



Joint Evaluation of the St. Lawrence Action Plan

At a glance

September 2024





Scope and Methodology



- The joint evaluation of the St. Lawrence Action Plan (SLAP) addresses issues of governance, reporting and external communications during the period from 2016–2017 to 2021–2022. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Treasury Board of Canada's *Policy on Results* (2016) and the Government of Quebec's *Directive concernant l'évaluation de programme dans les ministères et les organismes* (2014).
- The evaluation was based on a mixed methods approach involving the use of several sources of primary and secondary information and data, both quantitative and qualitative:
 - **Review of documents and analysis of program data** including SLAP management documents, work plans and reviews, web and social media analytics, and financial, administrative and performance data.
 - **Interviews** with 11 members of the Agreement Steering Committee (ASC).
 - **Survey** of government participants (59 respondents) and external partners (64 respondents).
 - **Case study** focused on decision-making by the ASC. The study included a document review and three group interviews with a total of 11 additional representatives.





Conclusions and Observations (1 of 3)

Governance

- The governance structure supports the fulfilment of SLAP's mandate by promoting information-sharing, consultation, and monitoring of program projects. The Issues Committees and Working Groups are carrying out their roles effectively.
- However, several members of the Agreement Steering Committee (ASC) are of the view that the Committee is not exercising its strategic role effectively. First, it is seldom used to discuss emerging issues or problems, which is expected under SLAP's management framework. Second, the recurrent absence of representatives from partner departments and agencies diminishes the ASC's ability to fully exercise its strategic role.
- Follow-up on ASC meetings can be strengthened to improve the effectiveness of decision-making and operations aimed at delivering SLAP's Joint Action Program.
- Opportunities for contribution to the SLAP are limited for First Nations and the municipal and community sectors.



Conclusions and Observations (2 of 3)

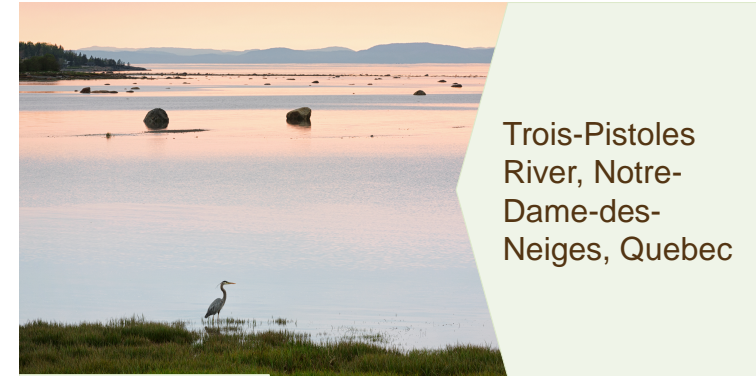
Reporting

- Generally speaking, the reporting process is effective and helps in tracking project progress and achievements.
- Project leaders consider the workload associated with SLAP reporting to be significant.
- Not all the information collected is used to support decision-making or the achievement of SLAP objectives.
- Several users find the electronic reporting platform difficult to work with.

Conclusions and Observations (3 of 3)

External Communications

- SLAP external communications are guided by an overall strategy, but that strategy does not have a performance measurement framework. It is impossible to determine whether objectives have been achieved.
- Partners said that external communications activities did not meet their needs. Allotted resources were not fully utilized.
- Collaborators and users said that they received little or no information on SLAP, despite their high level of interest in its activities and results.
- Despite efforts and a redesign, website navigation remains difficult; some content is out-of-date, and the News section is seldom used. SLAP does not have its own social media accounts and only occasionally uses government social media accounts. In addition, partners do not further disseminate SLAP publications.





Recommendations

Recommendation 1

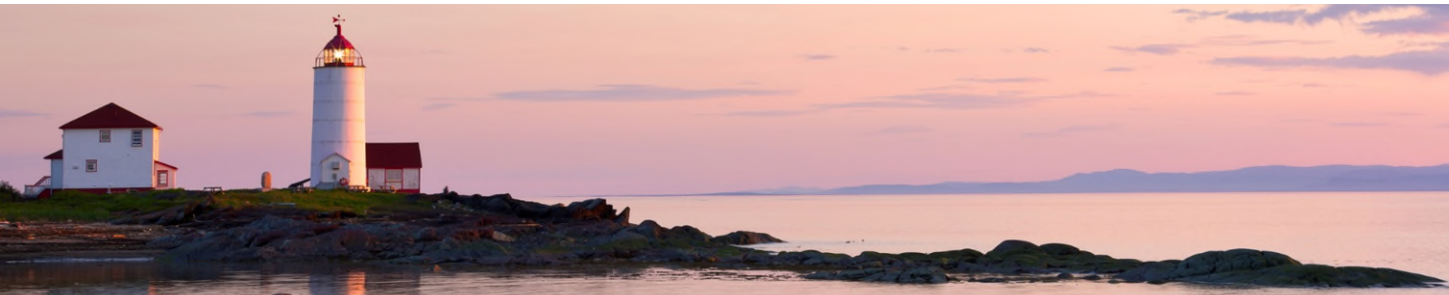
Strengthen the strategic use of the Agreement Steering Committee by all participants, and particularly by the Agreement Co-Chairs, to take advantage of opportunities to enhance programming and resolve obstacles to project progress. Strengthen the use of the system of designated substitutes for departmental representatives.

Recommendation 2

Improve reporting efficiency to reduce the associated workload. Consider adopting measures to improve the Oproma platform's user experience.

Recommendation 3

Strengthen SLAP external communications, including by ensuring that resources are in line with objectives and developing a strategy for measuring activity performance.



Île Verte, Quebec



Response from SLAP co-chairs

We have taken note of the joint evaluation report of the St. Lawrence Action Plan for the period between 2016-2017 and 2021-2022 as well as the recommendations made.

The governments of Canada and Quebec have been collaborating for 35 years now on the conservation and development of the St. Lawrence through successive Agreements which bring together around ten departments from each government.

The mandate of the joint evaluation of PASL focused on governance issues and external communications.

The two governments attach great importance to good governance of PASL bodies as well as to the communication and dissemination of the results resulting from the Agreement to all partners, collaborators, and users.

Thus, the recommendations made will be studied by the teams of the two governments in order to identify the possibilities of taking them into account by the end of the current Agreement (2011-2026) and consider those which can feed into the development of a future Agreement.

In closing, we would like to highlight the work carried out by the joint evaluation team and thank all the staff members, PASL partners and users who provided their observations.

