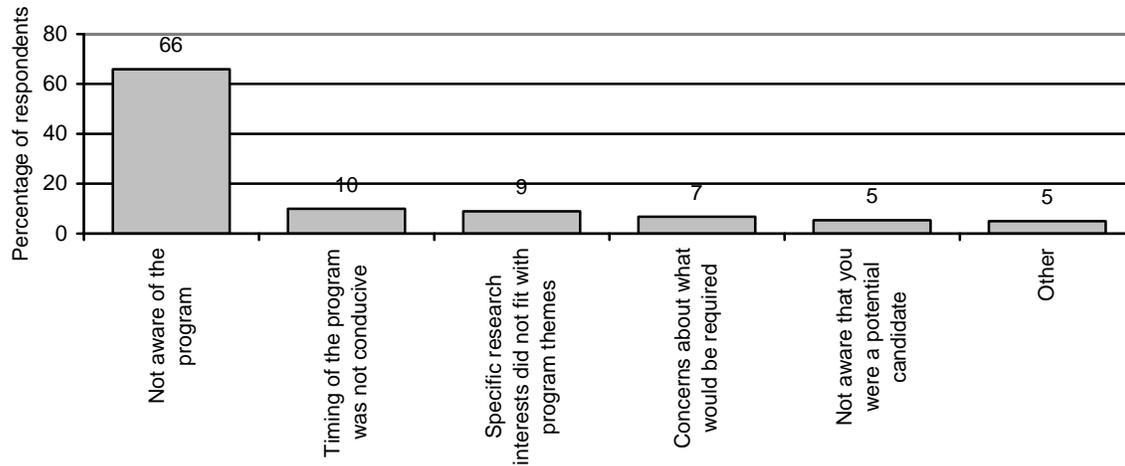
n (potential applicant) = 281. Multiple responses were possible; as a result, percentages may add to more than 100%.

When asked if there was a better way to communicate JI programs to potential applicants, all but five percent thought there were opportunities for improvement. The largest number of potential applicants suggested that SSHRC contact them by email (14%) or by contacting universities and community partners (11%). One potential applicant had the following suggestion: "Since I've apparently been identified as someone who might be interested, I could have been sent a letter or brochure informing me of the program. Between grant cycles, I never look at the SSHRC website." Analysis of qualitative data from potential respondents suggests that a multi-pronged communication strategy may be required, as individual strategies employed thus far appear not to have been fully successful in getting the attention of these researchers.

 Impediments to design, delivery of JI programs, and management of JI program mechanism

SSHRC stakeholders identified a number of impediments to the smooth management of the JI program mechanism. The most common include:

➢ Need to establish an improved, integrated framework for managing Joint Initiatives (7 informants of 9). According to one informant, there is a "need to develop a framework to guide strategic investments at SSHRC (themes, JIs, targeted investments), and to determine the place of JIs as they exist in this overall framework. This will likely be the first item of the agenda of the new VP strategics."

➢ Need for greater human resource capability (4 informants), including skills sets among Joint Initiative program officers and director, as well as the need for more senior positions (e.g., Vice President-level positions). According to one informant, "very few officers have developed a program from beginning to end. [Instead], you have very junior officers managing very complex programs."

➢ Need for clearer reporting requirements to assist in the management of the program, and to support decisions about establishing or renewing programs (3 informants). One management informant indicated that "the [Standing] committee [should not] be a

roadblock for the creation of Joint Initiatives, but a substantial report from staff would encourage good discussion."

Requested changes to program delivery identified in the course of case study research included:

➢ Greater advertising of Joint Initiatives, due to an insufficient number of applications (5 of 8 case studies, see 3.2.1 for discussion). One partner surveyed stated that: "[the] program foundered because good quality researchers did not respond to the funding opportunity. We would not try again without prior evidence of interest by the best. Response was so poor we cancelled halfway though."

➢ Better execution of programs. Stakeholders consulted as part of four case studies reported a range of program recommendations including greater tracking of flow of funds between organizations, and streamlining of adjudication processes. In particular, partners emphasized that there had been delays in program administration, in some cases affecting the viability of the program. In some cases, this was due to SSHRC staff turnover or complexity of the adjudication process (e.g., multiple-stage adjudication).

➢ Better coordination with researchers to enhance the policy relevance of research (3 case studies). For instance, a greater level of collaboration between policy makers, SSHRC, and researchers was recommended to increase the policy-relevance of research.

➢ Consistent delivery of research reports. Partners consulted as part of case studies reported that research reports were not delivered by funding recipients in all cases (4 case studies). This was described as a result of funding not being tied to delivery of research reports. While this issue is identified as an impediment, it should be noted that SSHRC does not have control over the delivery of research reports.

3.3 Alternative Delivery Models[34]

The JI program mechanism does not have one program model; instead, a variety of individual programs are implemented under the umbrella of the JI program mechanism, each program comprising one or more funding or granting mechanisms. Partners interviewed during case studies were asked to identify potential alternative delivery models to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their JI programs, as well as the advantages, disadvantages and potential risks associated with each. Further, in-depth case studies helped to identify advantages, disadvantages, and risks associated with the predominant delivery models used across the JI program mechanism. The following table illustrates these alternatives.

EXHIBIT 3.4 Alternate Delivery Models

Program Name	Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
Grants (predominant current model)	➢ SSHRC already has a database of researchers ➢ Greater flexibility compared to contracts ➢ Attract a broader range of researchers due to researchers'	➢ Given to individual researchers or small groups, lose advantage of contact between scholars ➢ Only a small number of researchers would benefit from this type of funding, compared	➢ Results of the studies may take three years to surface ➢ Researchers may never deliver a report

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[34] Given the way in which operational expenditures are tracked, it is impossible to tease out the proportion of operational funds that are spent specifically on joint initiatives programs (Meeting Report. Financial Information: Evaluation of the Joint Initiatives Program Mechanism. [10.11.05]. As such, the cost-effectiveness of alternative delivery models could not be assessed.

Program Name	Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
	familiarity with grant model	to network funding	
Supplement to research grant or fellowship	➤ Review process is already set up – reviewers are already on hand ➤ Little incremental cost to administer	➤ Might not have the same opportunity to interact with researchers ➤ Partner has little control – they are sent only those abstracts that they would consider relevant– may miss out on something innovative	None specified
Independent contracts between researchers and partnering agencies	➤ Partner has more control over the deliverables ➤ More time efficient ➤ Research published more quickly	➤ Little ability to adjust the research / Less flexible ➤ More work to administer the contracts ➤ SSHRC could not administer grants on behalf of partners	➤ Researchers may not respond favourably. ➤ Universities now charge administrative/indirect costs
Research Consortia[35]	➤ Strong relationships ➤ Low long-term oversight costs	➤ High up-front costs	➤ Risk of consortia splitting up

Research Grants. A number of JIs award funds through research grants. In addition, and more recently, JI programs have been integrating communication events into programs. Although this practice has the potential of increasing relevance of research results to partners, in one case study where a communication event was combined with the research grants, members of the audience interviewed still reported numerous issues with the communication of research results.

Supplements to grants/fellowships. Under such a delivery model, JI funding would be awarded as a supplement to an existing Standard Research Grants (SRGs) or graduate fellowship. Despite success in some programs (e.g., Canada Forestry Service Graduate Supplement), overall, this delivery model was not identified as a favoured option by partners. In total, only 2 of 16 partners felt that administering the program as part of one of SSHRC's existing programs would have increased the relevance of the research.

Contracts. Although SSHRC would not be able to award its grants funds through contracts due to restriction on the use of funds, SSHRC could facilitate the development of contracts between partners and researchers. Eight of out 16 partners surveyed indicated that providing contracts to researchers as opposed to grants would have increased the relevance of the research to them (major or moderate increase).

Research Networks or Consortia. Use of research networks or consortia was suggested by one informant; such models were documented in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. This type of model was suggested in which "SSHRC plays the role of a facilitator – a dual role of brokering of relationships and catalyzing discussion around issues. [SSHRC would under this model] bring the right people around the table and ensure that right questions are asked[36]." A similar model is described in SSHRC's Strategic Plan: the plan suggests that SSHRC could experiment with funding agreements that convene a range of stakeholders around specific issues.

During the validation phase of the evaluation, one SSHRC stakeholder suggested that the Initiative on the New Economy (INE) Public Outreach Grants program was another alternative

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[35] Research consortia are significant, longer-term research contracts between government and partnerships involving private companies, industry groups or entities that use research and research organizations. Source: http://www.frst.govt.nz/research/consortia.cfm

[36] Informant interview.

delivery model[37]. Like the JI program mechanism, the INE Outreach Grants are intended to mobilize social sciences and humanities research to users of research. Unlike the JI program, the Outreach program does not fund the creation of research.

Although the diversity of delivery models employed in the JI program mechanism allows the mechanism to adapt and respond to varying partner needs, the inherent complexity of the JI program mechanism has been noted by stakeholders as being at the core of a number of operational challenges – some of which were identified in section 3.2.2 above.

3.4 Conclusions: Management, Design and Delivery

The findings of the evaluation with regards to the management, design and delivery of the JI program mechanism may be summarized as follows:

➢ The cost of operating the JI program mechanism is estimated at $.7 M in 2004. The operating costs represent approximately 9% of the value of awards under the JI program mechanism.

➢ The resources devoted to the program mechanism were thought by program staff to be sufficient to administer programs, but not sufficient in consistently meeting partner timelines, conduct reviews, mobilize knowledge, or to pursue new partnership opportunities.

➢ SSHRC was found to invest less of its overall budget in partnership programs (4.6%) compared to NSERC and the New Zealand FRST program.

➢ The area of greatest concern among the partners surveyed was an insufficient number of applications to their program. According to the survey of potential applicants, lack of awareness of JI programs was the main reason that eligible researchers did not apply.

➢ There are a number of impediments to the smooth design, and delivery of JI programs, and to the management of JI program mechanism, which could be resolved through the development of procedures and guidelines, and the clarification of roles and responsibilities, in the context of an overarching management framework.

➢ The diversity of delivery models represents both strength and a weakness of the JI program mechanism.

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[37] This program is designed to facilitate non-traditional (i.e., excludes academic publications) dissemination of research funded under another program. Source:
http://www.sshrc.ca/web/apply/program_descriptions/ine/public_outreach_e.asp

4. Governance

Governance is the combination of processes and structures implemented by an organization in order to direct, manage, and monitor the activities of the organization toward the achievement of its objectives[38]. The evaluation assessed whether an appropriate governance structure is in place to direct, manage, and monitor the JI program mechanism by examining:

➢ Approval and renewal processes

➢ Roles and responsibilities

➢ Identification and mitigation of risk, and

➢ Performance measurement and evaluation

Effective governance articulates responsibilities for oversight and decision-making, and hence enhances accountability through the introduction of clarity and transparency in the decision-making process. The extent to which the aspects of good governance listed above are reflected in the JI program mechanism were assessed during the course of the current evaluation. It should be noted that the current study does not reflect an audit, but a review of governance issues within the framework of the overall evaluation.

The findings from the review of governance issues are detailed in the following sections.

4.1 Process to Approve and Renew Joint Initiatives

The governance of JI programs and of the mechanism as a whole falls under the mandate of SSHRC's Standing Committee on Research Support[39]. Composed of Council and external representatives, this Standing Committee of Council provides advice on policy and program directions, and oversees competition results. As of 2002, according to meeting minutes of the Standing Committee on Research Support, all potential new JI programs falling outside of the scope of SSHRC's four research priority areas[40] are to be referred to the Committee Chair for input and discussion[41]. Otherwise, new JI programs are negotiated, developed and launched under the authority of the Director of the SPJI Division. As signing authority on Memoranda of Understanding, SSHRC's President has final executive authority with regards to individual JI programs, and the program mechanism as a whole[42].

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[38] Professional Practices Framework, Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA).

[39] As of 2001. The Standing Committee on Research Support provides policy advice to SSHRC's Council and administrative advice to SSHRC staff on activities in the research, strategic and dissemination programs. http://www.sshrc.ca/web/about/committees/strategic_e.asp

[40] Identified at that time as Culture, Citizenship and Identities; Environment and Sustainable Development; Texts, Image, Sound and Technology; and Aboriginal Development.

[41] 2nd Meeting of the Interim Standing Committee on Research Support Minutes, 28 January 2002.

[42] *Evaluability Assessment for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)'s Joint Initiatives Program Mechanism,* June 2005.

The process of governing the approval of new JI programs is illustrated in Exhibit 4.1.

EXHIBIT 4.1: Process Governing the Approval of New JIs

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │   Approval Process for a New JI      │
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                                      │
                                      ▼
                        ┌──────────────────────────┐
                        │ JI falls under SSHRC's four│
                        │ research priority areas?   │
                        └──────────────────────────┘
                          │                      │
                          ▼                      ▼
                      ┌──────┐              ┌──────┐
                      │  No  │              │  Yes │
                      └──────┘              └──────┘
                          │                      │
                          ▼                      ▼
            ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
            │ Referred to the       │  │ Developed and launched    │
            │ Research Support      │  │ under the authority of the│
            │ Committee Chair for   │  │ Director of the Strategic │
            │ approval              │  │ Grants and Joint          │
            │                       │  │ Initiatives division      │
            └──────────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────┘
                          │                      │
                          ▼                      ▼
                  ┌───────────────────────────────────┐
                  │ Final executive authority for JIs  │
                  │ rests with SSHRC's President       │
                  └───────────────────────────────────┘
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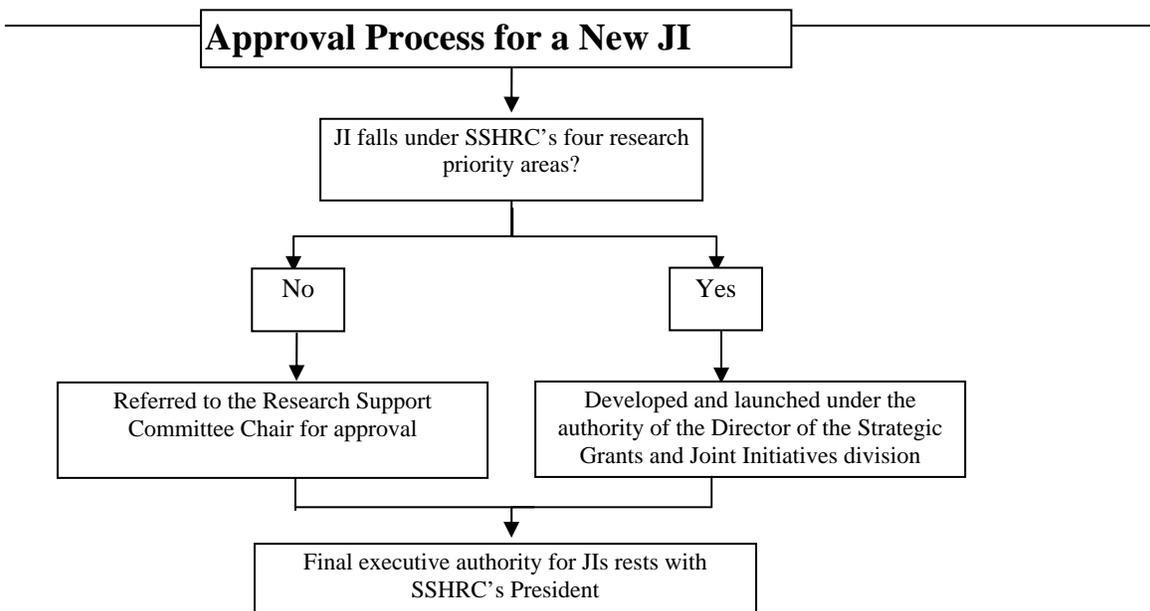
Source: 2002 minutes of the Standing Committee on Research Support

While the responsibility for approving Joint Initiatives is documented, how the process has worked in practice is less clear. Only in a few cases was the decision of the Standing Committee clearly communicated in the minutes (e.g., the Committee approved the renewal of the Ocean Management National Research Network Initiative, a partnership with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans)[43]. However, in other cases, decisions about approving or renewing Joint Initiatives are not clear from the minutes. For instance, in the minutes of the Standing Committee on Research Support in May of 2003, "A straw vote was held on the question of which Joint Initiatives currently up for possible renewal should be most actively pursued. While members held conflicting views, the Valuing Literacy in Canada and the Federalism and Federations Joint Initiatives received the most support[44]."

In the evaluability assessment, SSHRC management stressed the need for flexibility and speed in approving new Joint Initiatives. The approval process for Joint Initiatives accords a substantial amount of discretion to the Director of the Strategic Grants and Joint Initiatives division, therefore incorporating greater flexibility. Further, SSHRC has introduced measures to standardize the approval of new JIs, such as the MOU routing slip. However, the following issues were identified with the approval process:

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[43] Seventh Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research Support, January 29, 2004. At the Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research Support, the Joint Initiative with Infrastructure Canada is discussed, but no decision by the committee with respect to the approval of the program is noted in the minutes.
[44] Fifth Meeting of the Standing Committee on Research Support, May 1-2, 2003.

➢ ambiguity as to which programs would fall under the four themes, particularly culture. There was no documentation identified during the evaluation concerning the definition of which Joint Initiatives fell under the strategic themes.

➢ SSHRC stakeholders also referenced examples of Joint Initiatives that were embarked upon for primarily political reasons (e.g., Infrastructure Canada). It should be noted that no documentation was available to support this perception of a number of stakeholders interviewed.

➢ The approval process does not contain a mechanism to recognize and mitigate risk. Specifically, the approval process does not make distinctions between Joint Initiatives requiring differential levels of investment by SSHRC.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities in the Governance Structure

Standing Committee and Senior Management:

According to SSHRC's *Review of Corporate Governance,* "At both the Council/standing committee and senior management levels accountabilities and decision-making authorities are not consistently understood by all stakeholders nor consistently documented and widely communicated. In addition, accountabilities and decision-making authorities are less clearly defined and understood for the SSHRC management committee."[45] This finding from the internal audit is consistent with the results presented in the evaluability assessment, which indicated that in 2001, SSHRC's new Standing Committee on Research Support[46] questioned whether SSHRC Council members should have more say or provide more advice in the development of new JI programs, particularly given their involvement in the development of strategic themes programs.

Representatives from SSHRC that were interviewed expressed the view that the SSHRC Standing Committee on Research Support did not have sufficient time to devote to the Joint Initiatives program mechanism (4 of 6 SSHRC management informants). According to the evaluability assessment, SSHRC stakeholders suggested that merging of the Standing Committee on Strategic Programs and Joint Initiatives into the Standing Committee on Research Support had the impact that "individual JI programs and the program mechanism as a whole no longer had the same status or priority discussion during committee meetings."

Interview data collected during the current evaluation indicated that turnover in the Standing Committee on Research Support contributes to loss of knowledge about the procedure to approve new Joint Initiatives. There have been efforts to standardize the process concerning decisions about JIs (e.g., MOU routing slip), but these processes are in general fairly recent (July 2004). As a result, it is unclear as to whether these procedures assist members of the Standing Committee on Research Support in making decisions about JIs.

Another challenge with relying on the Standing Committee on Research Support has been development and presentation of proposals for new Joint Initiatives. No standards or procedures for reports to the Standing Committee on proposed new Joint Initiatives were identified during the course of the evaluation. The availability of a framework to guide proposals was suggested by

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[45] Review of Corporate Governance, Priorities and Recommendations Report, May 8, 2006.
[46] SSHRC's Standing Committee on Strategic Programs and Joint Initiatives was merged into the Standing Committee on Research Support in 2001.

one informant to encourage good discussion at the committee level about proposed Joint Initiatives.

Financial Management

Through the course of the evaluation, stakeholders identified billing of partners, as well as tracking of partner operational funds, as a challenge for SSHRC. The following challenges associated with timely billing of partners consistent with the MOU specifications were identified:

➤ *Clarity over responsibility for billing partners*. According to one informant, program managers have not been given clear guidance concerning responsibility for billing partners. While Finance has the responsibility for daily accounting activities and overseeing payments, program officers are more familiar with the operation of the individual Joint Initiatives and the level of funding contributed by partners each year.

➤ *Amounts charged to partners which differ from the MOU provisions*. In some cases, differences between MOU provisions and billed amounts were due to changes in program implementation (e.g., delays in program implementation)[47].

➤ *Difficulty accounting for partners contributions to operational expenditures.* Given the way in which SSHRC's operational expenditures are tracked, it appears impossible to track the proportion of operational funds contributed by partners.

4.3 Identification and Mitigation of Risks

Risk identification and management is important in an effective governance structure; in particular, an effective governance structure includes a process to identify, minimize, monitor and manage risks including financial and political risks. It should be noted that a risk-based approach to management is relatively new to SSHRC. The key risks associated with the program and the extent to which risks were identified and mitigated was analysed as part of the current evaluation.

Key informants interviewed offered opinions about the risks and risk management activities that currently exist in the governance structure. The most common risks are summarized below:

➤ *Damage to SSHRC's reputation* (7 of 11 informants). According to one SSHRC staff member, "JI's face loss of confidence on part of partners and those who have a stake in the outcome of supplied research, often because of delays." Further, according to another SSHRC staff member: "raising expectations on the part of partners is a risk. We are expected to have intellectual engagement; more than we have capacity for."

➤ *Operational risks* (5 informants). Specifically, delivery of programs on-time and on-budget was a risk given that programs were sometimes implemented late in the year. According to one informant, "The time taken to approve agreements is a challenge. An internal rule is that if there is no MOU by July 15, then the program should not be implemented that year; however, this rule isn't consistently followed."

➤ *Financial risks* (3 informants). Specifically, stakeholders were concerned that a partner would not be able to pay their share of the partnership funding. According to one

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[47] Billing information, as well as stakeholder interviews, were used to address the issue of whether partners were billed amounts consistent with MOUs.

stakeholder, "there were a few cases where the partner did not contribute what had been agreed." Examination of billing information available supported this statement.

➢ *Insufficient research activity.* Two case study partners identified a lack of qualified researchers as a risk to successful JI implementation.

➢ *Security risks* (2 case studies). Compromised security of confidential databases was identified for social sciences and humanities working with specialized databases.

<u>Mitigation Strategies:</u>

<u>The following strategies to manage risk were identified during the course of the evaluation:</u>

➢ *Memoranda of Understanding.* MOUs were identified by two informants as a means to mitigate the risk of creating unrealistic expectations and therefore damaging SSHRC's reputation. Two stakeholders consulted indicated that a higher level of review of MOUs was needed. According to one informant: "The evaluation division should review MOUs and policies in light of MOUs to ensure consistency with SSHRC's strategic plan. Consultation with the Director in Strategics should occur in order to ensure that timelines are ok." It should be noted that SSHRC has introduced procedures to ensure a review of MOUs is completed (e.g., MOU routing slip, effective April 2005).

➢ *Assessment of research capacity / number of potential applicants to program.* Consultation with one informant indicated that SSHRC had completed a review of potential capacity for at least one JI.

➢ *Data confidentiality standards.* Risk mitigation strategies were identified in program documentation for the Canadian Initiative on Social Statistics and the Canadian Education Statistics Council to maintain confidentiality standards.

4.4 Use of Performance Measurement, Review, Evaluation in Adjusting the Mechanism

The "Procedures in Establishing and Approving Memoranda of Understanding and Programs with External Funding Contributions" document (2005) states that it is imperative that reporting and accountability provisions be specified in Memoranda of Understanding. It should be noted that the Memoranda of Understanding reviewed to date were initiated prior to 2005, and the guidelines on evaluation provisions were published after the Joint Initiatives reviewed for the current evaluation were established.

Treasury Board's Management Accountability Framework identifies a need for evaluations to be risk-based. According to Treasury Board, "Within available resources, choices will have to be made: departments and agencies may need to focus on improving some areas more than others." Consistent with this guideline, a review was conducted of the frequency with which evaluations were completed for Joint Initiatives overall, and for Joint Initiatives worth more than $3M.

Overall, 17 MOUs specified that an evaluation or review would be completed for the Joint Initiative (45% of JIs reviewed).

EXHIBIT 4.2: Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) Specifying Evaluation Requirements
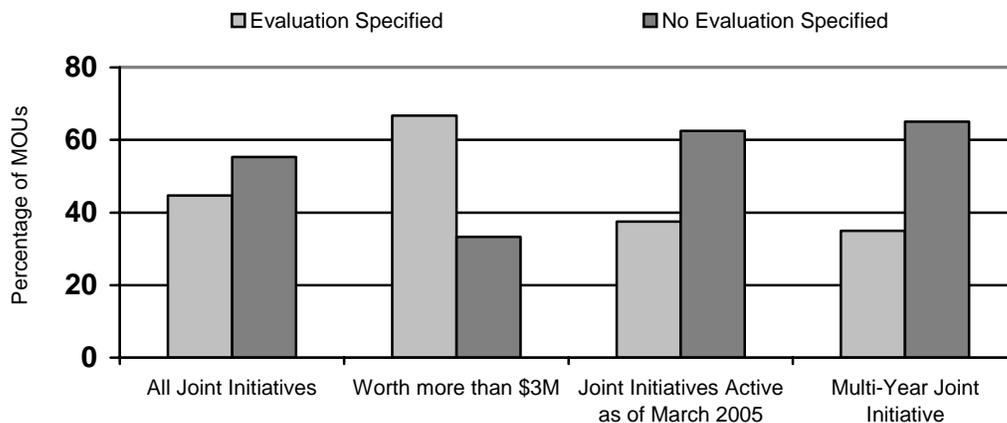
Source: Memoranda of Understanding

Factors Influencing the Use of Evaluations

The following factors were assessed:

➢ *Level of Risk.* Decisions to implement evaluations did appear to take the level of risk into account. Six of nine Joint Initiatives worth more than $3M had an evaluation requirement. In virtually all evaluations or reviews documented, the JI was worth more than $1,000,000 in value.

➢ *Recency of JI Programs.* Use of evaluations does not appear to be more frequent in current Joint Initiatives. Six of 16 Joint Initiatives defined as active[48] as of March 2005[49] specified the use of evaluations (37.5%), compared to 45% of all JIs.

➢ *Duration of JI Programs.* Multi-year Joint Initiatives were not more likely to include evaluation provisions in the MOU.

Of the 17 Joint Initiatives where an evaluation was specified, nine evaluations were actually located during the course of the current evaluation. In one of the cases where an evaluation was not found, a review consisting of a survey and a committee of experts was reported. For the remainder, no evaluation was reported on file[50].

Partner Perceptions of Evaluations

While little information was available about the perceived usefulness of the evaluations conducted, most partners were very satisfied (5 informants) or somewhat satisfied (7) with the level of review or evaluation of the program.

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[48] JIs for which competitions are being held.

[49] Based on budget figures

[50] It should be noted that limited program documentation was available for a portion of the Joint Initiatives.

Use of Evaluations

Few of the SSHRC stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation provided information about the extent to which evaluations were used to improve or modify JIs. One informant stated that:

> "Larger programs (e.g. Metropolis), the adjudication committee will make recommendations and we will make changes; tweak the program based on policy discussions. Sometimes partners make changes to the themes funded through a program." (SSHRC management)

Although there is anecdotal evidence that evaluations have been used to make decisions about programs, documentation regarding these decisions (and the extent to which evaluations have informed these decisions) could not be located.

4.5 Conclusions: Governance

Based on the results of this examination, the evaluation team has concluded the following:

➢ Although the process to approve new JI programs allows wide latitude to SSHRC management in negotiating and initiating JIs, the process is ambiguous and does not incorporate risk as a formal consideration.

➢ Relying on the Standing Committee for Research Support to approve Joint Initiatives presents a number of challenges:

- turnover on the committee.

- competing demands of Standard Research Grants and JI programs on the committee.

- guidelines for the development of proposals to the Standing Committee do not exist.

➢ MOU provisions for partner contributions have not always been followed. Challenges include ambiguity as to the ultimate responsibility for billing partners, difficulty accounting for partners' contributions to operational expenditures and changes in JI program timelines.

➢ Damage to SSHRC's reputation, operational, and financial risks were identified as the most significant risks facing SSHRC with respect to its partnership programs. MOUs were identified as a means to mitigate potential risks; however, concerns were raised with the extent to which MOUs were sufficiently vetted.

➢ Performance measurement and evaluation/review requirements expressed in MOUs have not been consistently implemented to date. As the "Procedures in Establishing and Approving Memoranda of Understanding and Programs with External Funding Contributions" document was prepared by staff in 2005, it is expected that future Joint Initiatives will incorporate evaluation specifications in the MOU provisions.

5. Program Results

The current evaluation addressed the impact of the Joint Initiatives program mechanism in the following areas.

Program Objectives (Explicit and Implicit)
 ➢ Has the program mechanism helped integrate strategic research results with policy-making and socio-economic development?
 ➢ Have the programs promoted the development of global and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of contemporary issues?
 ➢ Has the program encouraged multi-sectoral consultation?
 ➢ Has the program mechanism encouraged communication between researchers and users of research?
 ➢ Has the program mechanism helped increase the profile of SSHRC and of SSHRC-funded research?
 ➢ Has the JI program mechanism helped to build research and receptor capacity?
 ➢ Has funding from the Joint Initiatives program mechanism generated significant additional funds from other sources?
 ➢ Has the JI program mechanism resulted in sustainable partnerships (both at the JI program and funded project level)?

Other Impact Issues
 ➢ Does the JI program mechanism create undue risks? Are the risks associated with the JI program mechanism identified and mitigated effectively?
 ➢ Does the JI program mechanism produce any unintended effects? (eg., impagt on organizational function)?

The current section summarizes the findings of the evaluation with respect to the results of the Joint Initiatives program mechanism.

5.1 Impact on Policy-Making and Socio-Economic Development

Impacts Reported by Partners

Policy and economic impacts can be difficult to measure, since direct or single attribution may not be possible in assessing research impacts. Five of 16 partners surveyed stated that the research produced under the JI program had resulted in impacts on specific policy documents or practices developed by the partner. Examples provided by partners included:

> *A Better Practices Model, and a report and quitline protocol created based on Knowledge Synthesis on smoking cessation interventions for pregnant and postpartum women.*

> *The development of our Idea to Innovation program*

[Researchers] have produced background work for our Discussion Papers on Age, Vulnerable Workers, Globalization, Indigenous Legal Traditions to name a few. They have also done work on exploratory topics… as well as background work for reports to Parliament on Participatory Justice.

Case Study Research: Policy Impacts of Research

Four of eight case studies conducted identified policy impacts of the program. Partnerships with the Law Commission of Canada have resulted in reports that have been presented to Parliament. According to the partner, the RIT and VSR programs have had a direct impact in shaping the Commission's recommendations for law reform. The research produced by the RIT programs has served as the basis for Commission discussion papers and reports to Parliament.

The Network on the Human Dimensions of Biosphere Greenhouse Gas Management resulted in the development of research concerning carbon trading systems, which was used by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. According to one researcher, "BIOCAP's documents that contain information on the tradeoffs between farm returns and GHG levels from alternative management practices will reflect in some part the research efforts of our node."


Key factors affecting the use of the research included presentation of findings in a manner that is accessible and understandable (3 partners), and timeliness of the reports (2 partners). Three of these partners reported that they had used the research reports within three months. Five partners stated that the timing varied. For instance, one partner stated that "We have used one research report within six months of its release. The other we are still working on making it a stand-alone report. As for the third project, we are still waiting for research results." Only one partner surveyed stated that they did not use the research, and the key factor according to the partner was poor quality of research.

It should be noted that not all Joint Initiatives were intended to impact policy. Other programs, such as the Canadian Initiative on Social Statistics, were intended to facilitate access to restricted datasets.

Policy and Economic Impacts Reported by Researchers

Specific impacts were difficult to identify for researchers. Most researchers could not confirm whether their research had contributed to any type of policy or other document used by the partner, and did not know whether their research had been used by the partner. The fact that most researchers did not know what impact their research had on the partner can be linked to the fact that most researchers had no interaction with the partner while designing or conducting the research (84%) or in disseminating the research (59%). While most funding recipients were aware that the program was a joint funding initiative between SSHRC and the partner (66%), fewer were aware of their role in helping to achieve the goals of the program (36%).

EXHIBIT 5.1: Recipient Assessment of Impact of Research

☐ Research contributed to specific policy documents
☐ Research contributed to specific report, research documents publications produced by partner
☐ Research used by partner
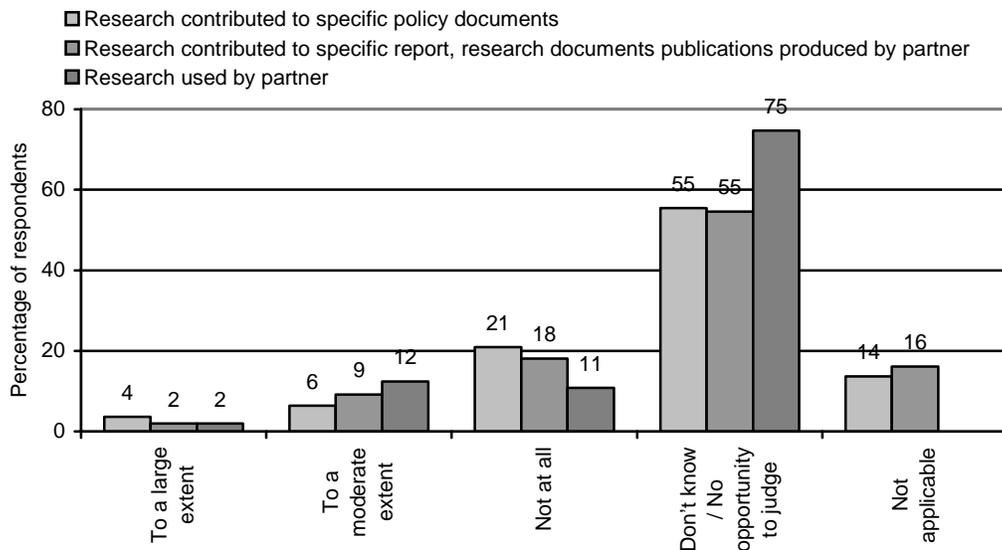
Source: Recipient survey, n (recipient) = 249

Partners reported that greater researcher awareness of their mandate and the research needs of their organization would have increased the relevance of the research. This is discussed in greater depth in Section 5.4.

5.2 Multi-Disciplinary Research

For the majority of JI applications, the research was one-discipline, one person research. Most applications to a Joint Initiative program mechanism represented only one discipline (55%). Across all applications, there was an average of 2.7 different disciplines per Joint Initiative application from 2000-2006[51], and a total of 30 disciplines and 280 sub-disciplines overall. The Immigration and the Metropolis program had the highest number of disciplines per application, on average, with over 9 disciplines per application for this Joint Initiative. The following Exhibit displays the average number of disciplines per application by Joint Initiative.

EXHIBIT 5.2: Multi-Disciplinarity in Applicants and Co-Applicants

Joint Initiative	Partner	Average Number of Disciplines per Applications	Top Discipline	Second Most Frequent Discipline
Immigration and the Metropolis (network delivery model)	Citizenship and Immigration Canada	9.4	Sociology	Geography
Society, Culture and Health of Canadians II	CIHR, National Health Research and Development Program	4.9	Psychology	Sociology
Ocean Mgt National	Department of Fisheries and	4.7	Geography	Sociology

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[51] with the exception of the Access to Research Data Centres, Infrastructure Canada program, and Sports Canada program

44

| Joint Initiative	Partner	Average Number of Disciplines per Applications	Top Discipline	Second Most Frequent Discipline
Research Network	Oceans			
Canadian Initiative on Social Statistics	Statistics Canada / CIHR	4.3	Sociology	Economics
BIOCAP Research Node Grant	BIOCAP Canada Foundation	3.7	Economics	Management/ Business/ Administrative Studies
Intellectual Property Management Program	NSERC and CIHR	3.5	Education	Management/ Business/ Administrative Studies
Homelessness and Diversity Issues in Canada	National Secretariat on Homelessness, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)	2.8	Social Work	Psychology
Research Partnership Programs	CFS; NSERC; private sector	2.6	Economics	Urban and Regional Studies, Environmental Studies
Essential Skills	HRSDC	2.5	Education	Sociology
Canadian Tobacco Research Initiative	National Cancer Institute of Canada, Canadian Cancer Society, Health Canada, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada	2.3	Psychology	Sociology
The Non-profit sector in Canada	The Kahanoff Foundation	2	Political Science	Management/ Business/ Administrative Studies
Multiculturalism Issues in Canada	Canadian Heritage	1.9	Education	Sociology
Relationships in transition	Law Commission of Canada	1.9	Law	Political Science
Valuing Literacy in Canada	National Literacy Secretariat, HRSDC	1.8	Education	Linguistics/ Psychology*
Official Languages Research and Dissemination Program	Canadian Heritage	1.6	Education	Linguistics
Federalism and Federations	Intergovernmental Affairs, Privy Council Office	1.6	Political Science	Economics

Source: SSHRC administrative data, all JI programs from 2000-2006, with the exception of the Access to Research Data Centres, Infrastructure Canada program, and Sports Canada program. For each application, the applicant and co-applicant(s) were identified, n=2,676
* Two disciplines were ranked as the second most common discipline

Administrative data from SSHRC was also used to assess which disciplines were most common in Joint Initiative applications. Across 2,676 applications, education was the most common discipline of the applicant/co-applicant, accounting for 446 applications (16.7% of all applications). Sociology (286 applications) and political science (219 applications) were also common disciplines. Overall, 160 of the applications (6%) were from the humanities, compared to 1,997 from the social sciences (75%)[52].

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[52] Some applications did not have a specified discipline. Other applications were from the natural or medical sciences.

Analysis was used to examine the cross-disciplinary research that was conducted as part of the Joint Initiatives. This analysis indicated that the following disciplines tended to co-occur in applications:
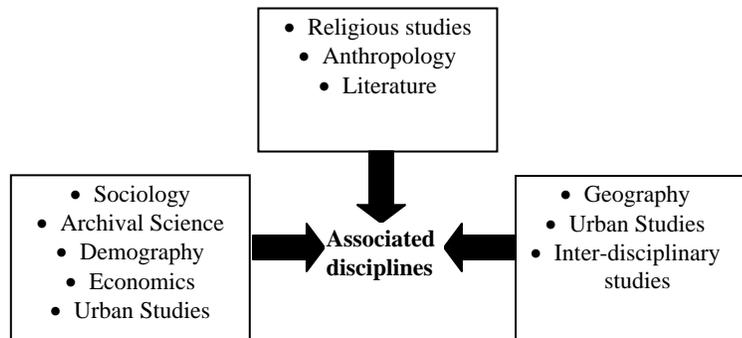
Source: JI program mechanism application data, n=2,676

However, given the data available for the current evaluation, it is impossible to confirm whether researchers successfully co-applying to a Joint Initiative program eventually worked together.

While multi-disciplinarity was an objective of the program, having the involvement of multiple disciplines was specifically mentioned as a critical factor for only 3 out of 8 partners consulted during the case studies. In other cases, partners noted that the disciplines of researchers varied, but did not indicate that this was a specific objective of the program. Further, in 5 of 8 case studies, multi-disciplinary research was not indicated as an objective of the program.

> **Case Study Research: Multi-Disciplinarity**
> BIOCAP described having multi-disciplinary research teams as important to the usefulness of the research being produced. In fact, this was the rationale for creating the program (to augment the research being done by natural scientists with research from the social sciences).

5.3 Multi-Sectoral Collaboration

The over-arching goal of the Joint Initiatives program mechanism includes collaboration and partnership with other organizations. The extent to which the JI program mechanism was successful in encouraging "government, private sector or community organizations to join in partnership with SSHRC to co-develop and co-fund thematic research[53]" is explored in the current section.

Overall, SSHRC has been successful at developing partnerships with outside agencies to fund social sciences and humanities research. More than 40 partnerships have been formed over the life of the JI program mechanism. With respect to the distribution of partners, the vast majority of JI partnerships (23 out of 32 distinct[54] partners) were with federal government departments (or agencies at arm's length with the government), or 72% of the Joint Initiatives.

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[53] Discussion Paper on the Future of Strategic Research, presented at the 2nd meeting of the Interim Standing Committee on Research Support, January 2002.
[54] Multiple partnerships with the same organization or sections within the same organization were counted only once.

During a meeting of the Standing Committee on Strategic Grants Programs and Joint Initiatives[55], questions were raised as to the reason for lack of partnerships with foundations, volunteer organizations, and private enterprise. Of the 44 Joint Initiatives reviewed, 4 were with foundations and 3 were with not-for profit agencies. Only one Joint Initiative has been implemented with a private-sector partner (Northern Telecom Limited, which ran between 1991 and 1994). Two other Joint Initiatives involved funding from private sector sources (Chairs in the Management of Technological Change and Forest Research Partnerships Program).

EXHIBIT 5.3: Joint Initiatives by Partner Type
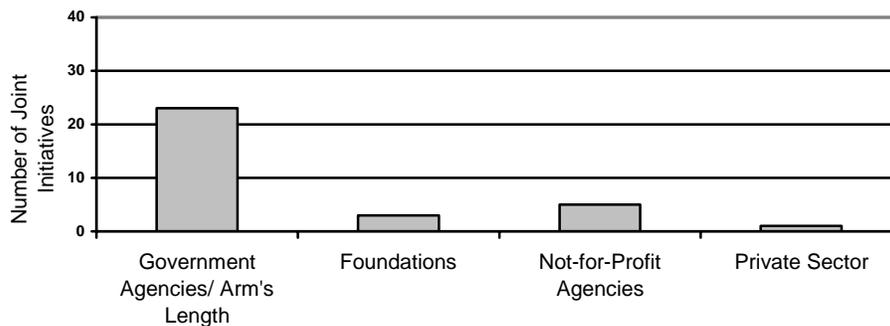
Source: Memoranda of Understanding

It was suggested in informant interviews that SSHRC may not be taking an active role in seeking new types of partners in these needed areas, while focusing on the partnerships that are of convenience. One interview completed with SSHRC management indicated a strong perceived need for partnerships with non-governmental organizations/philanthropic associations. According to this informant, it was clear in SSHRC's strategic plan consultations that there is a community of stakeholders outside of government where knowledge and greater partnership is needed.

5.4 Communication Between Researchers and Users of Research

Communication Between Partners and Researchers

The most immediate area where communication between researchers and users of research could occur is directly between the partner organization and the funded SSHRC researchers. In this area, both researchers and partners suggested that greater communication would be advantageous. For instance, in terms of satisfaction with the role negotiated, about half of partners surveyed felt that their role in the program post-adjudication should have been more substantial. In particular, 9 of 16 partners felt that greater involvement with researchers in designing research projects post-adjudication would have increased the relevance of the research to them. Three of eight partners interviewed as part of the case studies requested a deeper level of interaction with funded researchers.

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[55] Discussion Paper: Suggested Guidelines for Setting Joint Initiative Priorities, Feb 4 2000 (Presented at 5th meeting of Standing Committee on Strategic Grants Programs and Joint Initiatives).

As explained in Section 5.1, most researchers did not have contact with the partner agency in designing or disseminating their research. Recipients who reported that they designed their research to be relevant to partners (69%) stated that they chose an applied problem (34%) or a research topic related to the organization's goals (18%). Only 7% of recipients had contact with the partner in order to discuss their mandate or research needs.

It should be noted that consultation between the partner and researcher was not a specific goal of each JI. However, in three of six case studies where collaboration between researchers and users of research was a specific objective of the JI, the conclusion was that there was insufficient communication between these groups. In particular, for the CESC Education Research Initiative, a recommendation that emerged from the 2006 Symposium was to "encourage earlier and more systematic collaboration and partnership between researchers and potential knowledge users." For the Chairs in the Management of Technological Change, the evaluation found insufficient marketing to potential research users, and recommended an improved mechanism for research diffusion.

> **Case Study Research: Communication**
> According to the December 2001 Treasury Board submission for the Federalism and Federations program, "Research results were disseminated nationally and internationally through the virtual institutes, conferences and publications."

Specific communication activities organized by case study partners included conferences (2), symposium (1), seminars (1), and conference grants (1).

Dissemination Activities

Based on the analysis completed to date, it appears that researchers engaged in research under the Joint Initiatives program mechanism were more likely to present the results of their research at presentations or publish research results in media such as newspapers, compared to researchers receiving funding under SSHRC's Standard Research Grants. This analysis is based on the final research reports of 59 JI recipients and all researchers submitting a final research report for the Standard Research Grants (820 researchers). Although these results need to be interpreted cautiously given sample numbers, overall, JI funding recipients had a significantly higher number of publications and presentations compared to Standard Research Grant recipients[56]. Exhibit 5.4 illustrates the average number of presentations and publications for JI program recipients and potential applicants.

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[56] Includes all publications (e.g., articles, etc.) and presentations.

EXHIBIT 5.4: Presentations and Other Dissemination Activities – Standard Research Grants versus Joint Initiative awards
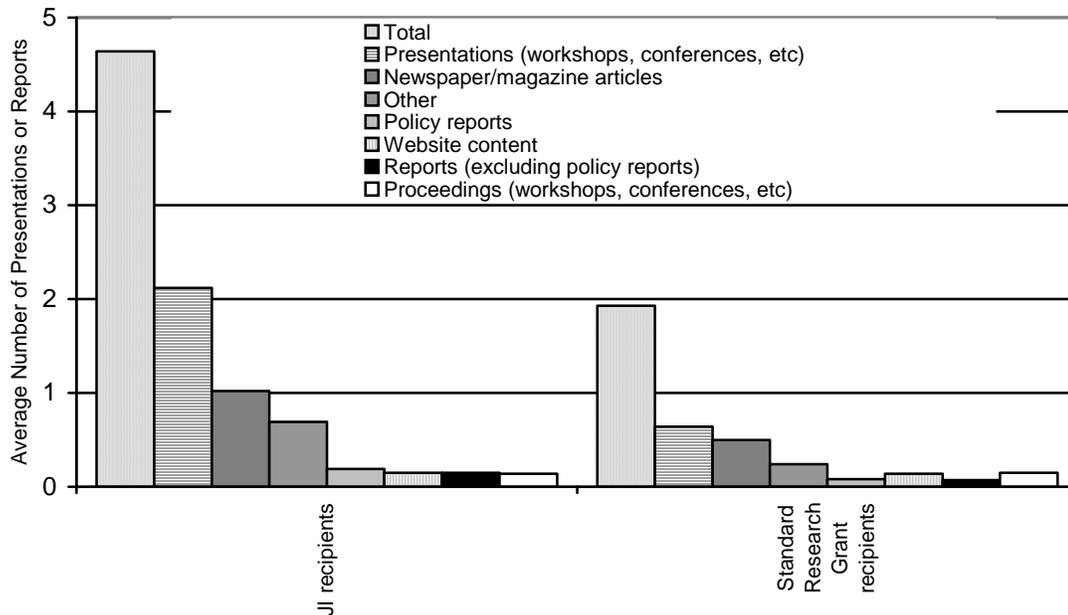
Source: Final Research Reports (Standard Research Grants and JI program awards). The Standard Research Grants sample includes final research reports for awards from 2000 to 2006. All JI final research reports were included (earliest year is 1998). n (Joint Initiative Final Research Reports) = 59, n (Standard Research Grants) = 820.
Note: Not all funding recipients submitted Final Research Reports, and results should be interpreted with caution.

With respect to publications, recipients of Standard Research Grants were found to have a higher (but not statistically significant) number of accepted/published academic articles, book chapters, and books. No significant differences were found between JI recipients and SRG recipients in terms of non-academic publications.

EXHIBIT 5.4: Publications and Other Dissemination Activities – Standard Research Grants versus Joint Initiative awards

Publications	JI recipients				Standard Research Grant recipients			
	Academic		Non-academic		Academic		Non-academic	
	Underway/ submitted	Accepted/ Published	Underway/ submitted	Accepted/ Published	Underway/ submitted	Accepted/ Published	Underway/ submitted	Accepted/ Published
Journal articles	.51	.90	.00	.05	0.36	1.46	0.01	0.13
Book chapters	.15	.58	.00	.12	0.08	0.97	0.25	0.00
Books	.12	.15	.02	.07	0.08	0.46	0.10	0.01
Total	.78	1.63	.02	.87	.52	2.89	.36	.14

Source: Final Research Reports (Standard Research Grants and JI program awards). The Standard Research Grants sample includes final research reports for awards from 2000 to 2006. All JI final research reports were included (earliest year is 1998). n (Joint Initiative Final Research Reports) = 59, n (Standard Research Grants) = 820.

Case Study Research: Communication
One of the primary means of program communication for the CESC JI was the yearly symposium. The overall conclusion from an evaluation completed of the symposium was that strong support was shown for further collaboration and transfer of knowledge

Communication Budget

The communication budgets for JI programs were examined through the survey of partners to determine whether the level of resources was a significant factor impacting communication between researchers and users of research. Recipients did report that a considerable percentage of their research budget had been spent on dissemination activities (13%)[57]. According to partners, approximately 10% of the Joint Initiative program budgets were spent on communication of research results. According to 4 of 7 partners who were knowledgeable about the JI program communication budget, the investment in communication activities was sufficient.

An analysis of the websites cited by partners where JI researcher results would have been communicated showed that all of these were partner's own websites. Further, case study research provided a number of examples of dissemination activities such as conferences and symposia:

> For the Federalism and Federations program, a conference grant was provided.

> The CESC Education Research Initiative included annual symposia.

> All Relationships in Transition recipients participated in an international conference on policing in 2002.

5.5 Profile of SSHRC and Social Sciences and Humanities Research

Most of the partners surveyed were familiar with SSHRC and its objectives prior to the initiation of the initiative; 14 partners were familiar with SSHRC and 12 stated that they were familiar with SSHRC's objectives prior to the initiative. However, participation in the program did cause an increase in the number of partners that were closely familiar with SSHRC. Following the program, 11 partners were very familiar with SSHRC (compared to 7 prior to the program), and 10 partners were very familiar with SSHRC's objectives (compared to 5 prior to the program).

Participating with SSHRC also resulted in a small increase in partner's assessment of the quality of social sciences and humanities research. Eleven of 16 partners indicated that they felt that the quality of social sciences and humanities research was very good following the program compared to eight prior to the program.

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[57] Source: Recipient survey, n=249.

EXHIBIT 5.5: Change in SSHRC's Profile Due to JI Program Mechanism
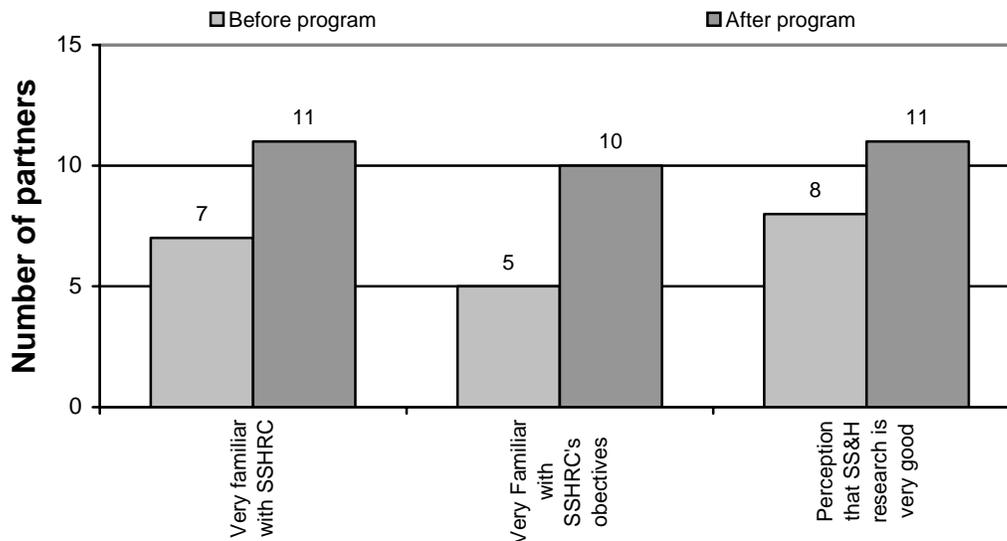
n (partner) = 16. Multiple responses were possible.

Further, participating in a Joint Initiative with SSHRC increased the profile of social sciences and humanities research in decision-making processes, according to 11 of 16 partners. According to one partner, "First - this competition was meant to serve the mutual needs of [the partner] and SSHRC to ensure that SSH were integrated into the planning of [the partner]."

5.6 Research and Receptor Capacity

For the purposes of this analysis, research capacity was defined in the following ways:

- ➢ Number of students directly supported by the JI program mechanism
- ➢ Number of students or non-student highly qualified personnel (HQP) hired by funding recipients under JIs.
- ➢ Increase in partners' ability to interpret and apply research.

Number of Students Supported by the Joint Initiatives Program Mechanism.

A total of 257 students were identified by SSHRC as participants in the Joint Initiatives program mechanism. The Canadian Initiative on Social Statistics (CISS) program accounted for the largest number of students (162). The CISS program, for instance, supports 60 masters students, and 80 doctoral students. In comparison, SSHRC funded 812 masters students in 2004, 985 in 2005 and 1200 in 2006 through its Canada Graduate Scholarships.

EXHIBIT 5.6: Number of Students by Joint Initiative

Program	Number of Recipients	Level of study					
		undergraduate	masters	doctoral	post doctoral	other	unknown
Canadian Initiative on Social Statistics (CISS) Access to Research Data Centres program	162	5	60	80			17
Canadian Tobacco Control Research Initiative (CTCRI)	2	1	1				
CHSRF/SSHRC Doctoral Fellowship program	8			8			
CIHR/SSHRC/NHRDP Health Career Awards program	32		2	1	29		
Doctoral Fellowships Program	10			10			
Federalism and Federations program	25		2	22		1	
Homelessness and Diversity Issues in Canada program	3			2	1		
Postdoctoral Fellowships Program	1				1		
Research on Canadian Children and Youth program	5		2	3			
Valuing Literacy in Canada program	9		1	7		1	
Total	257	6	68	133	31	2	17

Source: SSHRC administrative data

Students reported a range of impacts as a result of participating in the Joint Initiatives, including increased ability to analyse data (79%), present research (66%), design methodologies (57%), write research grants (53%), and participate in designing research (51%). Further, students reported that participation in the JI had resulted in continuation of their education past their original goal (44.7%), increased contact with employers (42.5%), and employment during or after their studies (34.0% and 25.6% respectively).

Number of Highly Qualified Personnel Hired or Trained Per Award.
Final research reports were analysed to determine the impact of the Joint Initiatives program mechanism in building research capacity at the university level. Only 59 final research reports were available out of a total of 730 total awards under the Joint Initiatives, so this data should be interpreted with caution. On average, recipients reported hiring five highly qualified personnel (HQP) as a result of their award.

EXHIBIT 5.7: Number of Highly Qualified Personnel Hired Per Award
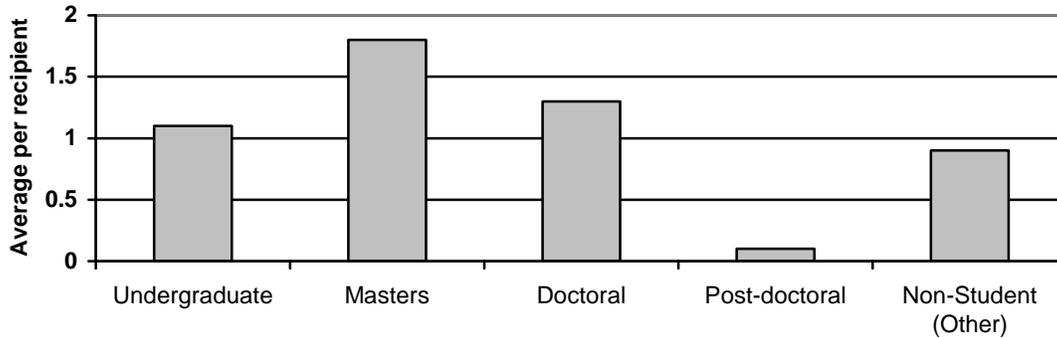
Source: JI Final Research Reports (n=59)

Recipients also reported on the number of students that worked on their thesis as a result of research funding. According to the survey of recipients, an average of 0.5 undergraduates, 1.2 master's students, and 0.8 doctoral students worked on their thesis as a result of the program funding (total of 2.5 HQP per award). It should be noted that the values reported in the survey are consistently lower than those reported in the final reports. It is possible that some of the students hired in Exhibit 5.7 did not conduct any work related to their thesis. It should also be kept in mind that both the survey of recipients and the final research reports reflect a minority of researchers funded under the program mechanism.

Increase in Partner Research Capability. Only a minority of partners reported increases in research capacity, in terms of the ability to complete research independently or to interpret research findings (5 partners). Partners were more likely to report an increase in their ability to apply research to decision making (7 partners), or in their access to research expertise (13 partners).

EXHIBIT 5.7: Increase in Partner Research Capacity Due to the Program

☐ Application of research to decision making   ☐ Ability to interpret research findings
☐ Ability to conduct research independently   ■ Access to expertise
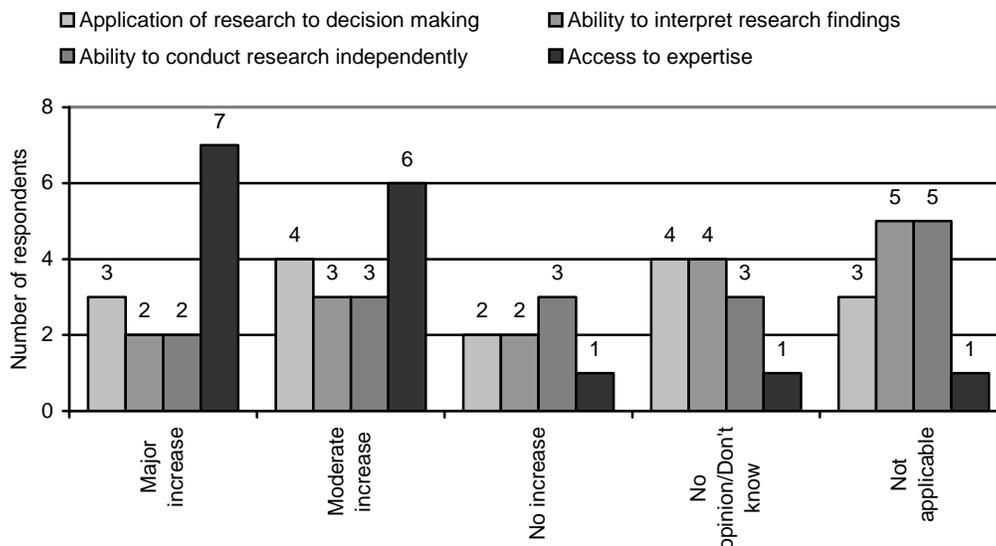
Source: Partner survey, n (partner) = 16.

According to one partner, they "would have been on the same path [without the program], but would not have had as many funded students, and would not have included the same level of quality."

5.7 Leveraging of Research Dollars

In total, partners contributed $40.4M in research funding for social sciences and humanities researchers since 1989, for a SSHRC investment of $39.7 million[58].

In addition, 15.7% of recipients reported further research funding from the partner organization following their participation in the Joint Initiative, and 16.9% of recipients reported that they received research funding from other organizations other than SSHRC or the partner to continue or expand upon the research for which they received funding under the JI. JI recipients reported $26.5M of resources committed to JI programs in applications to the program.

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[58] The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 2005/2006 Departmental Performance Report.

EXHIBIT 5.8: Resources Leveraged by Successful Applicants at Time of Application, Confirmed Only (in $000)
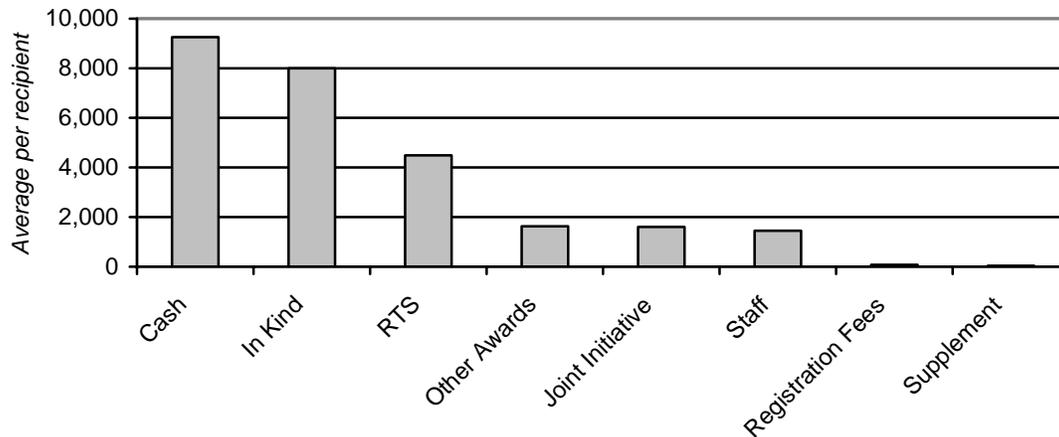
Source: SSHRC administrative data, applicants (2000 to 2002), n=489

Five of 16 partners reported that they had awarded funding to researchers in the social sciences and humanities following the program, however, none of the partners surveyed were able to estimate the value of such funding.

5.8 Strategic and High Potential Partnerships

Generally, partners were positive about their relationship with SSHRC. Fourteen of 16 partners surveyed stated that they would probably or definitely participate in another partnership with SSHRC, and 13 partners stated that they would recommend such a partnership to other organizations. Further, five partners stated that they would be interested in expanding the scope of the partnership with SSHRC.

The quality of partnerships between SSHRC and other organizations may be assessed using a number of criteria:

➢ Whether partnership programs are renewed, signalling partner satisfaction with the program or the sustainability of the program. Upon review of 41 Memoranda of Understanding for JI programs, six renewals were evident (one for which there was no MOU). This gives an approximate rate of 14.6% renewal rate.

➢ Value of partnerships. In 2005/2006, partners contributing the greatest level of funding to SS & H researchers were Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Metropolis) and Canadian Heritage (Official Languages, and Multiculturalism Issues in Canada).

➢ Type of contribution. Some partners such as Statistics Canada and the Canadian Education Statistics Council provided in-kind contributions (such as data), rather than direct funding support to social sciences and humanities researchers.

➢ Presence of partnerships with agencies other than SSHRC. Almost all partners survey (15 of 16) reported partnerships to co-fund research with organizations other than SSHRC.

Compared to the level of funding provided as part of the partners' Joint Initiatives with SSHRC:

- 2 partners indicated that the amount provided in their other partnerships was higher than the amount provided under the JI;

- 5 indicated that the level of funding was similar to the amount provided as part of the JI; and

- 4 partners reported that the level of funding in their other partnerships was lower than the amount provided as part of the JI.

➢ Program results. While a formal evaluation of each JI was not within the scope of the current project, a number of separate reviews concluded that JIs were successful in meeting their objectives (e.g., CISS).

Other measures may also be considered, such as the level of involvement of the partner in the research, and in interacting with researchers. For instance, the Law Commission of Canada works closely with its Virtual Scholars in Residence to develop Commission discussion papers and reports submitted to Parliament.

High Existing and Potential Partnerships

It should be noted that each partnership embarked upon by SSHRC may serve its own unique and strategic value. Notwithstanding this fact, an analysis was conducted to determine particularly strategic or high potential partners. For the purposes of this analysis, high potential partners were identified based on the number of partnerships they had undertaken with SSHRC and the value of the partnerships. Based on this analysis, the following partners were identified as having the highest potential:

➢ *Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).* CIHR has partnered with SSHRC on four Joint Initiatives over the past five years worth $8.7M in partnership contributions (across all partners) over the past five years[59]. One of the programs undertaken with CIHR (the Intellectual Property Management program) has been renewed.

➢ *Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).* NSERC has partnered with SSHRC on three programs over the past five years. Further, the total partnership contribution of programs undertaken in partnership with NSERC was $4.6M over the past five years. Two of the programs undertaken with NSERC have been renewed, suggesting a sustainable partnership with this organization.

➢ *Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC).* HRSDC participated in three Joint Initiatives over the past 5 years, worth $1.9M in partnership contributions over this time period.

➢ *Citizenship and Immigration Canada.* While SSHRC has entered into one partnership with this organization, the partner contribution over five years is $4.1M. Further, this program has previously been renewed.

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[59] Only financial contributions of all partners was available for this evaluation.

> *Canadian Heritage.* While the research programs with this partner have recently commenced, the two programs with Canadian Heritage represent two of the three JIs with the largest budgets.

5.9 Unintended Effects

Few unintended effects were reported during the course of the evaluation. Unintended effects are organized by respondent groups:

> *SSHRC stakeholders.* Key informants interviewed identified a few negative unintended effects: discontented partners, researchers not delivering quality research, and negative publicity.

> *Researchers.* One quarter of researchers (25%) reported that the Joint Initiatives program had changed their career direction, and 37% reported that participating in a Joint Initiative had changed their opinion about targeted research. According to one researcher: "I have come to appreciate even more the value and importance of applied research with community partners."

5.10 Conclusions: Program Results

Key conclusions with respect to the impact of the JI program mechanism are:

> **Policy Impacts.** In half of case studies, partners did identify policy impacts of research funded under the Joint Initiatives program mechanism. Researchers were less able to assess whether their research proved useful to the sponsoring partner.

> **Multi-disciplinarity.** Researchers from a wide variety of disciplines participated in the Joint Initiative program mechanism; however, the majority of applications represented a single discipline or researcher. The JI program mechanism was oriented to social science researchers; only 6% of funding applicants were from the humanities.

> **Multi-sector consultation.** SSHRC has partnered with 44 agencies, of which 36 have been with the federal government.

> **Knowledge transfer.** Joint Initiatives have provided dissemination opportunities for researchers; although no significant difference was found between the academic outputs of JI program recipients and SRG program recipients, the non-academic research output (presentations, newspaper/magazine articles, policy and other reports, website content, etc.) reported by JI program recipients is significantly higher than that of researchers funded under the SRG.

> **SSHRC's profile.** Partnership with SSHRC increased familiarity with and the reputation of social sciences and humanities research among partners to a moderate to minor degree.

> **Capacity Development.** A total of 257 students were supported by the Joint Initiatives program directly as program recipients. Further, researchers reported hiring an average of five highly qualified personnel (HQP) as a result of their award.

> **Leveraging.** In addition to the $40.4M in funding contributed by partners since 1989, 15.7% of recipients reported further research funding from the partner organization following their participation in the Joint Initiative, and 16.9% of recipients reported that

they received research funding from other organizations other than SSHRC or the partner to continue or expand upon the research for which they received funding under the JI.

➢ ***Partnerships.*** SSHRC has entered into a wide range of Joint Initiatives with 32 different organizations. Of these, the partnerships with CIHR, NSERC, HRSDC, Canadian Herirage and Citizenship and Immigration Canada were deemed to have the highest potential in terms of large-scale strategic partnerships.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the evaluation has demonstrated that SSHRC's JI Program mechanism is highly relevant, particularly in the context of SSHRC's new Strategic Plan which emphasizes "building connections to maximize the impact and quality of humanities and social sciences research"[60]. Defining the JI mechanism's place in the implementation of the Strategic Plan will be a crucial step in ensuring that SSHRC gets the most out of its strategic investments in this area. Although the evaluation points out a number of areas for improvement in terms of management, delivery and governance (which will need to be addressed in the short term), it also points out positive impacts in terms of developing partnerships, leveraging funds for social sciences research, and developing capacity. However, those elements that distinguish a JI program from other research granting programs (i.e., ensuring partner satisfaction, fostering partnerships, encouraging communication between researchers and users, etc.) appear to suffer most from lack of operational resources – suggesting that impacts could be much greater if more resources were invested <u>or</u> if fewer JI programs were pursued. The following set of recommendations was developed in order to help SSHRC better position this resource in the context of its Strategic Plan, and to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the JI program mechanism.

Recommendations

1. Continue to support the JI program mechanism in the context of SSHRC's Strategic Plan

It is recommended that SSHRC continue to support the JI program mechanism in the context of its Strategic Plan by:

→ defining the mechanism's place in implementing the vision set out in the Strategic Plan;

→ clarifying what is a joint initiative and defining its parameters;

→ identifying and ensuring the subsequent selection of highly relevant and engaged partners; and

→ ensuring the proper human and financial resourcing of the mechanism in light of SSHRC's current and future expectations with regards to this strategic resource.

2. Examine JI program mechanism objectives

On the whole, the objectives of the JI program mechanism continue to be of relevance and importance. However, the evaluation has identified a number of implicit objectives the mechanism is expected to achieve. As such, it is recommended that:

→ the mechanism's objectives be examined in the context of recommendation 1; and

→ that particular attention be given to assessing the relevance of the following objective given evaluation findings: "encourage multi-sectoral consultation and promote the development of global and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of contemporary issues".

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[60] Knowledge Council: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Strategic Plan 2006-2011, July 2005.

3. Develop JI program mechanism management and accountability framework

It is recommended that a framework[61] for the management and accountability of the JI program mechanism (including the selection, design, and delivery of JI programs) be developed in the context of recommendation 1. The framework should:

→ fit within a larger framework guiding SSHRC's strategic investments – in particular, consideration should be given to creating a separate standing committee of Council to oversee strategic programs;

→ balance the need for a flexible approach against the risks inherent to this type of investment; and

→ provide clarity in roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities in terms of governance, partnership development/maintenance, mechanism and program management, financial management, day-to-day operations, follow-up, etc.

The framework should also include:

→ indicators for tracking and reporting on mechanism activities, outputs and results; and

→ incorporate relevant evaluation findings in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the mechanism.

4. Revisit ratio of JI programs/staff and desirable number of active JIs

It is recommended that ratio of JI programs to staff, as well as the desirable number of active JIs (i.e., JIs for which competitions are being held) be revisited in the context of recommendation 1, and that the particular nature of administering JI programs (i.e., partnership development and maintenance, ensuring ongoing communication and coordination between researchers and users, follow-up activities, etc.) be acknowledged as different from other SSHRC programs and at the same time crucial to the mechanism's ability to achieve its objectives.

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[61] This framework could draw from, but expand on, Treasury Board's guidance on Results-based Management and Accountability Frameworks (RMAFs)

Appendices

Please see companion document "Evaluation of the Joint Initiatives Program Mechanism - Appendices to the Final Report, R.A. Malatest & Associates, December 2006".

Evaluation of the Joint Initiatives Program Mechanism

Appendices to Evaluation Report

Prepared by:
R.A. MALATEST & ASSOCIATES LTD.

For:
The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
(SSHRC)

December 15, 2006

APPENDIX A

Sources

Program Documentation

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APPENDIX B

Issues-Indicators Matrix

| Evaluation Issue | | Indicator | Data/Document Review | | | | | | | | | Interviews | | | Survey | | |
			Final Research Reports	MOUs	Administrative data	Minutes / Communication	Evaluations/reviews	Internal Audit	Other documents	Review of similar programs	Staff	Eval. Advisory Committee	Management	Partners	Researchers	Case Studies
RELEVANCE																
Is there still a need for the JI program mechanism? ***Are the objectives of the JI program mechanism still relevant?***	*1*	➢ Perceived relevance of JI program mechanism to the needs of SSHRC, its partners and the government					✔					✔	✔	✔	✔	
		➢ Perceived relevance of JI program mechanism to the needs of, and the work being done by researchers													✔	
		➢ Qualitative assessment of the consistency between the objectives of the JI program mechanism and SSHRC's general objectives				✔			✔			✔	✔			
		➢ Qualitative assessment of the consistency of JI program mechanism objectives with SSHRC's new strategic plan (i.e., Transformation)							✔				✔			
		➢ Demonstrated relevance of past JI programs and of similar programs in other organizations					✔			✔						✔
MANAGEMENT, DESIGN & DELIVERY																
Governance/Effectiveness Issues																
Is there an appropriate governance structure in place to direct, manage, and monitor the	2	➢ Qualitative assessment of the appropriateness of the governance structure currently in place as per the following criteria:														

Evaluation Issue	#	Indicator	Final Research Reports	MOUs	Administrative data	Minutes / Communication	Evaluations/reviews	Internal Audit	Other documents	Review of similar programs	Staff	Eval. Advisory Committee	Management	Partners	Researchers	Case Studies
				Data/Document Review							*Interviews*				*Survey*	
JI program mechanism?		o The process of negotiating and developing new JIs takes into account consistency with SSHRC's mandate; factors such as the external environment, risks, options, stakeholders, available resources; and potential impacts		✔		✔	✔	✔	✔		✔		✔	✔		✔
		o The roles and responsibilities of the various elements of the governance structure are clearly defined and communicated		✔		✔		✔	✔				✔	✔		✔
		o The governance structure incorporates the identification, assessment, and management of risk in its decision-making process				✔		✔	✔		✔		✔	✔		✔
		o Integrated approach is used to managing the whole portfolio of JI programs			✔				✔			✔	✔			✔
		o Clarity and consistent use of procedures in approving and renewing JIs				✔					✔	✔	✔			✔
		o Use of evaluations, management reviews and lessons learned in adjusting the mechanism and/or the individual JIs				✔	✔				✔	✔	✔			✔
		o Assessment of JI against what is stated in MOUs		✔			✔				✔	✔	✔			
Design & Delivery Issues																
What are the main impediments to the smooth selection, design and delivery of individual JI programs?	3	➢ perceived impediments by key stakeholder groups									✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
		➢ perceived clarity and adequacy of process to negotiate roles and responsibilities									✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
		➢ consistency of process with SSHRC principles		✔		✔	✔		✔		✔					

Evaluation Issue		Indicator	Data/Document Review								Interviews			Survey		
			Final Research Reports	*MOUs*	*Administrative data*	*Minutes / Communication*	*Evaluations/reviews*	*Internal Audit*	*Other documents*	*Review of similar programs*	*Staff*	*Eval. Advisory Committee*	*Management*	*Partners*	*Researchers*	*Case Studies*
		➢ frequency of SSHRC-initiated versus partner-initiated JIs				✔			✔		✔	✔		✔		
		➢ changes in procedure due to staff turnover				✔					✔					
		➢ private versus public partners				✔	✔									
Is the budget of the JI program mechanism appropriate for meeting the mechanism's objectives?	4	➢ qualitative assessment of budget appropriateness for meeting objectives			✔				✔		✔		✔			
		➢ comparison with budgets of other similar programs in other organizations			✔					✔				✔		
		➢ proportion of JI budget relative to SSHRC's overall budget			✔											
Are there other cost-effective alternatives to achieving the expected objectives?	5	➢ qualitative assessment of the advantages, disadvantages and risks of alternative delivery models (through simulations) in terms of: o cost-effectiveness o ability to reach objectives of the program o potential risks of changing models such as disruption due to partner familiarity with the existing model				✔			✔	✔						✔
		➢ list of alternate models									✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
		➢ qualitative assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of program delivery processes as per the following criteria:														
		o operating budget as a percentage of the total JI budget			✔	✔										

			Data/Document Review								Interviews			Survey		
Evaluation Issue		Indicator	Final Research Reports	MOUs	Administrative data	Minutes / Communication	Evaluations/reviews	Internal Audit	Other documents	Review of similar programs	Staff	Eval. Advisory Committee	Management	Partners	Researchers	Case Studies
		o consideration of other costs not captured in the operating budget									✔	✔				
		o comparison with other similar programs in other organizations								✔						
		➤ differential costs/effort by JI size		✔		✔	✔				✔					
Objectives and Results																
Explicit Objectives																
Has the program mechanism helped integrate strategic research results with policy-making and socio-economic development?	6	➤ partner ratings of policy usefulness of research												✔		✔
		➤ researcher ratings of policy usefulness of research	✔												✔	✔
		➤ extent to which JI program design elements facilitate the achievement of this objective (e.g.: extent to which program adjudication reflects partner relevant criteria)		✔					✔							✔
		➤ examples of successful (or unsuccessful) integration	✔													✔
		➤ Key success/failure factors	✔								✔		✔	✔	✔	✔
		➤ examples of use of research by partners	✔								✔			✔	✔	✔
		➤ average time between completion of project and partner use of results				✔								✔		✔
		➤ degree to which researchers design their research to ensure its usefulness				✔	✔								✔	✔
		➤ role of partner in designing the research		✔		✔					✔			✔		✔
Has the programs promoted the development of global and		➤ number of disciplines in grant applications and awards			✔	✔		✔								✔

Evaluation Issue		Indicator	Data/Document Review								Interviews			Survey		
			Final Research Reports	MOUs	Administrative data	Minutes / Communication	Evaluations/reviews	Internal Audit	Other documents	Review of similar programs	Staff	Eval. Advisory Committee	Management	Partners	Researchers	Case Studies
multi-disciplinary approaches to the study of contemporary issues?		➢ number of sub-disciplines in grant applications and awards			✔		✔		✔							✔
		➢ importance of multi-disciplinarity to research quality				✔	✔								✔	✔
Has the program mechanism encouraged communication between researchers and users of research?	8	➢ number of research communication activities/events by type (i.e., workshops, conferences, research publications, etc…)	✔						✔					✔	✔	✔
		➢ number of research communication events involving non-academic users of research	✔						✔					✔	✔	✔
		➢ review of publicity surrounding produced research							✔					✔	✔	✔
		➢ number of partners or collaborators (academic and non-academic) involved in individual JI funded projects	✔	✔	✔	✔								✔	✔	✔
		➢ examples of successful (or un-successful) communication to users of research					✔		✔			✔	✔		✔	✔
		➢ extent to which JI program design elements facilitate the achievement of this objective (e.g.: expectation that certain proportion of grant funds be used for communication of research)		✔	✔						✔			✔		✔
Implicit objectives																
Has the program mechanism helped increase the profile of SSHRC?	9	➢ profile among researchers (e.g., number of applications to JIs)			✔											
		➢ # and reasons for renewals as well as # and reasons for non-renewals		✔	✔	✔			✔		✔			✔		
		➢ number and diversity of partners over the years, as well as length of partnerships		✔	✔				✔							

8

Evaluation Issue		Indicator	Data/Document Review								Interviews			Survey		
			Final Research Reports	MOUs	Administrative data	Minutes / Communication	Evaluations/reviews	Internal Audit	Other documents	Review of similar programs	Staff	Eval. Advisory Committee	Management	Partners	Researchers	Case Studies
		➢ partner familiarity with SSHRC and SSHRC objectives		✔										✔		
		➢ familiarity of potential partners (identified through lapsed partners or review of federal departments/agencies) with JI program mechanism							✔					✔		
		➢ SSHRC staff and management impressions re. increased profile									✔	✔	✔			
		➢ Reputation for quality and expertise of Canadian SSHRC researchers is improved (partner perception pre- and post-program)												✔		
Has the JI program mechanism helped to build research and receptor capacity?	10	➢ Support for student training, including: • student placement, • thesis support, • support for students to attend conferences, • seed grants for student research.	✔	✔			✔		✔						✔	✔
		➢ alliances between universities and communities	✔	✔			✔								✔	✔
		➢ development of research centres/networks	✔	✔			✔								✔	✔
		➢ development of research capacity in an area of need			✔	✔	✔		✔					✔	✔	✔
		➢ qualitative assessment of partners capacity to receive, integrate, apply research results									✔	✔		✔		✔

Evaluation Issue		Indicator	Data/Document Review								Interviews			Survey		
			Final Research Reports	MOUs	Administrative data	Minutes / Communication	Evaluations/reviews	Internal Audit	Other documents	Review of similar programs	Staff	Eval. Advisory Committee	Management	Partners	Researchers	Case Studies
Has funding from the Joint Initiatives program mechanism generated significant additional funds from other sources (both at the JI program level and at the funded project level)?	11	➤ amount of additional research funding leveraged by source (at the program mechanism level, individual JI program level, and JI funded project level)	✔		✔									✔	✔	✔
		➤ research contracts between partners and researchers outside of the JI												✔	✔	✔
		➤ ratio of JI partner funds leveraged as a ratio to SSHRC's contribution			✔											
		➤ comparison of the level of funds leveraged by SSHRC versus that leveraged by other agencies as a result of similar programs			✔					✔						
		➤ efforts by SSHRC to generate additional research funding for the research community				✔					✔	✔	✔			
		➤ identification of high potential partnerships			✔				✔					✔		
Has the JI program mechanism resulted in sustainable partnership (at the JI program level and at the funded project level)?	12	➤ # and type of other collaborative endeavours undertaken by researchers during or after funding period													✔	✔
		➤ multiple programs or renewals of program with same partner		✔	✔						✔					
		➤ average length of partnerships		✔	✔									✔	✔	
		➤ progression of partnerships (in terms of magnitude and type)		✔	✔									✔	✔	✔
Does the JI program mechanism create undue risks? Are the risks associated with the JI program	13	➤ informed opinions re. potential risks: o negative impression of SSHRC or SSHRC researchers				✔	✔				✔	✔		✔	✔	

Evaluation Issue		Indicator	Data/Document Review								Interviews			Survey		
			Final Research Reports	MOUs	Administrative data	Minutes / Communication	Evaluations/reviews	Internal Audit	Other documents	Review of similar programs	Staff	Eval. Advisory Committee	Management	Partners	Researchers	Case Studies
mechanism identified and mitigated effectively?		o disconnection with SSHRC's mandate/objectives		✔		✔	✔		✔			✔	✔			✔
		o financial risks			✔			✔	✔							
		o complexity and variety of program delivery models			✔						✔	✔	✔			✔
		o sufficient oversight and review of JIs (lack of separate committee)				✔	✔					✔	✔			
		o sufficiency of vetting process for partners		✔			✔					✔	✔			
		o maintaining quality of funded research				✔	✔					✔	✔			
		o impact on other programs							✔			✔	✔			
		o loss of independence										✔	✔			
		o operational risks				✔					✔					✔
Does the JI program mechanism produce any unintended effects? (e.g., impact on organizational function)	14	➢ informed opinions re. potential unintended effects									✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

APPENDIX C
Membership and Mandate of Evaluation Advisory Committee

Mandate

The Evaluation Advisory Committee provides Project Management and consultants with advice the scope, overall quality, timelines, design, execution, analysis, and follow-up (including conclusions and recommendations) of the project to be undertaken, thus ensuring that the project achieves its objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities

In order to carry out this role, the Evaluation Advisory Committee is expected to:

➜ participate as required in the selection of consultants or consulting firms to conduct each phase of the evaluation[1];

➜ attend and participate in Project Advisory Committee meetings;

➜ provide feedback on draft documents and reports in a timely manner, and ensure that the evaluation takes into account corporate priorities as well as priorities specific to the Division or Directorate represented by each Committee member; and

➜ provide additional guidance as required and as appropriate.

Membership

The Evaluation Advisory Committee is composed of[2]:

➜ Patricia Dunne, Acting Vice-President, Programs;

➜ Marc Fonda, Assistant Director, Strategic Grants and Joint Initiatives Division;

➜ Gordana Krcevinac, Senior Program Officer, Strategic Grants and Joint Initiatives Division;

➜ Sylvie Paquette, Senior Policy Analyst, Corporate Policy, Planning, and International Collaboration Division;

➜ Hélène Régnier, Senior Policy Analyst, Corporate Policy, Planning, and International Collaboration Division (as of June 2006);

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[1] Four members of the Project Advisory Committee have been selected to form a proposal review sub-committee. They are: Marc Fonda, Sylvie Paquette, Rafika Amira and Courtney Amo.
[2] Les MacDonald and Denis Croux participated in this committee before their retirement.

- → Rafika Amira, Senior Performance and Evaluation Officer responsible for inter-Council evaluations and SSHRC special projects, Corporate Performance, Evaluation, and Audit Division (until July 2006);

- → Courtney Amo, Performance and Evaluation Officer (Project Manager), Corporate Performance, Evaluation, and Audit Division (**Chair**); and

- → **OBSERVERS**: France Landriault, Director, Corporate Performance, Evaluation, and Audit Division (until August 2006)

> Robert Lalande, Acting Director, Corporate Performance, Evaluation, and Audit Division

Other resource persons may be invited, from time to time, to provide comments and/or participate in meetings.

It is expected that the Project Manager be advised of a Committee Member's inability to participate or provide feedback according to required timelines. The Project Manager reserves the right to modify the membership of the Advisory Committee should a member become unable to fulfill his/her duties.

Relationship to Project Management

The Advisory Committee provides advice to the Project Manager, who maintains project authority.

Frequency of Meetings

The frequency of meetings varies according to the needs of the project. Advisory Committee members are expected to attend meetings, or, when possible, send representatives who are informed of the project to those meetings which they cannot attend.