



321 Simpson Avenue
Springfield, Canada

February 2, 2002

Dear Annie Vadeboncoeur,

Enclosed you will find a confidential report that responds to the evaluation plan regarding the Museums assistance program (MAP). We believe that this report will more than adequately meet your information requirements.

SMRT Consultants feel that an evaluation of the Museums assistance program is necessary to determine if the recent refocusing of MAP's priorities allows MAP to continue to meet their original goals and objectives. The advantages to performing an evaluation of MAP at this stage include assessing the effect of the refocused priorities on the museums across Canada that currently require financial assistance, as well as determining if the changes incorporated into Museums assistance program continue to meet the needs of Canadians regarding access to information regarding their diverse heritage. Furthermore, evaluation of the MAP is required to show accountability to the federal government regarding the overall need for the program.

The evaluation approach proposed by SMRT Consultants in an all-inclusive approach that will access all people involved with the MAP. This evaluation plan recommends obtaining information regarding the effect and use of MAP from the people that require MAP funding for their projects, those who administer the program, those who attend MAP funded exhibits, and everyday Canadians.

Please feel free to contact SMRT Consultants if you require further elaboration of the points made in this report, or if you have any other concerns. The evaluation questions that your company raised are ones we have addressed in the past with other clients. We hope, therefore, that our efforts in designing the evaluation plan for the Museums assistance program will lead to additional collaboration opportunities in the future.

We look forward to hearing your assessment of our future prospects. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the design evaluation of this very important program.

Sincerely,

A stylized, black, circular graphic element, resembling a lowercase 's' or a continuous loop, which is the logo for SMRT Consultants.

SMRT Consultants

Designing an Evaluation of

The Museums Assistance Program

Prepared for: Annie Vadeboncoeur, MAP Program Manager

Prepared by: SMRT Consultants

February 2, 2002



The Museums Assistance Project Background

The Museums Assistance Program (MAP) is managed by the Department of Canadian Heritage and provides financial assistance to Canadian museums and other related institutions that require additional sources of funding. MAP is aimed at ensuring excellent research, exhibitions, education, conservation, and information technology. MAP does this through three program components:

- financial support for traveling exhibitions which promote culture, heritage, and diversity (access and national outreach)
- financial support to Aboriginal museums for the development and management of collections (Aboriginal museum development)
- promotion of professional exchanges between museums and the development of museum professionals (organizational development)

Objectives

MAP provides financial assistance to Canadian museums and related institutions that:

- foster access by Canadians to their human, natural, artistic and scientific heritage
- enhance awareness, understanding and enjoyment of this heritage

Eligible Projects

Priorities for MAP funding include:

- projects which tell the Canadian story and promote inter-provincial perspectives
- projects which foster and support aboriginal museum development
- projects which support and encourage exchanges in dialogues between Canadian museum organizations and professionals

Eligible Applicants

Applicants to MAP must be:

- incorporated, non-profit Canadian museums

- incorporated non-profit organization wishing to plan and create a museum
- incorporated non-profit museum organizations and related institutions

Strengths and Weaknesses of Existing Evaluation Framework

SMRT consultants first step in planning the evaluation of the MAP was to examine the evaluation framework designed by Annie Vadeboncoeur and the professional evaluator. The strengths and weaknesses of the existing framework were determined, and suggestions regarding improvement are highlighted in the following section.

I. Relevance

With respect to the question of relevance, the MAP evaluation framework demonstrates valuable strengths. There are three chief questions of this kind, focusing on the relevance of the MAP objectives within the current policy context, the impact of the MAP program had it not been initiated in the 1970's, and the current needs of Canadians in regard to their awareness and understanding of Canadian heritage.

1) Do the MAP objectives remain relevant within the current policy context?

The first question in the evaluation framework asks whether the MAP objectives remain relevant within the current policy context in relation to the three components: Access to National Outreach, Aboriginal Museum Development, and Organizational Development.

With regards to the relevance of the three components, there are several strengths of the evaluation framework that should be emphasized. First, there is an appropriate amount of qualitative information sought to answer the question. Second, there is a good balance of both regional and national PCH input. Finally, the inclusion of Aboriginal heritage groups is fundamental and wholly fitting. While these strengths are commendable, there are also weaknesses in the evaluation framework that should be discussed.

First, there is not enough quantitative information to fully explore the question. This is particularly important in order to convince the stakeholders of the rigorosity of the data. In particular, a financial audit of Canadian museums should be employed in order to investigate issues pertaining to the success of museums to carry out proposed trans-national exhibits, operate Aboriginal heritage museums, and effectively enhance professional standards *without* MAP assistance. It would be useful to look at other potential sources for funding beyond the MAP program at this stage to determine the necessity of MAP funding.

Second, the usefulness of the 1999 MAP census survey is in question, since the MAP's priorities were refocused in that same year. It is not known whether the survey was conducted prior to this refocusing, and if so, whether there was sufficient time for respondents to make a valid evaluation of the new direction undertaken by the MAP program. Third, the evaluation framework is particularly vague in the degree to which program management will be surveyed for the development of a program management

model. This survey, in conjunction with the information gathered from the program documents, will aid in the development of a program evaluation model. Finally, it is highly recommended that the opinions of First Nations Peoples be included in the investigation of the relevance of the Aboriginal Museum Development component.

2) If MAP had not been implemented in the early '70's, to what extent would the MAP funded museum activities have been negatively impacted?

This question needs to clarify the meaning of “negatively impacted”. What type of negative impact could the museums that did not receive funding have? Would it be a negative impact for the museum if they did not have enough funding to go on a travelling exhibition for example, or would it be a negative impact if they went on the travelling exhibition without the funding but were financially suffering afterwards?

The MAP census survey may be a good way to question past applicants of whether they would have been negatively impacted without the MAP funding.

Perhaps an analysis of funding trends since the 1970's may indicate that programs are applying for more funding, but that does not necessarily mean that without the funding they are negatively impacted. Therefore, statistical analysis of the funding trends may not be very useful to answer this question. In addition, the opinions of stakeholders may not be a direct and accurate indicator of the negative impact that museums that do not get funding from MAP may have.

This question does not address non-profit museums that do not receive funding. They should compare the museums that received funding with a similar museum that did not receive funding perhaps because they did not know about the funding in order to determine whether those museums who did not get funding are negatively impacted. Or look at past museums that would have wanted the funding but no such program existed.

3a) What are, at the beginning of the 21st century, the current needs of Canadians in regard to their awareness and understanding of their diverse heritage?

In order to answer this question, opinions of Canadians may identify Canadians' needs as suggested in the framework. The 1999 MAP census survey is one way of accomplishing this indicator of the current needs of Canadians (if it is questioned in the survey). *Canadian Heritage questions in a national survey* can also be one way to find out how much Canadians know about their awareness and understanding of their diverse heritage. A literature review may be useful, in order to find past surveys measuring needs and interest of Canadians about wanting to know about their cultural heritage, or whether Canadians who know about their cultural heritage benefit in any way. Whether or not their needs are being assessed through these methods may not be so clear. Therefore, a more direct method of evaluating Canadians needs regarding their awareness and understanding of their diverse heritage is needed.

A visitor exit survey may be a biased sample to collect data from because they may already have been interested in knowing about their Canadian cultural heritage. They may believe more than others that knowing about Canadian heritage are more important than others may.

3b) What is the appropriate role of the federal government in regard to addressing these needs? For example, should the federal government identify the various “collections of national significance” across the country and provide support for their effective management?

The opinions of MAP stakeholders, and more importantly the opinion of Canadians can answer this question, depending on how relevant they think the efforts provided by the federal government are in regards to addressing these needs. A literature review may indicate the success of the federal government in the past of addressing needs such as these. The 1999 MAP census survey may also be a source of finding out what Canadians think that the appropriate role of the federal government should be.

Another option is to identify what the federal government believes that their role should be in addressing Canadians’ needs in regard to their awareness and understanding of their diverse heritage.

II. Success

The success measures of the proposed evaluation relate to four main areas:

4A) “To what extent has MAP led to Canadians knowing and understanding more about each other because of better access to their diverse heritage, identity, history and symbols?”

The proposed data sources of this question seem to be well represented in terms of their ability to provide both quantitative and qualitative information regarding the knowledge and understanding of Canadians. Ms. Vadeboncoeur’s proposal includes an assessment of the statistical profile of MAP funded projects in all of their forms. As well, the opinion of stakeholders is taken into account in order to get a more qualitative understanding (e.g., case studies) of the effect that the projects have had on the lives of Canadians.

However, this question does not seem to be fully addressed by Ms. Vadeboncoeur’s indicators. The very nature of the question presupposes that attendees of the exhibits have gained knowledge; the indicators do not address this directly. The number of exhibits does not infer learning, and the opinion of stakeholders (i.e., museum workers) is hardly an unbiased approach to answering this question. Though she does mention the exit survey for visitors, it is quite important that this survey consist of more than mere visitor satisfaction-type questions. Perhaps interviews or focus groups with museum visitors could be used in addendum to Ms. Vadeboncoeur’s proposed data sources.

4B) “To what extent has MAP led to the more effective retention, preservation, conservation, and presentation of the cultural heritage of Aboriginal peoples in Canada?”

The existing evaluation framework deals well with this question; it attempts to address this issue by looking at a statistical and descriptive profile of Aboriginal development, which is likely to be beneficial to the perception of the report as rigorous and credible. The opinion of stakeholders is also taken into account in order to provide a

balanced view. However, in terms of stakeholder views, the only data sources that address this indicator are case studies and the regional workshop. It is also important to interview funded organizations in order to determine their opinions on the role that MAP funding played in their ability to retain, preserve, conserve, and present Aboriginal peoples' heritage. Case studies are normally in-depth studies of a small sample of organizations, and may be used to gather some data, but it may be equally important to gather less in depth data, but with a more representative (i.e., larger) sample of organizations.

4C) "To what extent has MAP led to the more effective management and greater capacity to meet new challenges as well as long term financial stability of museum organizations across Canada regarding (1) professional development of trustees, staff and volunteers, (2) effective long term management of collections, and (3) planning and feasibility studies?"

The existing evaluation framework contains a rather extensive listing of indicators that address this question. However, this may be an indication of the vague and overly complex nature of the question being asked. It is actually at least three questions that have been collapsed together, addressing (a) effective management, (b) greater capacity to meet new challenges, and (c) long term financial stability, within the three areas indicated in the evaluation question. Before the impact of MAP can be fully understood in these areas, it is important to determine in what their status was in the past; for example, was professional development *not* managed effectively in the past? As well, it does not seem as though some of these questions included within this particular evaluation question are relevant to the MAP program. For example, is it really the goal of MAP to manage the professional development of museum staff, or is it to provide funding to enable these opportunities? Other indicators that may need to be addressed regarding this evaluation question include: (a) the retention of professionals should be examined in order to determine whether the opportunities are actually affecting the long-term status of the organizations receiving funding; and (b) a financial audit/review (including analysis of long term trends) of the funded agencies (or a sample thereof) should be performed in order to determine how MAP funding has effected their financial stability.

5) What performance monitoring mechanisms have been put in place to measure MAP performance? What annual reporting and/or periodic reviews should be implemented?

The indicators for this question are generally strong, however, further specification is required regarding where the project forms and reports will be obtained from. Data must be gathered from the regional offices as well as from the headquarters of MAP as these two distinct portions of the MAP operation administer support to different types of projects. Furthermore, an additional indicator of performance of MAP funded projects that is not included in the current evaluation plan is the number of published reports regarding MAP funded projects. This indicator would supply the Department of Canadian

Heritage with information regarding the success of the MAP project in reaching the public.

The data sources required to answer this evaluation question are inclusive, however, specification of the analysis of MAP funded projects for the number of reports published each year would be recommended. Furthermore, key informant interviews must include staff from both regional and national offices, as each office may have different performance monitoring systems.

III. Program Design and Delivery

In the area of program design and delivery there are four main evaluation questions.

6) Is the level of funding appropriate in each of the three MAP components?

The indicators for this question appear to be strong and valid ways of addressing the question. It is important in addressing the appropriateness of the disbursement of the funds to gather the opinions of MAP stakeholders and experts. It would be appropriate, however, to better define what is meant by MAP stakeholders and experts. These seem to be two completely different groupings of parties involved in the funding allocation and use of the MAP program.

Experts in the evaluation of this question seem to be those parties directly involved in the allocations of funds and their opinions as to the appropriateness of funding distribution is limited by the availability of such funds. Therefore, their comments on this matter would seem to have little relevance to this question outside of their area of expertise.

Stakeholders in the evaluation of this question should be defined as the personnel of the museum applying to the MAP program. Key informant interviews with these stakeholders is necessary in determining the appropriateness of the level of funding for the three MAP components.

An additional indicator to answer this question would be an analysis of the fiscal year end reports of successful candidates. This analysis would be valuable because it will show whether or not the level of funding from the MAP program was adequate or not in meeting their financial requirements.

The data surveys for answering this question must necessarily include a documentation review of the past funding, which is included in the original program evaluation. This documentation review should include a review of past funding and a current fiscal audit. Interviews with the stakeholders as defined above should be included, but interviews with experts as defined above do not seem to be an appropriate data source for the evaluation of this question. The 1999 MAP census survey and regional workshops would not provide appropriate information to address this question and would appear to be a waste of time and effort for evaluating this question. A more appropriate source of data for this question would be site visits to the successful applicants.

7) More generally, to what extent are the design and delivery of the three MAP components consistent with MAP objectives?

The indicators for the evaluation of this question are both appropriate. An analysis of MAP guidelines and criteria in regards to their fit regarding MAP objectives is necessary to evaluate the design and delivery of the three MAP components. The opinion of MAP experts is necessary in evaluating this question, as the experts are most aware of the specific objectives of the MAP program. Key informant interviews with MAP stakeholders are not appropriate in evaluating this question and as most stakeholders are not likely as familiar with the specific objectives of the program. In the evaluation of this question the data sources that must be used are a documentation review, which will include the development of a Managers Document Model. Key informant interviews with MAP experts are also a necessary and valuable source in evaluating this question. Again, data from the 1999 Map Census Survey and regional workshops are not appropriate.

8) More specifically, is MAP (three components) designed appropriately to reach targeted institutions and individuals?

The indicators for the evaluation of this question appear to be appropriate. A profile of institutions that receive MAP funding compared to those who have not received such funding is necessary in evaluating the effectiveness of the program design. Gathering the opinions of stakeholders and experts also seems to be appropriate ways to address this question, however, it is more appropriate to gather the opinions of stakeholders in regards to this question. It seems to effect stakeholders more so than the experts.

The data sources for this question necessarily require a documentation review and key informant interviews. Data gathered from regional workshops would be an appropriate data source for this question but again, data from the 1999 Census Survey would not necessarily be applicable.

9) Are there design/delivery elements that work against the success of MAP...

Further information needs to be obtained in this portion of the evaluation. A sub question required in this section is in relation to the application requirements. Many groups that may be eligible for the MAP may not be applying, as they do not feel they meet the eligibility requirements. This aspect requires further evaluation. Indicators should include applicants and non-applicants opinions, and the opinions of the staff of the MAP. The opinion of these groups would provide a rich source of data that would otherwise not be available, the applicants on the application and approval process, and the staff on the day-to-day actions required to carry out the administration of the MAP.

There is a paucity of data sources for this question as well. Data sources must include the personnel that perform the peer and regional reviews. Furthermore, groups that do not apply for the MAP should be contacted regarding their opinions of why they do not apply for the MAP, as this is important process data that may lead to a change in

the way the MAP is administered, and in the requirements for the three different components of the MAP.

IV. Cost-Effectiveness and Alternatives

This section of the evaluation framework relates to the cost-effectiveness of the delivery of the MAP programs.

10) Is the current MAP delivery approach cost-effective? How does it compare to similar (provincial/municipal/international) programs?

The indicators for this question will produce important information regarding MAP in comparison to other programs of this type. However, as MAP is a very individualized program to Canada, information regarding the cost-effectiveness of the MAP needs to be obtained from the stakeholders in the MAP program. To strengthen the data obtained from this evaluation question, fiscal trends over time need to be obtained to determine that the money that is being spent is being used wisely. In regards to stakeholder information, stakeholders may have suggestions for areas that require change to reduce costs that they have noticed from participating in the MAP process over time.

MAP Evaluation Plan

In order to evaluate the Museums Assistance Program, SMRT Consultants suggest three phases to the evaluation design. Phase One will be a needs assessment, in which the need for the MAP across Canada is determined. Phase Two will involve a process evaluation, in which the administration of the program will be evaluated to determine if it is being implemented as planned. The final phase of the evaluation plan includes an outcome evaluation in which the effectiveness of the MAP program is evaluated, in terms of both the museums that use the MAP, and those that could use it. This section of the report will outline in detail the methodology and rationale for the evaluation of the MAP.

I. Needs Assessment

Relevance

Trend and Ratio Analysis

A cost-effective method of beginning to gather evidence regarding the necessity of the MAP program for museums and Aboriginal heritage organizations is the analysis of uptake levels of MAP applications. The number of applications received on a yearly basis, as well as the number approved will be tabulated from the early 1970s until present. In particular, any differences in trend occurring subsequent to the 1999 shift in MAP's priorities will be examined in order to determine what effect, if any this shift may have had on application and approval rates. Regardless of the result of this information, it will only be a preliminary step in the evaluation, as the information will not indicate

definitively what the cause of shifts in trend were. For example, a decline may mean that the program is no longer necessary, or it may mean that less funding dollars have been allocated to ensuring that museum staff are aware of the existence of MAP. An increase in trend similarly may be the result of various factors.

Case Study (Analysis of Need)

Case studies of a small sample of Canadian museums will be done to determine whether MAP funding remains necessary to the design, transfer, and display of exhibits across Canada, the preservation and presentation of the cultural heritage of Aboriginal peoples, and the enhancement of professional standards. The case studies will take place with both MAP applicants that have successfully applied for funding, unsuccessful applicants, and institutions that have never applied for map funding. A sample of three to five institutions in each of these categories would be sufficient to capture the needed information. SMRT Consultants recommend that purposive sampling be used to sample from the museums across Canada. Attempting to represent the broadest possible range of attributes, museums would be selected for inclusion based upon their budget, number of visitors per year, diversity in funding sources, etc. A particularly important criterion is representation of Aboriginal heritage groups.

These case studies will include in-depth interviews with museum directors. The interviews will be semi-structured in terms of questions asked, but directors will be encouraged to discuss other (related) topics of importance to them that are outside of the formal structure of the interview. The interview will cover topics such as: Without MAP funding, what is your ability to engage in the above noted activities? Are there other sources of funding that you are aware of that may be used to fund these types of projects? Are there exhibits that your museum is interested in acquiring, but is unable to? Institutions who have successfully applied for MAP funding will be asked what they believe the overall negative impact to their museum would be had MAP never been implemented.

As well, the case study will involve a comparative review of the number of travelling exhibits the museums have been able to acquire, based on the population that they serve. When possible, the actual budgets of the organization/museum will be examined to determine their level of need (do they run in a deficit? do they receive a large amount of private sector funding? Etc.).

National Survey of Canadian Museum Directors

SMRT Consultants recommends the development of a national survey questionnaire. This questionnaire would be mailed out to staff at 300 randomly selected museums and contain a series of both open-ended and closed-ended questions regarding the relevance of the MAP program and its success. While this would be a large undertaking, our team feels it would be a necessary and fruitful enterprise.

Relevance Portion of the National Survey of Canadian Museum Directors

Based on the information obtained through the in-depth case studies, the relevance portion of the national survey will be developed in order to tap the views of museum directors. The issues identified by the small sample will be used to develop closed-ended survey questions. Questions, which may be identified prior to the analysis of the case studies, include (rated on a 7-point scale; 1 = Not at all able to provide without 100% outside funding, 7 = Able to provide regardless of outside funding): How able is your museum to acquire displays from other museums/organizations? Engage in staff training through conferences? Engage in formal staff training through university or college courses? Etc.

Visitor Exit Surveys

Finally, visitor exit surveys will be used to determine whether consumers view these exhibits as beneficial to Canadians and personally interesting and informative. In particular, a purposive sample of Aboriginal consumers will be targeted, to ensure that their views are recognized as important (especially in terms of the exhibits relevant specifically to Aboriginal culture).

Current Needs of Canadians

The next step in evaluating the need for the MAP is to determine the current needs of Canadians in regard to their awareness and understanding of their diverse heritage. To assess this need, a needs assessment must be designed to effectively evaluate this question. This process starts first of all with a review of the current literature in this area. Then the planning and conducting of several focus groups and forums across the country can follow. Then key informant interviews with selected members of the Canadian population to address these issues needs to be set up. In order to gather the appropriate needs of Canadians in regards to their awareness and understanding of their heritage a national heritage survey needs to be designed and implemented. This survey will be designed based on information learned from the focus groups and interviews. This survey will be sent to a representative sample of Canadian citizens, with care being taken to ensure a proportionate sample is drawn from each province. This survey will address questions directly related to awareness and understanding of Canadian heritage.

Finally, in regards to need, the appropriate role of the federal government in regard to addressing these needs must be determined. For example, should the federal government identify the various “collections of national significance” across the country and provide support for their effective management? This question can be addressed in the same manner described above. This question can be asked in the focus groups and the key informant interviews. The key informant interviews, however, will be expanded to appropriate members of the federal government.

II. Program Design and Delivery

Evaluability Assessment

In order to identify to what extent the design and delivery of the three components are consistent with the MAP objectives an evaluability assessment will be conducted. The first method that will be employed to gather information regarding the relevance of the MAP program is a modified version of an evaluability assessment (Rutman, 1980). This method begins with a review of program documentation in order to determine the causal linkages between program components (e.g., National Outreach Initiative), goals (e.g., development and circulation of travelling exhibitions), and objectives (e.g., to connect different geographic regions of the country). This information is displayed in a program documents model, which is also known as a program logic model (but is based solely on program documentation).

This model is further developed through interviews with MAP staff (at the regional and national level) to determine whether the consultant's model of the program fits with that of staff, and is relevant to the actual operation of the program.

Regional Workshops

The pre-existing evaluation framework lists "regional workshops" as potential data source. As the nature of these workshops is not specified in the evaluation documents, our team has assumed that these workshops include some method of assessing the views of regional MAP staff, and possibly those of any representatives of national headquarters that may attend. These workshops are therefore taken to be equivalent to a focus group of PCH MAP staff.

Process Evaluation

Once the program has been developed and begun, an evaluation of process is needed to note the extent to which the program is running the way it was planned, the type of people that the program is reaching and how much the program is operating as expected (Posavac & Carey, 1997). This process evaluation will also include unstructured telephone interviews with people using and not using the service because this information may provide points of views that have not been considered.

The first question that should be addressed is whether or not the level of funding is appropriate in each of the three MAP components. The 1999 MAP census survey will be analyzed in order to find any relevant information about whether past non-profit museums found that the funding was appropriate. Another survey that will be sent to a random sample of non-profit museums in Canada that have and/or have not received funding from MAP in the past will also be sent out. This survey will ask how much money is needed for the projects that may be applicable to MAP and how much of the costs they are able to afford. Past funding recipients for each of the three MAP components will be asked to participate in an unstructured telephone interview¹ in order

¹ The reason for including telephone interviews instead of focus groups was due to the difficulty in gathering the staff of non-profit museums all over Canada in a focus group.

to identify whether the levels of funding were enough, too much, or what problems or obstacles they had (e.g., any amount of money would have helped).

In order to determine whether MAP is designed appropriately to reach targeted institutions and individuals the documentation review will be analyzed in order to look at all applications that were received in order to determine what type of applicants are applying for funding and whether they match the target group. In addition, the documentation review will look at the profile of institutions reached by MAP vs. the intended institutions that were to be reached and determine whether they are reaching their target population.

In order to determine whether the design/delivery elements work against the success of MAP, the national survey that will be sent out to all non-profit museums will include questions about the reasons why non-profit groups did not apply for the funding and if they did not what their reasons were. Therefore, it is possible to identify whether the criteria for approval may not apply in the first place. In addition, the focus groups that will be targeting past non-profit museums that received funding for each of the three components will be asked questions pertaining to the design and delivery of the approval criteria

II. A. Cost-Effectiveness and Alternatives

In order to identify whether the current MAP delivery approach is cost-effective a literature review of other provincial/municipal/international programs regarding delivery process and funding/budgeting decisions and a literature review of federal programs that may support similar projects will be conducted. In addition, interviews with key informants and regional workshops may help identify ways to reduce costs.

Alternatives in the design and delivery will be examined from the surveys and interviews from the non-profit museums and determine whether there are more cost-effective ways in reaching the goals of MAP.

III. Outcome Evaluation of the Museums Assistance Program

SMRT Consultants recommends the development of a national survey questionnaire. This questionnaire would be mailed out to staff at 300 randomly selected museums and contain a series of both open-ended and closed-ended questions regarding the relevance of the MAP program and its success. While this would be a large undertaking, our team feels it would be a necessary and fruitful enterprise.

As mentioned earlier, SMRT Consultants recommends the development of a national survey questionnaire in order to quantify certain programmatic and delivery aspects pertaining to the MAP program. This is especially important in evaluating the question asked in cell 4A. For example, it is essential to ascertain the number of travelling exhibits and the number of new media initiatives, as outlined in the original evaluation framework. The survey would be mailed out to a sample of museum staff from 300 randomly selected Canadian museums, provided they meet the criteria to apply for MAP assistance.

Moreover, the national survey would also be used in order to evaluate the question posed in cell 4C: To what extent has MAP led to the more effective management and greater capacity to meet new challenges as well as long term financial stability of museum organizations across Canada? In this regard, the survey would question museum staff about MAP's ability to assist in their professional development, long-term management of collections, and planning and feasibility studies. For instance, a key question in the area of training staff is whether MAP-assisted museums were able to retain the staff after training.

According to the evaluation questions, a major criterion of success is the degree to which MAP has led to Canadians having a better understanding of each other. This question poses a great amount of difficulty because of the difficulty posed in assessing the contribution of the MAP program to Canadians "knowing" each other. As such, SMRT Consultants recommends that an exit survey be undertaken in which participants are asked to respond to a series of questions regarding their knowledge of Canadian heritage, identity, history, and symbols. Respondents should be matched on demographic characteristics (e.g., urban centres, age, frequency of visits to museums) so that comparisons may be made between respondents frequenting MAP and non-MAP assisted exhibits.

It is also vital that qualitative interviews with all key stakeholders be undertaken in order to ascertain the criteria upon which MAP success should be judged. Such interviews should include questions pertaining to access to, and preservation of, cultural heritage. SMRT Consultants also recommends that focus groups be conducted with PCH regional staff members. The pre-existing evaluation framework lists "regional workshops" as potential data source. As the nature of these workshops is not specified in the evaluation documents, our team has assumed that these workshops include some method of assessing the views of regional MAP staff. These workshops are therefore taken to be equivalent to a focus group of PCH MAP staff. These focus groups would be of great value in helping to identify core issues in the domain of cultural heritage and the success of the MAP program in achieving its goals.

Finally, it is necessary to uncover which performance monitoring mechanisms are to be utilized in order to continue to assess the MAP program's success. The abovementioned exit survey, as well as data from the 1999 MAP census survey, stakeholder interviews, and regional workshops, will help speak to this question. SMRT Consultants also recommends that publications and contributions by MAP-assisted museum staff be compared to those contributions by non-MAP-assisted staff.

Overall, the use of the national survey, exit survey, stakeholder interviews, and focus groups (i.e., regional workshops) are critical to evaluating the success of the MAP program. The information gathered by these means, in conjunction with data from the 1999 MAP census survey, financial audits, case studies, and program documentation reviews, will help to elucidate the various outcomes of the MAP program in relation to its stated goals and research questions. Furthermore, the blend of qualitative and quantitative nature of the data to be gathered should be sufficient in convincing the stakeholders of the thoroughness and validity of the research project.

Challenges and Opportunities

Our plan is to reach the non-profit museums that MAP does not reach and/or non-profit museums that do not apply for MAP funding. The challenge to our approach of data collection is to reach this sample of non-profit museums through a mail-out survey, which may be difficult to reach through this method because of the low response rates that occur in mail-out surveys. The strengths of our plan are that we may reach a population of target respondents of MAP that are not applying for funding. This may highlight for MAP why certain non-profit museums are not applying for funding and why. In addition, funding applicants who have not received funding will also be included in this survey and it will be possible to determine the effects of not receiving funding for these museums.

References

Posavac, E.J. & Carey, R.G. (1997). *Program evaluation: Methods and case studies* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rutman, L. (1980). *Planning useful evaluations: Evaluability assessment*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.