

# Evaluation of the Biometrics (Steady State) and Canada-United States Immigration Information Sharing (IIS) Initiatives

Evaluation Division

Research and Evaluation

Certain sections containing sensitive information have been redacted in accordance with the principles of the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*.

October 2019



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada

For information about other Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) publications, visit: [www.cic.gc.ca/publications](http://www.cic.gc.ca/publications).

Available in alternative formats upon request.

Également disponible en français sous le titre : Évaluation de l'initiative de biométrie (état stable) et de l'initiative d'échange de renseignements en matière d'immigration (ERI) entre le Canada et les États-Unis

Visit us online

Website: [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/CitCanada](https://www.facebook.com/CitCanada)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/CitImmCanada](https://www.youtube.com/CitImmCanada)

Twitter: @CitImmCanada

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, 2019

Ci4-202/2020E-PDF  
978-0-660-33656-5

Ref. No.: E4-2017

## Table of contents

List of acronyms .....	iii
Executive summary .....	iv
Evaluation of the Biometrics – MRAP.....	ix
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Purpose of the evaluation .....	1
1.2. Profile of the initiatives.....	1
1.2.1. <i>Biometrics</i> .....	1
1.2.2. <i>Immigration information sharing with the US</i> .....	2
1.2.3. <i>Expansion</i> .....	3
1.2.4. <i>Roles and responsibilities</i> .....	4
1.3. Statistical profile of applicants.....	5
1.3.1. <i>Biometrics</i> .....	5
1.3.2. <i>Immigration Information sharing with the US</i> .....	5
<b>2. Methodology .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1. Evaluation scope, focus and questions.....	6
2.2. Data collection methods .....	7
2.3. Limitations and considerations.....	8
<b>3. Relevance.....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1. Continued need .....	9
3.2. Alignment with departmental and government priorities .....	10
<b>4. Performance – Use of biometrics and IIS with the US .....</b>	<b>11</b>
4.1. Use of biometrics in immigration decision-making .....	11
4.1.1. <i>Incidence of matches</i> .....	11
4.1.2. <i>Contribution to decision-making</i> .....	12
4.2. Use of IIS with US in immigration decision-making.....	12
4.2.1. <i>Incidence of matches</i> .....	13
4.2.2. <i>Contribution to decision-making</i> .....	13
4.3. Use of biometrics and IIS in the refugee context .....	14
4.3.1. <i>Asylum in Canada</i> .....	14
4.3.2. <i>Resettlement from abroad</i> .....	15
4.4. Use of Biometrics for verification at POEs .....	16
4.5. Use of Biometrics to support criminal investigations.....	17
4.6. Contribution to safety, security and program integrity.....	18
<b>5. Performance – Implementation of the initiatives.....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1. Effectiveness of policies, procedures and guidelines.....	19
5.1.1. <i>Legal authorities, privacy measures and quality assurance</i> .....	19
5.1.2. <i>Functional guidance and training</i> .....	21
5.2. Communication and coordination .....	23
5.3. Coverage for biometric enrolment abroad .....	23
5.4. Capacity abroad to enrol and use biometrics.....	24
5.5. Capacity in Canada to verify Biometrics at POEs .....	26
5.6. Capacity abroad to use IIS with the US .....	27
5.7. Resource utilization .....	28
5.7.1. <i>Contribution to facilitated movement and application processing abroad</i> .....	28
5.7.2. <i>Value for the investment</i> .....	29
<b>6. Conclusions and recommendations .....</b>	<b>31</b>

<b>Appendix A:</b>	<b>Nationalities of Temporary Residents requiring biometrics under Steady State .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix B:</b>	<b>Logic models .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix C:</b>	<b>Overview of the surveys used in the evaluation .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Appendix D:</b>	<b>Limitations and considerations.....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix E:</b>	<b>Survey findings on the contribution of Biometrics and IIS with the US to safety, security and immigration program integrity in Canada .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Appendix F:</b>	<b>Survey findings on formal and informal avenues for discussion for IRCC migration offices abroad.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Appendix G:</b>	<b>Survey findings on the value of biometrics and IIS with the US in decision-making .....</b>	<b>47</b>

## List of tables

Table 1:	Biometrics: Applicant intake and matches returned from the RCMP's RTID system .....	11
Table 2:	Biometric and Biographic IIS with the US: Applicant intake and matches returned .....	13
Table E1:	Contribution of Biometrics to Safety, Security and Immigration Program Integrity in Canada .....	44
Table E2:	Contribution of IIS with the US to Safety, Security and Immigration Program Integrity in Canada .....	44
Table F1:	Presence of formal avenues for discussion .....	45
Table F2:	Presence of informal avenues for discussion .....	45
Table F3:	Need for more formal avenues for discussion .....	45
Table F4:	Effectiveness of avenues for discussion .....	46
Table G1:	Extent to which Biometrics are Valuable to Decision-Making .....	47
Table G2:	Extent to which IIS with the US is Valuable to Decision-Making.....	47

## List of acronyms

ASC	Application Support Centre
BAU	Biometrics Assessment Unit
BOSU	Biometrics Operational Support Unit
BSO	Border Services Officer
CBSA	Canada Border Services Agency
CCRTIS	Canadian Criminal Real Time Identification Services
CISU	Centralized Information Sharing Unit
CIBIDS	Canadian Immigration Biometric Identification System
CN	Centralized Network
DN	Domestic Network
GCMS	Global Case Management System
GoC	Government of Canada
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board
IRPA	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act
IRPR	Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations
IIS	Immigration Information Sharing
IPGB	Immigration Program Guidance Branch
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
IT	Information Technology
IN	International Network
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
M5	Migration 5
MO	Migration Officer
OPC	Office of the Privacy Commissioner
OB	Operational Bulletin
OPPB	Operations Planning and Performance Branch
OGD	Other Government Department
PR	Permanent Residence
POE	Port of Entry
PIL	Primary Inspection Line
PIK	Primary Inspection Kiosk
PDI	Program Delivery Instructions
RTID	Real Time Identification
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SI	Secondary Inspection
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SSC	Shared Services Canada
SIMB	Solutions Information Management Branch
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TR	Temporary Resident
TRBP	Temporary Resident Biometrics Project
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UN Refugee Agency)
US	United States
VAC	Visa Application Centre

## Executive summary

### Purpose of the evaluation:

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the Biometrics (Steady State) and Canada-United States (US) Immigration Information Sharing (IIS) Initiatives. The evaluation examined the relevance and performance of these initiatives, with a focus on their ongoing operations between 2014 and 2017. Expansion activities in relation to the Biometrics and IIS initiatives were not assessed as part of the evaluation. However, considerations to inform expansion efforts are presented.

The evaluation was conducted in fulfillment of commitments made within the Biometrics and IIS Treasury Board Submissions and Performance Measurement Strategies, as well as evaluation requirements of the Treasury Board 2016 *Policy on Results*. The evaluation was led by Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and conducted in collaboration with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

### Overview of the initiatives:

Both Biometrics and IIS with the US are mechanisms used within the context of identity management and immigration decision-making to better establish the identity of foreign nationals seeking entry into in Canada, and to obtain otherwise unknown information on applicants to aid in determining admissibility.

#### **Biometrics**

The biometrics currently collected by Canada are comprised of a digital photograph and fingerprints, as well as associated biographic information.

- At the time of the evaluation, biometrics were being collected from asylum claimants, deportees and refugee resettlement applicants, as well as from Temporary Resident (TR) applicants (visitor visa, work and study permit applicants) from 29 visa-required countries and one territory.

Once collected, biometrics are searched against the RCMP's Real Time Identification (RTID) system for match information related to previous criminality and immigration history in Canada, and then stored in the RTID system. Biometric information is also verified to confirm the identity of visa holders upon arrival at Canadian ports of entry (POE).

#### **Canada-US IIS**

In 2011, under the *Beyond the Border Action Plan*, Canada and the US committed to establishing automated immigration information sharing capabilities in order to improve immigration and border determinations, establish and verify the identities of travelers, and conduct screening at the earliest possible opportunity to strengthen the screening of foreign nationals. Under systematic IIS with the US, Canada exchanges immigration information using two types of queries: Biographic (based on elements such as name, date, country of birth and gender) and Biometric (based on fingerprints).

At the time of the evaluation:

- Canada exchanged immigration information with the US using biographic-based queries for all foreign nationals applying for a TR visa (including applicants for study and work permits), permanent residence (PR), and refugee resettlement from abroad. Potential matches from the US are only returned if derogatory (i.e. negative) information exists.
- Canada exchanged immigration information with the US using biometric-based queries for biometric-required TR applicants, resettled refugee applicants and in-Canada asylum claimants. Biographic and immigration information are only exchanged upon confirmation of a fingerprint match, and immigration information exchanged can be positive or derogatory in nature.

### ***Expansion***

At the time of the evaluation, efforts to expand Canada's Biometrics and IIS initiatives were well underway, and many of the key commitments under the Expansion project had already been implemented. While not assessed as part of the evaluation, some important accomplishments of Expansion are outlined below.

- Systematic immigration information sharing began expanding in 2017 to other Migration 5 partners, beginning with Australia (April 2017) and New Zealand (February 2018).
- The Biometrics Expansion project began rolling out in 2018. Key accomplishments at the time of evaluation included:
  - The expansion of the biometrics requirement to non-exempted TR applicants, as well as permanent residence applicants, applying from outside of Canada (completed in December 2018); and
  - The deployment of automated Systematic Fingerprint Verification (SFV) at Primary Inspection Kiosks (PIK) for five of the eight planned airport POEs: Vancouver (January, 2019), Halifax (February, 2019), Ottawa and (March, 2019), Calgary and Edmonton (June, 2019). In addition, Quebec City (February, 2019) and Toronto City Centre (March, 2019) also deployed SFV through their participation in the PIK initiative.

### **Summary of conclusions and recommendations:**

In sum, the evaluation found that the Biometrics and Canada-US IIS initiatives are well aligned with domestic and international security priorities, as well as with Canada's objectives under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA). The initiatives provide important tools for Canada's identity management, immigration and border decision-making processes, and play an important role in protecting the integrity of Canada's immigration and refugee programs, as well as in maintaining public and partner confidence in these efforts.

The evaluation focused on results related to the ongoing operations of these initiatives with a view to informing the Biometrics Expansion project. With this in mind, the conclusions highlight key findings from the evaluation of Biometrics (Steady State) and IIS with the US,

while providing considerations within the context of Expansion, and presenting recommendations for the way forward with this work.

***Biometrics and IIS with the US for immigration decision-making: Use and capacity***

The evaluation found that Biometrics and IIS with the US have been contributing to identity management and decision-making, largely at the application stage, for Canada's TR and refugee programs. Biometrics provide objective, reliable information to establish and confirm a client's identity, and IIS with the US provides access to a larger system of records to help confirm a client's identity and travel history. Both also provide information on potential criminal, security and immigration risks associated with the client. Correspondingly, the evaluation found added benefits for officers as result of having this information for decision-making, and highlighted its contribution to enhancing Canada's safety and security, and detecting abuse/fraud in the immigration program.

However, the evaluation also revealed challenges with the functional guidance, training and support available, and with interpreting derogatory information returned through IIS with the US. It found that quality assurance related to using this information for decision-making has been limited, and that the equipment, IT systems and network supporting their use are not always reliable. As the amount of biometric and IIS information to review increases with Expansion, it will be important to ensure that officers are well supported to use this information, and that mechanisms are in place to ensure that they are using it effectively and efficiently in decision-making for clients.

**Recommendation 1: IRCC should, in consultation with partners, review and enhance functional guidance and training related to Biometrics and IIS and put in place a Quality Assurance Strategy to monitor the use of this information in immigration decision-making.**

**Recommendation 2: IRCC should identify and prioritize technical issues related to the Biometrics and IIS equipment, IT systems, network and support, and put in place a plan to address these issues where feasible.**

***Biometrics and IIS with the US for immigration decision-making: Refugee context***

The evaluation found that Biometrics and IIS with the US have been useful to decision-making for both the asylum and resettlement contexts and play an important role in supporting identity management and program integrity, particularly for the asylum system. However, the evaluation also revealed areas for improvement, unique to the asylum and resettlement contexts:

- In the asylum context, there is a need for better communication, coordination and support related to the initiatives to facilitate decision-making.
- In the resettlement context, biometric information sharing with the UNHCR, a key referral partner, would be beneficial to strengthen identity management.

**Recommendation 3: IRCC should, in collaboration with CBSA and the IRB, put in place a strategy to improve coordination, information sharing and support for the use of Biometrics and IIS in the asylum context.**



**Recommendation 4: IRCC should develop options for biometric information sharing on resettled refugee applicants with the UNHCR, and implement a selected option to enhance identity management in the resettlement context.**

***Biometric verification at POEs: Use and capacity***

The evaluation found that the approach to biometric verification largely relied on the digital photographs, and not fingerprints, during the reporting period for the evaluation. Photograph verification was mandatory for all biometric-related passages, while fingerprint verification was discretionary at eight major airport POEs equipped under the Temporary Resident Biometrics Project (TRBP). BSOs were instructed to refer clients for fingerprint verification if there were identity concerns after a visual inspection of their biometric photograph. Correspondingly, only 4.4% of biometric-related passages at these POEs were biometrically verified through fingerprints.

However, fingerprint verification is becoming automated at PIKs at ten airports through Biometrics Expansion and the PIK initiative. It is also being expanded to additional POEs on a discretionary basis at Secondary Inspection through Biometrics Expansion. Expansion of the capacity to verify biometrics at POEs, and in particular SFV, will take fuller advantage of the biometric tools available, and is expected to further strengthen identity management at POEs.

The evaluation also found that many Border Services Officers (BSOs) were not aware of functional guidance related to biometric verification, and that they tended to learn how to verify biometrics through informal ways rather than training. Furthermore, there were no quality assurance mechanisms in place to monitor their decision-making in the biometric verification process. Given the increased client volumes that will come with Expansion, there is a need to disseminate adequate guidance on biometric verification to support effective decision-making at POEs.

**Recommendation 5: CBSA should review, enhance and promote functional guidance, training and support for biometric verification.**

***Biometric enrolment: Service coverage and accessibility***

At the time of the evaluation, most biometric enrolment was conducted abroad by Visa Application Centers (VACs). While VAC country coverage was generally adequate for clients from the 29 countries and one territory subject to this requirement, there was an indication of possible gaps related to the proximity of service locations. As the evaluation did not directly capture information on the client experience related to biometric enrolment, challenges related to service coverage were based on the perspectives of IRCC representatives.

Biometrics expansion is extending the enrolment requirement to TR and PR client populations from all countries applying from abroad and within Canada. With more and more clients being impacted by biometric enrolment, it will be critical to better understand the client experience with respect to service coverage and accessibility.

**Recommendation 6: IRCC should put in place a strategy to measure and monitor the quality of client services related to biometric enrolment, taking into account enrolment services provided abroad, as well as those eventually provided in Canada.**



## Evaluation of the Biometrics – MRAP

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Implementation Date
<b>Recommendation 1:</b>  IRCC should, in consultation with partners, review and enhance functional guidance and training related to Biometrics and IIS and put in place a Quality Assurance Strategy to monitor the use of this information in immigration decision-making.	IRCC agrees with this recommendation.			
	Effective and efficient training, functional guidance and Program Delivery Instructions (PDIs) are a top priority for IRCC. As part of the recent Biometrics Expansion Project (Bio-X) the existing training, functional guidance and PDIs were reviewed in an effort to align existing direction with changes taking place. Two major PDI updates were conducted as part of Bio-X, in addition to several smaller updates: a webinar, related to assessing and interpreting partner results, was also delivered to all Operations officers in December 2018.	Action 1A: Develop and issue guidance around partner immigration processes and codes that will help IRCC officers better understand and apply the result of IIS in a consistent manner.	Lead: IPG – Biometrics Program Division (BPD)	Q2 2020/21
	IRCC is working with M5 partners, in its ongoing operations, on developing better guidance around partner immigration processes and codes, which will allow officers to better apply information sharing results in their processing.	Action 1B: Integrate updated biometric collection and M5 information-sharing training into IRCC's officer training programs.	Lead IPG – BPD	Q2 2020/21
	As part of its implementation of a quality assurance strategy, IRCC has been considering monitoring the use of information through aggregate reporting and is exploring ways to obtain case-specific information from offices. Currently, the Department monitors when information sharing queries hit against particularly serious codes from partners with a goal of ensuring proper screening is done.	Action 1C: Consult impacted partners and develop options for how to better track and monitor the use of information-sharing.	Lead: IPG – BPD	Q2 2020/21

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Implementation Date
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b></p> <p>IRCC should identify and prioritize technical issues related to the Biometrics and IIS equipment, IT systems, network and support, and put in place a plan to address these issues where feasible.</p>	<p>IRCC agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>Various technical issues related to Biometrics and IIS were prioritized and addressed through Bio-X. IRCC is maintaining and updating the current technical functionality, while also looking to proactively improve where possible. The Department also continues to leverage initiatives in other areas where technical improvements are happening and continues to seek sources of funding to enable a larger overhaul of user functionality related to IIS in particular. This is all part of IPG Branch input into the broader Departmental change request prioritization process, with a view to supporting TDSS efforts to improve IT infrastructure such that information sharing queries and biometric enrollments do not adversely affect system performance or processing times.</p> <p>Some activities are already underway to develop and implement a plan to improve technical functionality. IRCC, CBSA and RCMP meet regularly to discuss issues occurring with fingerprint quality, query and response times, and are reviewing equipment specifications along with training initiatives to reduce rates of error and poor-quality prints. Additionally, IN-International Support is in the process of updating the Biometric Collection Stations (BCS) with new hardware, giving priority to locations that have been operating through TRBP.</p>	<p>Continue to maintain a list of priority change requests and provide input into the Departmental change request prioritization process.</p>	<p>Lead: IPG – BPD</p> <p>Support: Transformation and Digital Solutions Sector (TDSS); Admissibility – IMIS</p>	<p>Q4 2019/20 and ongoing annually</p>

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Implementation Date
<b>Recommendation 3:</b>  IRCC should, in collaboration with CBSA and the IRB, put in place a strategy to improve coordination, information sharing and support for the use of Biometrics and IIS in the asylum context.	IRCC agrees with this recommendation.			
	<p>A working group with representation from IRCC, the CBSA and IRB was already in existence for the purpose of working through shared challenges in asylum processing. This group now includes representation from the M5 Information Sharing Team and regularly discusses how to better facilitate the exchange of internationally obtained information between the three partners, while also respecting our obligations to international partners.</p>	Action 3A: As part of the Integrated Claim Analysis Centre (ICAC), Develop with partners a standard operating procedure that will clearly define how they will better operationalize the exchange of information related to Biometrics and IIS amongst them.	<p>Lead: IPG – Asylum Program Division (APD)</p> <p>Support : IPG – BPD; CBSA – Intelligence &amp; Enforcement Branch; IRB</p>	Q3 2019/20
	<p>The three organizations also have the Asylum System Management Board (ASMB), a senior-level asylum systems oversight committee, which is a venue to explore potential information-sharing opportunities.</p> <p>Additionally, since July 2018, IRCC, the CBSA and the IRB have been piloting the small-scale Integrated Claim Analysis Centre (ICAC) to ensure that information, including IIS results, is available to decision makers as early in the asylum process as possible. The ICAC received permanent funding in the most recent Budget, and the M5 Information Sharing team will assist with training new officers this fall.</p>	Action 3B: Provide training to officers that will be hired as part of the expanded ICAC, as well as officers assessing the new asylum ineligibility, that will allow them to better understand and apply the results of IIS in a consistent manner.	<p>Lead: IPG – BPD</p> <p>Support: IPG – APD</p>	Q3 2019/20

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Implementation Date
<b>Recommendation 4:</b> IRCC should develop options for biometric information sharing on resettled refugee applicants with the UNHCR and implement a selected option to enhance identity management in the resettlement context.	IRCC agrees with this recommendation.  While IRCC's application and screening process for resettled refugees is already thorough, the capacity to verify or exchange UNHCR biometric information would further improve identity management and program integrity. However, it is important to note that options for the exchange of information with the UNHCR will have significant resource implications.	Action 4A: Develop and present a policy paper to IRCC Policy Committee on options to improve identity management and integrity through information sharing with the UNHCR or verification of UNHCR biometric data.	Lead 4A: Admissibility – IMIS  Support 4A: Refugee Affairs Branch (RAB); IN – ROD; IPG – BPD	Q1 2020/21
		Action 4B: Implement selected option, contingent on senior management approval and funding.	Lead 4A: Admissibility – IMIS  Support 4A: Refugee Affairs Branch (RAB); IN – ROD; IPG – BPD	Q4 2022/23
<b>Recommendation 5:</b> CBSA should review, enhance and promote functional guidance, training and support for biometric verification.	CBSA functional guidance, training and support for Border Services Officers (BSOs) was revised and augmented to address the new and expanded biometric services now provided by the CBSA as a result of the Biometrics Expansion project, which subsumes the fingerprint verification service at secondary inspection that was introduced through the Temporary Resident Biometrics Project. The collection and verification of biometrics has now been incorporated into BSO induction training. Existing and new officers have the supports required to support biometric services for Temporary Resident and Permanent Resident applicants.	No further action is required by the CBSA.	Lead: CBSA – Travellers Branch  Support: CBSA – Human Resources Branch	N/A

Recommendation	Response	Action	Accountability	Implementation Date
<p><b>Recommendation 6:</b></p> <p>IRCC should put in place a strategy to measure and monitor the quality of client services related to biometric enrolment, taking into account enrolment services provided abroad, as well as those eventually provided in Canada.</p>	<p>IRCC agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>The Biometrics Expansion Program Performance Information Profile (PIP), finalized in 2017, contains a number of indicators that are meant to evaluate client service and client experience. BPD made a commitment to Treasury Board to report on the indicators beginning 2 years post project closure once sufficient data is available.</p> <p>However, ongoing reporting for internal senior management and partner departments happens on a monthly basis and includes client service indicators.</p>	<p>Action 6A: Assess Biometrics Expansion as per the indicators defined in the Biometrics Expansion Performance Information Profile (PIP).</p>	<p>Lead: IPG – BPD</p> <p>Support: Client Experience Branch; Various Bio-X Project Partners</p>	<p>2 years post project closeout (approx. Q2 2021/22) and ongoing as per the PIP</p>





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the relevance and performance of the Biometrics and Canada-United States (US) Immigration Information Sharing (IIS) Initiatives, with a focus on their ongoing operations between 2014 and 2017.

- The evaluation was conducted in fulfillment of commitments made within the Biometrics and IIS Treasury Board Submissions and Performance Measurement Strategies, as well as evaluation requirements of the Treasury Board 2016 *Policy on Results*.
- It was led by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and conducted in collaboration with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2. Profile of the initiatives

Both Biometrics and IIS with the US are mechanisms used within the context of identity management and immigration decision-making in order to better establish the identity of foreign nationals seeking entry into Canada, and to obtain otherwise unknown information on applicants to aid in determining admissibility.

### 1.2.1. Biometrics

The biometrics currently collected by Canada are comprised of a digital photograph and fingerprints, as well as associated biographic information. More than 70 countries have implemented or are planning to implement their own biometric screening in their immigration and border programs, including Canada's Migration 5 (M5) partners: the United States (US), United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand.

At the time of the evaluation, biometrics were being collected from asylum claimants, deportees and refugee resettlement applicants, as well as from Temporary Resident (TR) applicants (visitor visa, work and study permit applicants) from 29 visa-required countries and one territory.

- Canada began with the collection of biometrics from deportees and asylum claimants in 1993.
- The Temporary Resident Biometrics Project (TRBP) was initiated in 2009. It established the requirement<sup>2</sup> and capacity to collect, store, safeguard, verify and process biometric information for Temporary Resident (TR) applicants (i.e., visitor visa, work

---

<sup>1</sup> The limited roles of Shared Services Canada (SSC) and the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) were not assessed in this evaluation.

<sup>2</sup> The requirement for TR applicants from the 29 visa-required countries and one territory to enrol their biometrics was articulated in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR). The requirement has since been revised with the introduction of Expansion.

permit and study permit applicants) from 29 visa-required countries and one territory (30 nationalities),<sup>3</sup> and became fully functional in December 2013.<sup>4</sup>

- Canada then began collecting biometrics from resettled refugee applicants in November 2014.
- Once collected, biometrics are searched against the RCMP's Real Time Identification (RTID) system for records of known criminals, past refugee claimants, persons previously deported, and previous immigration applicants, and then stored in the RTID system.
- The digital photograph is verified to confirm the identity of the visa holder at Primary Inspection Line (PIL) at all ports of entry (POE). At the time of the evaluation, fingerprints could be verified, on a discretionary basis, at Secondary Inspection (SI) at eight major airports.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.2.2. Immigration information sharing with the US

In 2011, under the *Beyond the Border Action Plan*, Canada and the US committed to establishing automated immigration information sharing capabilities in order to improve immigration and border determinations, establish and verify the identities of travelers, and conduct screening at the earliest possible opportunity to strengthen the screening of foreign nationals. The commitment became the IIS project, which was comprised of four interconnected initiatives: Systematic IIS, Resettlement Information Sharing, Criminal Removal Information Sharing<sup>6</sup> and Interim Asylum Information Sharing.<sup>7</sup>

Under systematic IIS with the US, Canada exchanges immigration information with the US based on two types of queries: Biometric and Biographic.

At the time of the evaluation, Canada was sending biometric-based queries to the US on biometric-required TR applicants, resettled refugee applicants and in-Canada asylum claimants; and biographic-based queries to the US on all foreign nationals applying for a temporary resident visa (including applicants for study or work permits), permanent residence, and refugee resettlement from abroad.

---

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for a list of the 29 countries and one territory implicated in the Biometrics Initiative

<sup>4</sup> In 2014, the Biometrics Project Office completed a TRBP Project Close Report, which provided an overview of the project, an assessment of project performance, key lessons learned, and final project financials.

<sup>5</sup> The eight major airports with capacity to verify fingerprints during the Steady State phase of the Biometrics Initiative were: Halifax, Pierre Elliot Trudeau (Montreal), Ottawa, Pearson (Toronto), Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver.

<sup>6</sup> The Criminal Removals Information Sharing component of IIS was not implemented, and was eventually scoped out of the IIS initiative.

<sup>7</sup> The Interim Asylum Information Sharing component was temporary in nature; it had as its objective to increase the volume of biometric information shared manually on in-Canada asylum claimants to approximately 12,000 cases per year beginning in 2013.

**Biometric IIS:**

- The capability to exchange information with the US in an automated way using biometric-based queries was completed in May 2015, and was fully deployed to all overseas missions, in Canada offices, and POEs by August 2015.
- Biographic and immigration information are only exchanged upon confirmation of a fingerprint match. If there is a match, immigration information related to the individual's previous biometric encounters will be returned from the US, which can be positive or derogatory in nature.

**Biographic IIS:**

- The bilateral exchange of immigration information between Canada and US using biographic-based queries began in December 2013.
- Biographic information includes name, aliases, date and country of birth, passport nationality, gender, and travel document number/issuing authority.
- Potential matches from the US databases are only returned on an individual if derogatory (i.e. negative) information exists.<sup>8</sup>

The US to Canada query functionality was deployed in December 2015 and the IIS project was officially closed in March 2016, with outstanding elements transferred to the Biometrics Expansion Project.

**1.2.3. Expansion**

In 2017, Canada began expanding its systematic immigration information sharing to other M5 partners, beginning with Australia (April 2017) and New Zealand (February 2018).<sup>9</sup>

In 2018, Canada began rolling out its Biometrics Expansion project. Key changes to the Biometrics Initiative under Expansion include:

- Expansion of the biometric requirement to all TR applicants (excluding US nationals) as well as permanent residence (PR) applicants.<sup>10</sup>
- Change to the requirement to enrol biometrics for TR applicants from enrolment for every application to once every 10 years.
- Change to automated Systematic Fingerprint Verification (SFV) at Primary Inspection Kiosks (PIK) for ten airport POEs.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Derogatory information includes negative determinations made pursuant to the U.S.'s immigration and nationality laws, or other information that may be relevant to an inadmissibility or ineligibility decision under Canada's immigration laws.

<sup>9</sup> At the time of the evaluation, systematic information sharing with the United Kingdom was expected to come into effect in 2020-21.

<sup>10</sup> The biometric requirement was applied to foreign nationals from Europe, the Middle East and Africa on July 31, 2018, and to Asia, Asia Pacific on December 31, 2018. At the time of the evaluation, clients eligible to apply from within Canada were temporarily exempt from the biometric requirement. Capacity to enrol biometrics in Canada for eligible clients was anticipated for 2019 at selected Service Canada locations.

<sup>11</sup> This change includes the eight major airport POEs, initially equipped under the TRBP to conduct fingerprint verification at SI, as part of the Biometrics Expansion Project, as well as Quebec City and Toronto City Centre

- Expansion of capacity to verify fingerprints at SI to 11 additional airports and 38 land POEs, on a discretionary basis, using a verification device.

#### 1.2.4. Roles and responsibilities

IRCC is the lead department responsible for the two initiatives, and is responsible for the overall coordination, monitoring and reporting across partners. For Biometrics, key responsibilities include: policy development and interpretation and maintenance of regulations, support to the field, monitoring privacy safeguards and conducting quality assurance and anti-fraud activities. For IIS, key responsibilities include: managing information sharing activities and the relationship with the US, as well as providing centralized support to partners.

- IRCC Migration Officers (MOs) abroad collect biometrics from resettled refugee applicants and in exceptional circumstances, from biometric-required TR applicants. They use biometric and IIS results in their immigration decision-making on applications from these client groups.
- IRCC Local Officers in Canada collect biometrics from asylum claimants as part of intake and review biometric and IIS results to support of decision-making on refugee claims in Canada.<sup>12</sup>
- IRCC also manages a contract with Visa Application Centres (VAC) overseas and an agreement with Application Support Centres (ASC) in the US to collect biometrics from required TR applicants.

CBSA is responsible for biometric verification at POEs in Canada. This includes the procurement and installation of biometric equipment at POEs, providing input into policy requirements, training staff and monitoring and reporting.

- Border Services Officers (BSOs) verify the biometrics of biometric-required TRs and resettled refugees arriving at POEs. They can also collect biometrics from asylum claimants as part of intake and review biometric and IIS results to support decision-making on refugee claims in Canada.<sup>13</sup>

The RCMP is the service provider responsible for maintaining and monitoring the Canadian Criminal Real Time Identification Services (CCRTIS) systems, which include the RTID system; these systems support the two initiatives.

- Key responsibilities include: fingerprint submission processing and maintenance of IT systems and interfaces, system enhancements, fingerprint storage, and the recruitment and training of the fingerprint and criminal records staff.

---

through their participation in the PIK initiative. At the time of the evaluation, automated SFV had been deployed in Vancouver (January, 2019), Halifax and Quebec City (February, 2019), Ottawa and Toronto City Centre (March, 2019), and Edmonton and Calgary (June, 2019). Deployment for the remaining airports (with the exception of Toronto Pearson) were planned to be completed in 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Sometimes, commissionaires collect biometrics at IRCC Local Offices.

<sup>13</sup> CBSA inland enforcement officers can also review biometric and IIS results to support decision-making on refugee claims in Canada.

Shared Services Canada (SSC) provide infrastructure, network and security support for both initiatives, and the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) uses biometric IIS results from the US to support their decision-making on refugee claims in Canada.

### 1.3. Statistical profile of applicants

The following provides a statistical profile of the applicant intake and the match information returned for the Biometrics and Canada-US IIS Initiatives, based on an analysis of administrative data from the Global Case Management System (GCMS).

#### 1.3.1. Biometrics

Biometric enrolment intake increased each year between 2014 and 2017 to a total of 1,283,203 applicants, representing 1,098,103 unique clients.<sup>14</sup>

- 91.7% of intake was for TR applications, of which 81.6% were visitor applicants.
- 89.6% of applicant enrolment occurred abroad at VACs, while about 4% of applicant enrolment occurred at a Migration Office abroad, 1.5% at an ASC in the US and 4.3% in Canada at an IRCC local office or a CBSA POE.
- The 5 most frequent countries of citizenship for the applicant intake were: Nigeria (11.8%), Pakistan (10.2%), Jamaica (9.3%), Iran (8.9%) and Colombia (7.7%).
- Processing was incomplete for 1.1% of intake, largely due to poor quality prints (97.6%).
- 15.9% of intake during this period matched to a previous immigration record and 0.1% to a previous criminal record in Canada.

#### 1.3.2. Immigration Information sharing with the US

Intake for Biometric and Biographic IIS with the US also increased between 2014 and 2017<sup>15</sup>.

**Applicants enrolled for biometrics:** Both biometric and biographic immigration information sharing occur for TR and resettled refugee applicants who are biometrically enrolled. Only biometric immigration information sharing occurs for asylum claimants.

- Biometric IIS intake: 824,117 applicants over the reporting period.
  - 88% of intake was for TR applications.
- Biographic IIS intake: 1,209,976 applicants over the reporting period.

**Applicants NOT enrolled for biometrics:** Only biographic immigration information sharing occurs for applicants who are not biometrically enrolled.

- The biographic IIS intake for non-enrolled applicants amounted to 7,936,349 applicants over the reporting period.

---

<sup>14</sup> Some clients applied more than once during this period.

<sup>15</sup> In 2014, IIS was only partially implemented and focused primarily on biographic information sharing.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Evaluation scope, focus and questions

The evaluation assessed issues of relevance and performance for the Biometrics (Steady State) and the Canada-US IIS Initiatives, addressing the expected outcomes associated with the ongoing operations of the two initiatives between 2014 and 2017, as outlined in their respective logic models (see Appendix B).

- The evaluation scope and approach were determined during a planning phase, in consultation with IRCC branches involved in the management and delivery of the initiatives, as well as partner departments: CBSA and RCMP.
- For Biometrics, the focus was on the collection, matching and verification of biometrics for required TR applicants (29 countries and one territory), asylum claimants and resettled refugee applicants.
- For IIS, the focus was on the systematic biographic- and biometric-based information sharing between Canada and the US for:
  - Biometric-required TR applicants (29 countries and one territory), asylum claimants and resettled refugee applicants in relation to Biometric IIS.
  - TR and PR applicants, as well as resettled refugee applicants in relation to Biographic IIS.
- Expansion activities in relation to the Biometrics and IIS initiatives were not assessed as part of the evaluation. However, considerations to inform expansion efforts are presented.

The evaluation questions are presented below.

Relevance:

- 1) Is there a continued need for the Biometrics and Immigration Information Sharing initiatives?
- 2) Are the Biometrics and IIS initiatives aligned with IRCC, partner departments' and federal government objectives and priorities?

Performance:

- 3) Are existing Biometrics and IIS related policies, procedures and guidelines consistent amongst, and understood by, delivery partners (i.e. IRCC, CBSA, RCMP)?
- 4) Are coordination and communications among delivery partners effective (i.e. IRCC, CBSA, RCMP)?
- 5) [Biometrics] Are service locations for enrolment and collection of biometrics providing adequate coverage and access for populations who are required to enrol biometrics?
- 6) [Biometrics] To what extent does biometrics related information/data influence immigration decision-makers and contribute to strengthened identity management for informed admissibility decision making?
- 7) [IIS] To what extent does IIS related information/data influence immigration decision makers and contribute to an enhanced ability to establish and verify identity; and to the detection of individuals who may pose a risk or threat to Canada or who are seeking to enter/remain for mala fide purposes?

- 8) [Biometrics] To what extent does the Biometrics initiative provide increased support for criminal investigations?
- 9) To what extent do the Biometrics and IIS initiatives contribute to the facilitated movement and processing of returning (admissible) individuals?
- 10) To what extent do the Biometrics and IIS initiatives contribute to enhancing safety and security, and to preventing abuse, of Canada's immigration system?
- 11) Are the Biometrics and IIS initiatives operating efficiently given their respective resources?

## 2.2. Data collection methods

The evaluation used multiple lines of evidence that gathered qualitative and quantitative data from a range of stakeholder perspectives. Data collection and analysis took place from July 2017 to September 2018, and was conducted primarily internally by IRCC's Evaluation Division. The RCMP Evaluation Team collected and analyzed its own data (document review, interviews and program data), and the CBSA Evaluation Team provided their own administrative data analysis. These analyses were integrated into the report where appropriate.

<b>Lines of Evidence</b>	<b>Description</b>
Document Review	Relevant program documents were reviewed to gather background and context on the Biometrics and Canada-US IIS Initiatives, as well as to assess its relevance and performance. Documents reviewed included: Legislation and Regulations; Treasury Board Submissions; Federal Budgets and Reports, such as Departmental Results Reports; Privacy Impact Assessments, Memoranda of Understanding and Implementing Arrangements; Program Delivery Instructions, Operational Bulletins, and Manuals; Other Reports, Analyses and Dashboards related to the Initiatives; Documentation on similar initiatives in M5 countries.
Interviews	A total of 35 interviews were conducted with 48 representatives from various stakeholder groups, including IRCC (21), CBSA (2), RCMP (6), IRB (2) and M5 partners (4). <sup>16</sup> The interview list was developed in consultation with program representatives. In order to obtain additional context, consultations were also conducted with Biometric-VAC Officers, representatives from Shared Services Canada and IRCC's Solutions and Information Management Branch, and with representatives from IRCC's Legal Services.

---

<sup>16</sup> In order to capture the different perspectives of the various groups responsible for policy and program delivery in the TR, resettlement and asylum contexts, interviews were conducted with representatives from the following IRCC groups: Admissibility Branch, Immigration Program Management Branch, International Network, Centralized Network, Domestic Network (including representatives responsible for Reviews and Interventions related to the Asylum System), Refugee Affairs Branch (Asylum and Resettlement) and Integrity Risk Guidance Branch.



Analysis of Administrative Data	<p>Administrative data from IRCC, CBSA and the RCMP were examined for the 2014 to 2017 reporting period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRCC: Data from GCMS were analyzed to examine biometric enrolment, biometric matches to RTID, and biometric and biographic immigration information returned from the US, for designated applicant populations.</li> <li>• CBSA: Data from the Consolidated Management Reporting System (CMRS) were analyzed to examine photo and fingerprint verification for the TRBP at air and land POEs.</li> <li>• RCMP: Performance data from CCRTIS were analyzed to examine criminal submissions and transactions involving immigration and refugee files.</li> </ul>
Surveys	Online surveys were conducted with Migration Officers (n=101), Migration Program Managers (n=32) and Border Services Officers (n=194). More details on the survey methodologies are provided in Appendix C.
Site Visit	A site visit was conducted at Pearson Airport to better understand how biometric verification and enrolment work at the POE with CBSA. The site visit included a walkthrough of operations at Primary and Secondary Inspection, as well as interviews with BSOs and a Superintendent. In order to better understand different POE contexts, follow-up consultations were also conducted with representatives from the Montreal and Edmonton airport POEs, as well as from Prairie Region land border operations.

## 2.3. Limitations and considerations

Overall, the different lines of evidence were complementary and reduced information gaps, as well as enabled the triangulation of findings. However, a few limitations and considerations should be noted in relation to difficulties in extracting and using the data captured in GCMS; challenges in obtaining the perspectives of BSOs; and gaps in financial data.<sup>17</sup> In spite of these issues, results generally converged towards common and integrated findings. The mitigation strategies, along with the triangulation of findings, were considered to be sufficient to ensure that the findings are reliable and can be used with confidence.

---

<sup>17</sup> See Appendix D for detailed information on these limitations and considerations, as well as the mitigations strategies used to address them.



### 3. Relevance

Relevance of the Biometrics and Canada-US IIS Initiatives was examined in relation to continued need, as well as alignment with the objectives and priorities of partner departments and the Government of Canada (GoC).

#### 3.1. Continued need

**Finding:** There is a continued need for both Biometrics and IIS with the United States, as they contribute to identity management and program integrity and enhance confidence in Canada's immigration program among international partners and the public.

The document review highlighted the rationale and continued need for Biometrics and IIS with the US.

- **Biometrics:** Based on the need to fix the identities of applicants in order to foster more confident and accurate decisions, which was expected to protect Canadians, reduce abuse of visa/refugee programs, improve border security, facilitate removals, and help focus resources on legitimate applications.
- **IIS:** Strongly rooted in the *Beyond the Border Action Plan*<sup>18</sup> and the need for facilitated efforts to address security threats and the expedition of legitimate trade and people.

The interviews confirmed a continued need for the initiatives.

- **Biometrics:** Crucial importance to identity management (locking in an identity) and supports enhanced program integrity; biometrics is the trend in international migration management; maintains partner and public confidence.
- **IIS:** Solidifies the basis for immigration decision-making; boosts partner confidence and strengthens partnership with the US; provides a more complete picture of the client, their identity and travel trajectories tied to this identity; contributes to improved program integrity of the asylum system.

Document review and interviews also confirmed a strong alignment between Canada's approach to biometrics and immigration information sharing and the initiatives of M5 partners.

---

<sup>18</sup> In February 2011, Canada and the US released the *Beyond the Border: A Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness*, which established the vision for a committed partnership to improve cooperation between the two countries in an effort to increase the security of the Canada-US perimeter. This document was followed in December 2011 by the *Beyond the Border Action Plan*, which included a commitment that both countries would share immigration information in an automated way (i.e., the IIS project).

### 3.2. Alignment with departmental and government priorities

**Finding:** Biometrics and IIS with the United States are well aligned with the objectives, priorities and commitments of IRCC, CBSA, RCMP and the Government of Canada.

The Biometrics and Canada-US IIS Initiatives are aligned with the objective of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) “to protect public health and safety and to maintain the security of Canadian society.”<sup>19</sup> They are also consistent with partner mandates related to safety and security and GoC priorities related to security and strengthening cross-border ties with the US.

- IRCC works to facilitate the legitimate entry of visitors, economic immigrants, sponsored family members and those seeking protection in Canada, while protecting the health, safety and security of Canadians.<sup>20</sup>
- The CBSA provides integrated border services that support national security priorities and facilitate the flow of people and goods across the border and is an integral part of the Public Safety Portfolio.<sup>21</sup>
- The RCMP plays a key role in providing for the safety and security of Canadians. Its mandate includes: preventing and investigating crime; contributing to national security; and providing operational support services to police and law enforcement agencies in Canada and abroad.<sup>22</sup>
- Budgets 2013 to 2015 mention security initiatives, specific to Beyond the Border and facilitation. Budget 2017 reflects the need to expedite legitimate travel, people and information across the border, as well as the need to strengthen cross-border ties with the US.<sup>23</sup>

The interviews pointed out:

- How the initiatives help to build confidence and to keep the border open with the US, as well as contribute to strengthening identity management, which is important to managing migration.
- The initiatives are positively contributing to international security, and to fostering the trust of M5 partners.
- How the priorities of the three departments are complementary and work together.

For IRCC, however, the Biometrics Initiative is less aligned with the department’s objective to improve client services and enhance the client experience, as they introduce another step in the application process. The department must balance this priority with competing pressures in its operational context to adequately respond to increasingly complex safety and security challenges.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> IRPA Objectives – Immigration, section 3(1)(h).

<sup>20</sup> Source: IRCC Departmental Results Report 2017-18.

<sup>21</sup> Source: CBSA Departmental Results Report 2017-18.

<sup>22</sup> Source: RCMP Departmental Results Report 2017-18.

<sup>23</sup> Source: GoC: Jobs Growth and Long-Term Prosperity: Economic Action Plan 2013; The Road to Balance : Creating Jobs and Opportunities 2014; Strong Leadership, A Balanced Budget, Low Tax Plan For Jobs, Growth and Security 2015; Building a Strong Middle Class: Budget 2017.

<sup>24</sup> Source: IRCC Departmental Results Report 2017-18.

## 4. Performance – Use of biometrics and IIS with the US

This section considers performance in relation to the use of biometrics and IIS with the US in support of the decision-making contexts relevant to IRCC, CBSA and the RCMP.

- IRCC uses the information to support immigration decision-making on applications from prospective TRs and resettled refugees abroad, while the IRB, with support from IRCC and CBSA, uses this information to assist with decision-making on refugee claims in Canada.
- The CBSA also uses biometrics to support verification of travellers' identities at POEs, and the RCMP grants access to the RTID system for police agencies to assist with criminal investigations in Canada.

It also looks at how the use of these tools contribute to safety and security and the integrity of Canada's immigration program.

### 4.1. Use of biometrics in immigration decision-making

**Finding:** Biometric information has strengthened immigration decision-making by providing objective, reliable information to establish and confirm a client's identity and detect potential risks. There is also an indication that the contribution of biometrics will increase as the number of enrolments captured in Canada's system continues to grow.

#### 4.1.1. Incidence of matches

Matches to the RCMP's RTID system can reveal negative or positive information about an applicant's previous encounters in Canada which can be used to inform immigration decision-making (admissibility and eligibility). While negative information (e.g., criminality) can reveal potential risks or threats associated with an applicant, positive information (e.g., a successful TR application in the past) can assist in confirming an identity and provide evidence of a positive Canadian travel history.

Administrative data analysis showed that between 2014 and 2017 biometric enrolment intake and the number of RCMP matches revealing a previous immigration history or previous criminality increased over time.

**Table 1: Biometrics: Applicant intake and matches returned from the RCMP's RTID system**

		2014	2015	2016	2017	Overall
Type of match	Applicant intake	220,969	265,278	351,931	445,025	1,283,203
Matches to previous immigration record	Number	16,244	38,120	61,220	88,754	204,338
	Percent of intake	7.4%	14.4%	17.4%	19.9%	15.9%
Matches to previous criminal record	Number	128	163	256	295	842
	Percent of intake	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%

Source: GCMS 2018

- Overall, more than 200,000 matches revealing a previous immigration history and over 800 matches revealing previous criminality were returned.
- The number of matches to a previous immigration history and the relative proportion of these matches to intake increased each year (from about 7% to 20%).
- While the number of matches to a previous criminal record increased each year, the relative proportion of these matches to intake remained at about 0.1% throughout the reporting period.

#### 4.1.2. Contribution to decision-making

Interview and survey findings highlighted the important contribution of biometrics to identity management and immigration decision-making.

- Interviews noted how biometric information:
  - Provides objective evidence of a person's identity, creates a system of record, and helps to mitigate program integrity risk and potential fraud.
  - Contributes to identity management, providing a baseline for an individual's identity, and has great potential to strengthen identity management with Expansion.
  - Contributes to decision-making and identity confirmation, provides added value and credibility to an applicant's information and increases confidence in decision-making.
- Most of the MOs surveyed with experience prior to the introduction of biometrics reported increased benefits as a result of having this information.<sup>25</sup> For example:
  - 90% indicated being better informed about the client's identity.
  - 83% indicated being better informed about the information provided on the client's application.
  - 88% indicated increased confidence and 92% indicated decreased uncertainty about the client's identity.
  - 90% indicated an increased ability to detect risks/threats associated with the applicant's identity.

#### 4.2. Use of IIS with US in immigration decision-making

**Finding:** IIS with the US contributes to strengthened immigration decision-making by providing access to a larger system of records to help confirm a client's identity and travel history and detect potential risks. Information sharing enhances the benefits of having biometrics by expanding the evidence base for decision-making.

<sup>25</sup> The analysis was based on responses from 60 MOs surveyed with experience processing applications involving biometrics, as well as experience in application processing prior to the introduction of the Biometrics initiative, in order for respondents to be able to compare their pre and post experience. Results were similar for BSOs surveyed.

### 4.2.1. Incidence of matches

IIS with the US can return derogatory match data helping to reveal potential risks or threats associated with an applicant or positive match data helping to confirm an identity and providing evidence of a positive travel history with a trusted partner.

Administrative data analysis showed that between 2014<sup>26</sup> and 2017 intake and the number of matches for IIS with the US generally increased over time, particularly for biometric IIS (see Table 2).

- Biometric IIS intake reached over 820,000 applicants, returning a little over 327,000 matches, representing about 40% of intake.
- Biographic IIS intake (for biometric-enrolled and non-enrolled applicants) reached over 9.1 million applicants, and returned a little over 260,000 matches, representing about 2.9% of intake.<sup>27</sup>

**Table 2: Biometric and Biographic IIS with the US: Applicant intake and matches returned**

		2014	2015	2016	2017	Overall
<b>BIOMETRIC IIS Applicant intake</b>		-	<b>78,703</b>	<b>325,404</b>	<b>420,010</b>	<b>824,117</b>
<b>Matches Returned</b>	Number	-	27,798	124,226	175,093	327,117
	Percent of Intake	-	35.3%	38.2%	41.7%	39.7%
<b>BIOGRAPHIC IIS Applicant Intake: Enrolled for Biometrics</b>		<b>219,243</b>	<b>256,576</b>	<b>330,174</b>	<b>403,983</b>	<b>1,209,976</b>
<b>Matches Determined</b>	Number	11,552	12,394	16,991	20,988	61,925
	Percent of Intake	5.3%	4.8%	5.1%	5.2%	5.1%
<b>BIOGRAPHIC IIS Applicant intake: NOT Enrolled for Biometrics</b>		<b>1,685,697</b>	<b>1,812,339</b>	<b>2,085,381</b>	<b>2,352,932</b>	<b>7,936,349</b>
<b>Matches Determined</b>	Number	39,226	42,963	55,377	65,321	202,887
	Percent of Intake	2.3%	2.4%	2.7%	2.8%	2.6%

Source: GCMS 2018

### 4.2.2. Contribution to decision-making

IIS with the US allows immigration decision-makers in Canada to check applicants seeking to come to Canada against a vast system of records on immigration-related encounters of travelers to the US, much broader than the volume of encounters in Canada.

- The US Department of Homeland Security's biometric repository, called the Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT), holds more than 200 million unique identities and processes more than 300,000 biometric transactions per day.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> In 2014, IIS was only partially implemented and focused primarily on biographic information sharing.

<sup>27</sup> The match rate for biographic IIS may be lower as potential matches are returned only when derogatory decision data exists.

<sup>28</sup> Source: DHS website: [www.dhs.gov/biometrics](http://www.dhs.gov/biometrics) (accessed April 3, 2019).

Interview and survey findings highlighted the added benefits of having IIS with the US for immigration decision-making (admissibility and eligibility) at the application stage.

- Interviews noted how IIS information returned from the US:
  - Helps to confirm client identity and information and uncover risks and possible misrepresentation.
  - Provides increased comfort to decision-makers and a basis for predicting future behaviour.
  - Limits risk and solidifies the basis for decision-making.
- Most MOs surveyed with experience prior to the introduction of IIS reported increased benefits as a result of having this information. For example, with Biometric IIS:<sup>29</sup>
  - 92% indicated being better able to confirm the client's identity.
  - 88% indicated being better informed about the information provided on the client's application.
  - 87% indicated increased confidence and 85% indicated decreased uncertainty about the client's identity.
  - 92% indicated an increased ability to detect risks/threats associated with the applicant's identity.

### 4.3. Use of biometrics and IIS in the refugee context

**Finding:** Biometrics and IIS with the US provide valuable information to support identity management and decision-making in the refugee context, particularly for Canada's asylum system.

#### 4.3.1. Asylum in Canada

Asylum claimants represented only a small proportion of biometric enrolment and IIS intake between 2014 and 2017.<sup>30</sup> However, analysis of administrative data showed proportionately comparable or higher match rates for asylum claimants, both to information in the RCMP's RTID system and to information exchanged with the US, compared to match rates for biometric-required TRs.

- The biometric enrolment intake for asylum claimants amounted to a total of 61,843, representing 4.8% of the overall intake.
  - About 16% of asylum claimants matched to a previous Canadian immigration record in RTID (same for biometric-required TRs).

---

<sup>29</sup> The analysis was based on responses from 60 MOs surveyed with experience processing applications involving biometrics, as well as experience in application processing prior to the introduction of the Canada-US IIS initiative. Results were comparable for biographic IIS, with a slightly smaller percentage indicating being better able to confirm the client's identity with this information.

<sup>30</sup> Capture in GCMS of biometric information on asylum claimants began in 2015. CBSA began processing refugee claims in GCMS in Fall 2015, and only began using IIS at that time.

- 60,204 asylum claimants were included in the intake for biometric IIS with the US, representing 7.3% of applicants included in this intake.<sup>31</sup>

Interviews highlighted the important contribution of biometric and IIS information to decision-making on asylum claims, but also noted implementation-related challenges.

- The collection of biometrics limits the potential for claiming asylum in multiple countries, thus contributing to the integrity of the asylum system.
- Biometric information has positively contributed to the adjudication of asylum claims; it is considered an asset to effective decision-making.
- IIS with the US helps to confirm details of a claimant's application and to determine if claimants have claims or protection status elsewhere. It provides evidence on identity, as well as legal status in another country, criminality, employment, travel history, etc.
- However, some challenges were also noted.
  - A lack of coordination in the asylum context was noted. Challenges with communication and support to IRCC local offices and the IRB were also noted.
  - The IIS information provided to the IRB is inconsistent in terms of format, and is not always provided in a timely manner.
  - There are issues with interpreting the codes for derogatory information returned from the US, as well as limitations in the number of queries that can be made to the US for additional information.

#### 4.3.2. Resettlement from abroad

Like asylum claimants, resettled refugee applicants only made up a small proportion of the biometric enrolment and IIS intake between 2014 and 2017. Correspondingly, the match rate was quite small for this client group.

- The biometric enrolment intake for resettled refugee applicants amounted to a total of 44,936, representing 3.5% of the overall intake.
  - 2.3% of resettled refugee applicants matched to a previous Canadian immigration record in RTID.
- 38,822 resettled refugee applicants were included in the intake for biometric IIS with the US, representing 4.7% of applicants included in this intake.

Interviews highlighted that while possibly not as useful as in the asylum context, biometrics and IIS with the US are still important in the resettlement context.

- There is a need for biometrics from resettled refugee applicants, as they generally do not have reliable identity documents.
- As with asylum claimants, having biometrics from resettled refugee applicants allows Canada to fulfill its agreements and build confidence with the US.

---

<sup>31</sup> There is only biometric IIS with the US for asylum claimants.



- Resettled refugee applicants were generally considered to be a lower risk client group. It was suggested that having their biometric information may not be as helpful, as they would not have travelled very often to Canada or the US, and that information sharing with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) would be more helpful than information sharing with the US from a program design point of view.
- Both Canada and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Canada's largest referral agency and key partner in resettlement, collect biometrics from resettled refugee applicants; however, IRCC does not verify these biometrics.

#### 4.4. Use of Biometrics for verification at POEs

**Finding:** The approach to biometric verification largely relied on the digital photographs, and not fingerprints, during the reporting period for the evaluation. However, Biometrics Expansion will increase capacity for fingerprint verification, notably through automation at Primary Inspection Kiosks at several major airports, taking more full advantage of the available biometric tools at POEs.

Biometrics are verified at POEs by BSOs with a view to providing greater assurance that the person being granted entry to Canada is the same person to whom a visa was issued abroad.<sup>32</sup>

At the time of the evaluation, eight major airport POEs were equipped under the TRBP for both photograph and fingerprint verification in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. The other air and land POEs were only equipped for photograph verification.

- Photograph verification was mandatory for all biometric-related passages, while fingerprint verification was discretionary at the eight airports equipped under the TRBP. As per CBSA instructions, fingerprint verification was intended to be used by BSOs if they had identity concerns after a visual inspection of the biometric photograph.
  - BSOs visually compare the biometric photograph to the individual at PIL first, and if not a match, they refer them to SI for fingerprint verification.
  - However, site visit findings suggested that people were rarely referred to SI for this purpose.
  - During the reporting period, instructions were provided for the fingerprint verification of some mandatory resettled refugee populations (of note, Syrian refugees).<sup>33</sup> Based on a review of administrative data, these populations were estimated to represent about half of clients for whom fingerprints were verified during the reporting period.

Consistent with instructions to the field, administrative data analysis showed that generally BSOs at POEs used their discretion not to verify fingerprints between 2014 and 2017.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Source: TRBP PMS (2013) and foundational documents.

<sup>33</sup> Source: CBSA (2015) TRBP Fingerprint Verification for Overseas Refugees Shift Briefing Bulletin.

<sup>34</sup> This analysis was based on 2018 data obtained from the CBSA for biometric-related passages at air and land POEs.



- There were 695,514 biometric-related passages at the eight airports equipped to conduct fingerprint verification. Of these, only 4.4% were biometrically verified through fingerprints, while almost all (99.4%) were biometrically verified through photographs.<sup>35</sup>
- Most fingerprint verification was conducted at Pearson (68.3%) and Pierre Elliot Trudeau (Montreal) (29.8%) airports.

For other POEs (equipped to verify photographs only), there were 114,153 biometric-related passages, and almost all (97.6%) were biometrically verified through photographs.<sup>36</sup>

As previously noted, fingerprint verification is becoming automated at PIKs at ten airports through Biometrics Expansion and the PIK initiative. It is also being expanded to additional POEs on a discretionary basis through Biometrics Expansion.

Biometrics, such as fingerprints and photographs, can be used to uniquely identify and reliably verify an individual's identity. While the digital photograph, captured in GCMS for biometrically enrolled clients, offers an additional data point from a trusted source to help verify their identity, fingerprints offer a more objective means to do so. Expansion of the capacity to verify biometrics at POEs, and in particular SFV, will take fuller advantage of the biometric tools available, and is expected to further strengthen identity management at POEs.

#### 4.5. Use of Biometrics to support criminal investigations

**Finding:** There is an indication that Biometrics have assisted police agencies in Canada by providing access to additional immigration and refugee related information to support criminal investigations and the identification of individuals.

Biometric-based information from RTID is used by the RCMP's CCRTIS. Administrative data analysis showed that CCRTIS received close to 2 million criminal submissions and transactions from 1,500 police agencies between 2014 and 2017.<sup>37</sup>

- Of these, about 1.17% were matched to a Temporary Resident/Refugee file (TRB/REF).
  - On average, 85% of the TRB/REF matches to the CCRTIS were refugees, and 15% were TRs.
  - 72% were criminal submissions of fingerprints related to arrests/charges and 28% were transactions in an attempt to identify an individual.

The interviews highlighted how biometrics have provided increased support for criminal investigations in Canada by allowing for the identification of individuals and by providing investigators in the field with additional information on their identity and status.

<sup>35</sup> A total of 30,338 biometric-related passages were biometrically verified through fingerprints, and 691,101 through photographs at the eight major airport POEs.

<sup>36</sup> A total of 111,378 biometric-related passages were biometrically verified through photographs at the other POEs.

<sup>37</sup> This analysis was based on program data obtained from the RCMP in 2018 for CCRTIS submissions and transactions.

## 4.6. Contribution to safety, security and program integrity

**Finding:** Biometrics and IIS with the US have contributed to enhancing safety and security and to preventing abuse of Canada's immigration system, largely at the application phase, by providing reliable information on potential criminal, security and immigration risks associated with clients to help support refusals in immigration decision-making.

The Biometrics and Canada-US IIS initiatives provide access to important information related to immigration, criminality, and security issues, which can be used by officers to help detect potential risks associated with these individuals, and eventually support refusals if deemed appropriate.

Administrative data analysis found that Biometrics revealed derogatory information about a number of applicants, and some applicants were eventually refused.

- **Biometrics:** About 41% of matched applicants with a previous immigration history and about 60% of matched applicants with previous criminality in Canada had their application refused.

Most Migration Program Managers (MPMs), MOs and BSOs surveyed indicated that Biometrics and IIS with the US contribute to: detecting individuals who may pose a risk/threat to Canada; detecting abuse/fraud of Canada's immigration system; and enhancing the safety/security of Canada (see Appendix E for detailed information on these survey results). These results also suggested that the requirement to enrol biometrics may act as a deterrent to those wanting to commit fraud or abuse of Canada's immigration system.

## 5. Performance – Implementation of the initiatives

This section considers performance in relation to various aspects of implementation of the Biometrics and Canada-US Initiatives, including: the effectiveness of policies, procedures and guidelines; communication and coordination; biometric enrolment service coverage; capacity to enrol, use and verify biometrics; capacity to use IIS; and resource utilization.

### 5.1. Effectiveness of policies, procedures and guidelines

#### 5.1.1. Legal authorities, privacy measures and quality assurance

**Finding:** The necessary legal authorities and privacy measures are in place to effectively support the initiatives. While various quality assurance measures are also in place, notably in relation to privacy, there is an indication of gaps with respect to quality assurance in relation to decision-making.

**Legal Authorities and Privacy Measures:** Document review and interview findings confirmed that legal authorities, information sharing mechanisms and privacy measures supporting the collection and use of biometrics and the exchange of immigration information with the US are in place and are generally considered to be sufficient/effective.

- Legal authorities are built in to IRPA<sup>38</sup> and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* (IRPR).<sup>39</sup>
- Various agreements, arrangements and/or Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the US and other government departments (OGD) are in place, setting out the parameters for the types of information that can be shared and how it will be shared.
  - Specifically, the Canada-US Treaty on Immigration Information Sharing<sup>40</sup> is legally binding, whereas the Canada-US Statement of Mutual Understanding (SMU)<sup>41</sup> on Information Sharing is not.

<sup>38</sup> The requirement to produce relevant evidence for examination, including photographic and fingerprint evidence, in support of an application is set out in IRPA. Source: IRPA, Part 1 *Immigration to Canada*, Division 2 Examination, section 16(1) and 16(2)(a).

<sup>39</sup> IRPR identifies the foreign nationals and the types of applications for which the biometric requirement applies, as well as related exemptions and procedures. Source: IRPR, Part 2 General Requirements, Division 2.1 Collection and Verification of Biometric Information, section 12.1. At the time of the evaluation, the Regulations were updated and sections added to address changes related to Expansion.

<sup>40</sup> The Immigration Information Sharing Treaty enables Canada and the US to share systematically information from third-country nationals who apply for a visa or permit to travel to either country. The Treaty also provides an additional tool for regular, systematic information sharing on in-land asylum claimants, which already occurs on a case-by-case basis under an existing agreement between Canada and the United States. Source: ARCHIVED – Backgrounders — Immigration Information Sharing Treaty - [www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/archives/backgrounders-2012/immigration-information-sharing-treaty.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/archives/backgrounders-2012/immigration-information-sharing-treaty.html) (Accessed April 3, 2019).

<sup>41</sup> Building on the Smart Border Declaration, signed in December 2001, the SMU provides for the exchange of information on a case-by-case basis between Canada and the US in accordance with their domestic laws. It also includes an Appendix regarding the Sharing of Information on Refugee Status Claims, signed in August 2003. Sources: Information-Sharing Arrangement among Citizenship and Immigration Canada, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and the U.S. Department of State - [www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/agreements/statement-](http://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/agreements/statement-)

- Various privacy impact assessments (PIA) have been conducted in relation to the initiatives, and procedures are in place to deal with any privacy-related issues. Some privacy controls have been built into systems by design (e.g., GCMS).
  - While the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC) is generally satisfied with privacy related to the initiatives, there are some outstanding concerns with respect to the long-term retention and secondary use of TR fingerprints by law enforcement, and a lack of a direct complaint mechanism for clients to report suspected privacy breaches at VACs.<sup>42</sup>

**Quality Assurance:** Interview, document review and survey findings showed that while some quality assurance (QA) measures are undertaken in relation to the initiatives, there are gaps for IRCC and CBSA.

- Quality controls are built into the IT systems supporting the initiatives, such as GCMS.
- Interviews suggested that the QA work conducted by IRCC is spread throughout the department, and much of it relates to privacy. Centralized Network (CN), IN and the Solutions Information Management Branch (SIMB) all have their own QA-related practices, which touch on some aspects of the two initiatives, but not all.
- Biometrics: IRCC's International Network (IN) monitor VAC activities, including biometric enrolment,<sup>43</sup> and CN undertakes various activities, including QA on the transmission and collection of biometrics, the functioning of equipment, and the number of opinions from the Biometric Assessment Unit (BAU).<sup>44</sup> The RCMP also has QA practices in place for the use, storage and sharing of biometrics-based information in line with their Service Level Agreement (SLA) commitments.<sup>45</sup>
- IIS with the US: IRCC's Immigration Program Guidance (IPG) Branch conducts QA on how officers handle serious derogatory codes to ensure that processes and security screening steps are being followed. It was also noted in the interviews that IRCC has done some QA related to fingerprint retention, as well as some manual checking of the results of automatic sharing.<sup>46</sup>

---

[mutual-understanding-information-sharing/about.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/agreements/statement-mutual-understanding-information-sharing/about.html) and Backgrounder: Canada-U.S. Agreement on the Sharing of Information on Refugee Status Claims - [www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/agreements/statement-mutual-understanding-information-sharing/backgrounder.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/agreements/statement-mutual-understanding-information-sharing/backgrounder.html) (Accessed April 3, 2019).

<sup>42</sup> Source: Correspondence between the Office of the Privacy Commissioner and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (now Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada).

<sup>43</sup> IRCC's IN monitors VAC activities as part of their management of the VAC contract, and a network of regional Biometric VAC officers (BVO) supports these monitoring activities.

<sup>44</sup> The BAU is responsible for analyzing the results of biometric checks when an applicant's fingerprints match against a criminal record or previous deportee record in the RCMP's Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC), and providing an opinion to Migration Officers abroad on the person's inadmissibility under IRPA.

<sup>45</sup> Dashboards and other analyses related to poor quality prints, the application of exemption codes, and RCMP response times are also produced by IRCC.

<sup>46</sup> Documentation suggests that QA should be taking place for IIS in relation to elements, such as data retention, the manner in which data is disclosed, whether data is marked as received, and quotas for queries. Sources: Implementing Arrangement between CIC, CBSA and the US with respect to Biographic IIS; Concept of Operations related to Canada-US Biometric IIS.

- **Decision-making:** Though there is no specific requirement, very few MPMs surveyed reported having conducted QA involving the use of biometric and IIS information in decision-making in the past year. Site visit and interviews findings also suggested that CBSA does not do QA in relation to biometric verification at POEs.

Thus, the QA measures in place focus more on privacy, systems and biometric enrolment, and less on IIS with the US and using biometric and IIS in the decision-making context, either abroad or at POEs.

### 5.1.2. Functional guidance and training

**Finding:** While program delivery guidelines are in place to support the initiatives, there are challenges related to functional guidance for IRCC and CBSA, and officers tend to learn how to work with biometrics and IIS with the US through informal ways, rather than through formal training.

**Functional Guidance:** Document review, interviews and survey findings indicated that the effectiveness of functional guidance and training varied among departments, and highlighted some issues for IRCC and CBSA.

- IRCC has various tools, such as a Biometrics manual, CIBIDS guide, biometric- and IIS-related Program Delivery Instructions (PDIs), and Operational Bulletins (OBs). The IPG Branch Mailbox and CN's Biometrics Operational Support Unit (BOSU) and Centralized Information Sharing Unit (CISU) also provide support.
  - About half of MOs surveyed indicated that functional guidance related to biometrics (49%) and IIS (53%) was not easy to find.
  - Of those who had consulted the functional guidance:
    - Some felt that policies and procedures related to biometrics (40%) and IIS (36%) are not clear.
    - Some also felt that functional guidance related to biometrics (36%) and IIS (36%) are not useful/helpful to immigration decision-making.
- CBSA has OBs and IRPA-, POE- or location-specific instructions related to biometrics, as well as online training materials for biometric verification and systematic biometric IIS. There are also PDIs on IIS, but it was pointed out they may not always apply to the CBSA context.
  - Survey findings showed that many BSOs were not aware of the functional guidance related to biometric verification (81%).
  - Interview findings were consistent, noting that POE staff are unsure of the policies and procedures guiding them, as well as the rules and exceptions regarding the populations requiring biometrics.<sup>47</sup>
- RCMP has policies and procedures in place on how to process biometric information, such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), workflows and SLAs.

<sup>47</sup> After data collection was completed for the evaluation, CBSA updated its functional guidance, such as operational bulletins, shift briefings, and Biometric Program Guide, in preparation for the implementation of expanded biometric services at POEs under the Biometrics Expansion Project. However, the results of these efforts could not be assessed for the evaluation.

- While interviews indicated that the policies and procedures related to biometrics in place to support RCMP staff are not specific to the initiative,<sup>48</sup> they were considered to be clear and effective.

**Training:** Interview and survey findings suggested that while there is some formal training, IRCC and CBSA officers tend to learn through informal ways. The RCMP provides training, both general and specific to the Biometrics initiative.

- IRCC Learning and Training:
  - Most MOs surveyed indicated learning how to use biometrics (80%) and IIS (85%) in immigration decision-making through informal training/shown by colleagues.
  - Only a small percentage indicated learning through formal training (18% for biometrics and 10% for IIS).
  - Many MPMs surveyed indicated a need for more formal training for MOs at their Migration Office on using biometric (63%) and IIS results (81%) in immigration decision-making.
  - Views were mixed in the interviews on the adequacy of IRCC training. Some suggestions for improvements were noted: adapting training more quickly to updates to ensure that changes are communicated; and providing more regular training for MPMs and Temporary Duty staff.
- CBSA Learning and Training:
  - Many BSOs surveyed indicated learning how to verify (70%) biometrics through informal training/shown by colleagues.
  - Only a small percentage indicated learning through formal training (23%).
  - Interview findings suggested challenges with existing training, and that training may be designed more for IRCC needs than CBSA needs.<sup>49</sup>
- RCMP Learning and Training:
  - Training specific to the initiative is made available and offered whenever there is an update.
  - General training as a service provider includes entry level training, coaching and mentoring with respect to the infrastructure for fingerprints.

---

<sup>48</sup> The interviews highlighted that RCMP policies and procedures related to biometrics are broader in scope, providing guidance related to biometric-related information held in the national repository, including guidance on the collection of biometrics on Canadians.

<sup>49</sup> After data collection was completed for the evaluation, CBSA updated its training, including the creation of Biometric videos on Verification and Enrolment, and an updated online course on Secondary Processing and Passage History, in preparation for the implementation of expanded biometric services at POEs under the Biometrics Expansion Project. However, the results of these efforts could not be assessed for the evaluation.

## 5.2. Communication and coordination

**Finding:** While there are formal and informal mechanisms in place to support coordination and communication in relation to the Biometrics and Canada-US IIS initiatives, there is an indication that they are not always effective, particularly for the asylum context.

Document review and interviews showed that there are coordination/communication mechanisms related to the initiatives.

- For Biometrics: Examples include: Senior Review Boards, the Biometrics Business Management Committee and ad hoc meetings between OGD partners.
  - However, it was noted that some mechanisms were put in place to support the TRBP, and at the time of the evaluation were primarily supporting work in relation to Expansion rather than ongoing operations.
- For IIS with the US: Examples include: Joint Advisory and Joint Consultation Committees with OGD partners, an operations committee with the US, and regular M5 meetings.

While no challenges were noted in the interviews with respect to coordination and communication for the RCMP, various challenges were highlighted for IRCC and the CBSA, including:

- For IRCC: It was noted that there is governance, but management responsibilities are not always clear. The technical lead is IPG Branch, but there is a lot of turnover.
  - It was suggested that work is done in silos, changes and updates are not well communicated, and there are challenges related to the asylum context.
- For CBSA: It was suggested that there is no governance related to IIS, and no formal mechanisms for communication/coordination related to biometrics (only ad hoc), within CBSA.
  - It was noted that coordination and communication are not effective, particularly at the senior management level.

Survey findings indicated a greater reliance in Migration Offices abroad on informal avenues for discussion to address issues/questions related to using biometrics and IIS information in application processing, as well as a need for more formal avenues for discussion with IRCC-NHQ. Moreover, avenues for discussion within one's Migration Office were more frequently perceived to be effective compared to avenues with IRCC-NHQ. See Appendix F for detailed information on these survey results.

## 5.3. Coverage for biometric enrolment abroad

**Finding:** VAC country coverage for biometric enrolment is generally adequate for the client populations being enrolled abroad; however, there is an indication that there are challenges related to the proximity of VAC service locations to clients.



Analysis of administrative data showed that most biometric enrolment between 2014 and 2017 was conducted abroad, and largely at VACs for biometric-required TRs.<sup>50</sup> As such, the evaluation largely examined service coverage in relation to VACs.

- Document review showed that between 129 and 136 VACs provided coverage to between 94 and 96 countries during the reporting period for the evaluation.<sup>51</sup> However, ten biometric-required countries and one territory did not have a VAC.
  - Interviews and document review noted some factors influencing the selection of VAC locations, including application volumes, security and diplomatic considerations.
- Generally, the interviews suggested that coverage has been adequate, and administrative data analysis showed that 81.4% of biometric-required TR applicants who enrolled their biometrics at a VAC were able to do so within their country of residence.
- However, findings from the survey of Migration Program Managers (MPM) suggested that there may be gaps.
  - 67% of MPMs surveyed (outside of the US) indicated that the VAC(s) corresponding to their location did not provide adequate coverage and access for clients.
  - 77% of MPMs surveyed (outside of the US) indicated having heard about complaints related to biometric enrolment;<sup>52</sup> of these, 60% reported having heard about complaints related to the proximity of service locations to clients.

Thus, while many countries had VACs to conduct biometric enrolment during the reporting period for the evaluation, their proximity to clients may have not always been ideal.

## 5.4. Capacity abroad to enrol and use biometrics

Most biometric enrolment occurred abroad during the reporting period. Similarly, most applications involving biometrics (about 94%) were processed abroad. As a result, the analysis largely focused on the capacity of VACs, ASCs and Migration Offices abroad to enrol and use biometrics in application processing.

**Finding:** Technical issues with respect to the equipment, IT systems and network in place create challenges for staff abroad in collecting biometrics and using the related information to support application processing.

Survey and interview findings largely indicated capacity issues for IRCC in relation to the IT systems and network, as well as the equipment, supporting biometrics.

---

<sup>50</sup> A small proportion (4%) of biometric enrolment abroad was also conducted by Migration Office staff, primarily for resettled refugee applicants. Another 1.5% was conducted by ASCs in the US.

<sup>51</sup> Also, about 135 ASCs provided coverage to the US during the reporting period for the evaluation. Since the time of the evaluation, additional VACs have been set up to support Biometrics Expansion to other countries in Europe, Africa and the Middle East (July 31, 2018) and Asia, Asia-Pacific and the Americas (December 31, 2018). As of December 31, 2018, there were 152 VACs providing biometric enrolment services.

<sup>52</sup> 23 out of 30 of MPMs (outside of the US) surveyed indicated having heard about complaints; of these, 87% indicated a frequency of “rarely” (43.5%) or “sometimes” (43.5%).



- Knowledge on using biometric results: All MPMs surveyed felt at least to some extent (*somewhat, quite a bit or a great deal*) that MOs at their Migration Office had adequate knowledge to effectively use biometric results in decision-making.
- Equipment: IRCC, as well as VACs on behalf of IRCC, use the Canadian Immigration Biometric Identification System (CIBIDS) to collect biographic and biometric data (fingerprints and facial images) from applicants. It consists of both hardware and software to capture and record this data.<sup>53</sup> A mobile version of CIBIDS (or mobile kit) exists, which can work offline.<sup>54</sup>
  - 78% of MPMs surveyed felt that Migration Offices had sufficient capacity for biometric enrolment using CIBIDS, while 66% felt that the VACs/ASCs corresponding to their Migration Office had sufficient capacity to conduct biometric enrolment based on the volume of clients for whom it is needed.
  - However, 50% felt that the CIBIDS equipment did not function in a reliable way.
  - Of the MPMs located in Migration Offices using the mobile kits, 83% felt that their Migration Office had sufficient capacity to enrol biometrics using them.
  - However, all felt that mobile kits were difficult to transport and 75% felt that they did not function in a reliable way.
  - Challenges regarding the mobile kits were also noted in the interviews.
- IT systems and network.
  - 94% of MPMs surveyed reported issues/challenges related to the IT systems and/or network supporting the use of biometrics in application processing (e.g., unplanned system or network outages, issues with GCMS).
  - Of these, 47% felt that these challenges have been a problem to a large extent (*quite a bit or a great deal*).
  - The interviews highlighted challenges with remotely accessing the system (e.g., bandwidth, power supply), as well as time zone difficulties.
  - 66% of MPMs surveyed felt that the Biometrics tabs in GCMS were not easy to use.
- Support.
  - Support related to Biometrics is largely provided by IRCC through BOSU. BOSU acts as an operational support desk receiving inquiries concerning issues with the collection, transmission, verification, receipt and reading of biometric data.<sup>55</sup>
  - IRCC's IT Service Desk is responsible for providing IT support.

---

<sup>53</sup> Major CIBIDS components include: an electronic fingerprint-capture device used to capture the applicant's fingerprints; a video camera used to record the process of biometric collection (only at the VACs); a digital camera used to capture the applicant's live photo; a travel document reader used to retrieve the applicant's travel document information; a bar-code reader used to retrieve the applicant's unique identifier number; the CIBIDS software. Data received through CIBIDS is encrypted and sent to a central processing hub at IRCC NHQ, which then sends the biographic data and digital photos to GCMS and the fingerprints to the RCMP's RTID system. ASCs use a separate system to collect biometric data that is then transferred to IRCC.

<sup>54</sup> After the biometric operator finishes collecting the biometric information, CIBIDS encrypts it and stores it on the hard drive of the mobile unit laptop. When the laptop is reconnected to the GoC network, CIBIDS sends the data automatically to the central processing hub.

<sup>55</sup> BOSU is the first and single point of contact for all biometric-related requests, and is the primary liaison with IPGB and the IT Service Desk within IRCC, as well as with CBSA and RCMP partners.

- Of the MPMs surveyed who reported issues/challenges related to the IT systems and network, 77% indicated having asked for support.
  - Of these, 61% indicated that the support received was not adequate to address their IT issues/challenges.
- It was noted in the interviews that while support provided by BOSU is 24/7, IT support for GCMS is not. Based on a consultation with BVOs, GCMS issues take more time to resolve when time zones do not overlap with regular working hours.

## 5.5. Capacity in Canada to verify Biometrics at POEs

**Finding:** There is an indication that there can be issues at the POE with respect to equipment, functional guidance and support for biometric verification, and that capacity to verify biometrics based on client volumes can be a challenge.

Survey findings suggested that there are issues at POEs related to equipment, functional guidance and support, as well as overall capacity to verify biometrics based on client volumes.

- Capacity and client volumes: At the time of the evaluation, all POEs had the capacity to verify photographs, whereas only the eight major airport POEs were equipped to verify fingerprints on a discretionary basis.
  - As previously noted, while photograph verification was mandatory for all biometric-related passages, fingerprint verification was intended to be used on discretionary basis if BSOs had identity concerns after a visual inspection of the biometric photograph.
  - 54% of BSOs surveyed felt that their POE did not have sufficient capacity to verify biometrics based on the volume of clients for whom it was needed.
  - For fingerprint verification, site visit findings suggested that some factors affecting a BSO's discretion to verify fingerprints were uncertainty about the individual's identity, as well as time and the number of people waiting to be seen by a BSO.
- Equipment: 63% of BSOs surveyed with experience verifying biometrics felt that the verification equipment was easy to use; however, 60% felt that it did not function in a reliable way.
- Functional guidance and support: Awareness of related functional guidance was low among BSOs surveyed with experience related to biometric verification (19%).
  - Interviews noted that POE staff are unsure of the policies and procedures guiding them, as well as the rules and exceptions regarding the populations requiring biometrics.
  - 61% of BSOs surveyed indicated having asked for support for questions/issues when conducting biometric verification. The most common sources of support consulted by BSOs surveyed were another BSO, followed by a Superintendent.
  - Of these, some indicated that the support was not timely (42%) or adequate to address their questions/issues (43%).

## 5.6. Capacity abroad to use IIS with the US

BSOs and IRCC officers (in Canada and abroad) can use IIS information in the context of their work. However, it is most often used in the context of application processing abroad. As a result, the analysis largely focused on the capacity of MOs to use IIS information in application processing abroad.

**Finding:** Some Migration Officers abroad have difficulty interpreting derogatory information returned from the US through IIS.

While survey findings also suggested challenges with the IT systems and network supporting the use of IIS with the US, they pointed to larger issues with respect to effectively using IIS results in decision-making, particularly in relation to interpreting codes for derogatory information.

- Knowledge on using IIS results: Most MPMs surveyed felt at least to some extent (somewhat, quite a bit or a great deal) that MOs at their Migration Office had adequate knowledge to effectively use IIS results in decision-making.
  - However, 81% of MPMs surveyed indicated a need for more formal training for MOs on using IIS results.
  - Of note, survey results revealed difficulties understanding the biographic (45%) and biometric (49%) IIS derogatory codes returned from the US for some MOs surveyed. These difficulties were also highlighted in the interviews and consultation with BVOs.
- IT systems and network:
  - 69% of MPMs surveyed reported issues/challenges related to the IT systems and/or network supporting the use of IIS with the US in application processing (e.g., unplanned system or network outages, issues with GCMS).
  - However, of these, only 9% felt that these challenges have been a problem to a large extent (quite a bit or a great deal).
  - 63% of MPMs surveyed felt that the IIS tabs in GCMS were not easy to use.
- Support:
  - CISU is the primary point of contact in Canada for IIS operations with Canada's M5 partners, and is responsible for: compiling and creating requests for additional information; receiving responses; and disseminating this information to Canadian officers.<sup>56</sup>
  - As with Biometrics, IRCC's IT Service Desk is responsible for providing IT support.
  - Of the MPMs surveyed who reported issues/challenges related to the IT systems and network, 64% indicated having asked for support.
    - Of these, 57% indicated that the support received was not adequate to address their IT issues/challenges.

---

<sup>56</sup> CISU also provides corrected information to M5 partners pertaining to biographic and/or biometric queries; reviews corrections to previously shared M5 partner information; and liaises with the CBSA's Central Analysis Unit.

## 5.7. Resource utilization

### 5.7.1. Contribution to facilitated movement and application processing abroad

**Finding:** Biometrics and IIS with the US have contributed to the facilitated movement and processing of admissible individuals by providing evidence to support decision-making. Potential processing efficiencies to be gained through the initiatives will likely be realized downstream.

Interview and survey findings suggested that Biometrics and IIS with the US have facilitated application processing and the movement of travellers by making immigration decision-making easier, but not necessarily faster or more efficient.

- Strengthened decision-making: As previously discussed, interview and survey findings highlighted the added benefits of having biometrics and IIS with the US for immigration decision-making: better information about the client's identity, increased confidence in decision-making, and increased ability to detect risks/threats.
- Facilitated processing: While survey findings suggested that the initiatives are facilitative, interviews and administrative data analysis highlighted that requiring clients to enrol with every application is inefficient.
  - Most MOs surveyed felt that:
    - Having biometrics for immigration decision-making facilitates application processing (80%).
    - Having biographic (88%) and biometric (91%) IIS with the US facilitates application processing for admissible individuals.
  - However, interview findings suggested that the initiatives as they are currently operating are not facilitative yet, but have potential. It was noted that processing efficiencies will be realized as the system of record grows – and with Expansion.
    - At the time of the evaluation, biometrics had to be enrolled for each application, so there were no efficiency gains in terms of enrolment for returning applicants. This changed with Expansion.
  - Administrative data analysis showed that between 2014 and 2017, 13% of biometrically enrolled clients submitted more than one application during the four-year period.
    - Of those with multiple applications, 82% submitted two applications and 18% submitted three or more applications during the reporting period.
- Timeliness of automated systems and follow-ups:
  - 80% of MOs and 77% of BSOs surveyed indicated that the match results from the RCMP are available in a timely manner.
  - 84% of MOs surveyed with experience processing applications with RCMP match results reviewed by the BAU indicated that BAU opinions are provided in a timely manner.
  - 96% of MOs surveyed indicated that automatic IIS results are received from the US in a timely manner.

- However, 43% of MOs with experience processing applications involving a request for additional information indicated that results related to these requests are not received in a timely manner.<sup>57</sup>
- Processing Times:
  - Administrative data analysis looking at processing times did not show any efficiency gains, but rather pointed to slightly longer processing times for biometrically enrolled TR applicants when match information was obtained through the initiatives.
  - Survey findings with MOs also suggested that working with the results of biometrics and IIS with the US can delay processing times.
    - Some MOs surveyed felt that the time it takes to use biometric results from the RCMP (46%) and BAU opinions (42%) negatively affects their processing time.
    - 44% of MOs surveyed felt that the time it takes to use results from automatic IIS from the US negatively affects their processing time.
    - Many MOs surveyed felt that understanding and interpreting the biographic (82%) and biometric (77%) match-related derogatory codes from the US delays their processing of the application.

Thus, while some efficiencies have or will be realized with Expansion, officers using biometric and IIS information in their application processing still have to take time to review it. More information can lead to more time for its review. Similarly, the more questions there are related to the meaning of the information received, the more time it can take to use it.

### 5.7.2. Value for the investment

**Finding:** There is an indication that Biometrics and IIS with the US have generated value for Canada's investment by enhancing identity management and immigration decision-making. It is expected that the benefits will increase as enrolments and information sharing partners expand.

**Costs associated with the initiatives:** Budget estimates indicated that about \$213.9 million was allocated to Biometrics<sup>58</sup> and \$131.7 million to IIS with the US.<sup>59</sup>

- Actual expenditures were not available for all departments and all years covered by the evaluation, preventing a quantitative analysis of the costs associated with the initiatives.
  - IRCC tracked project costs related to setting up the TRBP and was tracking these costs for Biometrics Expansion at the time of the evaluation. However, the ongoing operations of the initiatives were not being tracked separately in a systematic way, as they were embedded within other departmental programs.
  - Moreover, the initiatives were implemented using a phased approach, making the separation of project costs from ongoing operations difficult.

<sup>57</sup> Requests for additional information from the US are coordinated by CISU.

<sup>58</sup> This amount represents the total allocation (2013-14 to 2017-18) to IRCC, CBSA, RCMP and SSC for Biometrics (Ongoing Operations).

<sup>59</sup> This amount represents the total allocation (2012-13 to 2016-17) to IRCC, CBSA, RCMP, SSC and the IRB for IIS, and includes both project and ongoing implementation amounts.

- Some of the costs for Biometrics during the reporting period for the evaluation were offset by the fees for enrolment collected from biometric-required TRs.<sup>60</sup> The total fees collected between 2014 and 2017 are estimated to be just under \$100M.<sup>61</sup>
  - Biometrics (Steady State) only collected fees from biometric-required TRs from 29 countries and one territory. It is estimated that the GoC funded enrolments under this regime at a rate of 47%, and that the client covered the rest of the costs through the biometric fee (i.e., \$85 per individual).
- Biometrics Expansion builds on the infrastructure created by the TRBP. The economies of scale resulting from Biometrics Expansion to other TR and PR business lines are expected to reduce the incremental processing cost of each biometric enrolment from \$160 to \$85, eventually allowing biometric enrolments to be fully cost-recovered.<sup>62</sup>
- There are no cost recovery measures for IIS with the US.

**Value for the investment:** Interview findings noted that it is difficult to quantify the value of preventing the entry of people posing a security risk to Canada. However, interview and survey findings pointed to qualitative benefits related to these initiatives.

- Value of biometrics and IIS with the US: Many MPMs, MOs and BSOs surveyed indicated that biometric and IIS information are valuable to identity management and immigration decision-making (see Appendix G for detailed information related to these survey results).
- Increased benefits of having biometrics and IIS with the US: As discussed earlier in the report, most MOs surveyed with experience prior to the introduction of Biometrics and IIS with the US reported increased benefits as a result of having this information.
  - This was also true for BSOs surveyed in relation to Biometrics.
- Contribution of Biometrics and IIS with the US to safety, security and immigration program integrity in Canada: As discussed earlier in the report, most MPMs, MOs and BSOs surveyed indicated that Biometrics and IIS with the US contribute to: detecting individuals who may pose a risk/threat to Canada; detecting abuse/fraud of Canada's immigration system; and enhancing the safety/security of Canada.
- Potential for value to grow: Interview findings highlighted the value in baselining an identity for future interactions with the immigration program and how the value of the initiatives will grow as the system of record and information sharing partners grow.
  - Future opportunities for systems integration linking Biometrics to other IRCC programming, such as Passport and Citizenship were also suggested.

---

<sup>60</sup> Under Biometrics (Steady State), the biometric fee was \$85 per individual. Biometrics Expansion maintained the individual fee of \$85, as well as introduced a family rate of \$170, and a rate of \$255 for group of performing artists (3 or more persons).

<sup>61</sup> This calculation is based on fee amount for an individual (\$85) X the number of biometric-required TR applicants (1,176,423).

<sup>62</sup> Source: IRCC Cost-Benefit Analysis prepared for the Biometrics Expansion project.



## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

In sum, the evaluation examined the relevance and performance of the Biometrics (Steady State) and Canada-US IIS initiatives and found that they are well aligned with domestic and international security priorities, as well as with Canada's objectives under IRPA. The initiatives provide important tools for Canada's identity management, immigration and border decision-making processes, and play an important role in protecting the integrity of Canada's immigration and refugee programs, as well as in maintaining public and partner confidence in these efforts.

The evaluation focused on results related to the ongoing operations of these initiatives with a view to informing implementation of the Biometrics Expansion project. At the time of the study, Expansion efforts were already underway: the biometrics requirement was being expanded to all TRs as well as PRs; capacity to verify biometric fingerprints was being expanded beyond the eight major airport POEs; and immigration information sharing was being expanded to other M5 partners. With this in mind, the conclusions highlight key findings from the evaluation of Biometrics (Steady State) and IIS with the US, while providing considerations within the context of Expansion, and presenting recommendations for the way forward with this work.

### **Biometrics and IIS with the US for immigration decision-making: use and capacity**

The evaluation found that Biometrics and IIS with the US have been contributing to identity management and decision-making, largely at the application stage, for Canada's TR and refugee programs. Biometrics provide objective, reliable information to establish and confirm a client's identity, and IIS with the US provides access to a larger system of records to help confirm a client's identity and travel history. Both also provide information on potential criminal, security and immigration risks associated with the client.

Correspondingly, the evaluation found added benefits for officers as result of having Biometrics and IIS information for decision-making, including being better informed about the information provided on the client's application, increased ability to detect risks/threats associated with the applicant's identity, and increased confidence in decision-making. Stakeholders also highlighted the contribution of this information to enhancing Canada's safety and security and detecting abuse/fraud in the immigration program.

However, the study also revealed some challenges affecting the capacity of officers to effectively and efficiently use this information in their decision-making, including issues related to the functional guidance, training and support available, and with interpreting derogatory information returned through IIS with the US. The evaluation also found that QA related to using this information for decision-making has been limited, and that the equipment and IT systems and network supporting their use are not always reliable.

As the amount of biometric and IIS information to review increases with Expansion, it will be important to ensure that officers are well supported to use this information, and that mechanisms are in place to ensure that they are using it effectively and efficiently in decision-making for clients.

**Recommendation 1: IRCC should, in consultation with partners, review and enhance functional guidance and training related to Biometrics and IIS and put in place a Quality Assurance Strategy to monitor the use of this information in immigration decision-making.**

**Recommendation 2: IRCC should identify and prioritize technical issues related to the Biometrics and IIS equipment, IT systems, network and support, and put in place a plan to address these issues where feasible.**

### **Biometrics and IIS with the US for Immigration decision-making: Refugee context**

The evaluation found that Biometrics and IIS with the US have been useful to decision-making for both the asylum and resettlement contexts and play an important role in supporting identity management and program integrity, particularly for the asylum system. However, the evaluation also revealed areas for improvement, unique to the asylum and resettlement contexts:

- In the asylum context, there is a need for better communication, coordination and support related to the initiatives to facilitate decision-making.
- In the resettlement context, biometric information sharing with the UNHCR, a key referral partner, would be beneficial to strengthen identity management.

**Recommendation 3: IRCC should, in collaboration with CBSA and the IRB, put in place a strategy to improve coordination, information sharing and support for the use of Biometrics and IIS in the asylum context.**

**Recommendation 4: IRCC should develop options for biometric information sharing on resettled refugee applicants with the UNHCR and implement a selected option to enhance identity management in the resettlement context.**

### **Biometric verification at POEs: Use and capacity**

The evaluation found that the approach to biometric verification largely relied on the digital photographs, and not fingerprints, during the reporting period for the evaluation. Photograph verification was mandatory for all biometric-related passages, while fingerprint verification was discretionary at eight major airport POEs equipped under the Temporary Resident Biometrics Project (TRBP). BSOs were instructed to refer clients for fingerprint verification if there were identity concerns after a visual inspection of their biometric photograph. Correspondingly, only 4.4% of biometric-related passages at these POEs were biometrically verified through fingerprints.

However, fingerprint verification is becoming automated at PIKs at ten airports through Biometrics Expansion and the PIK initiative. It is also being expanded to additional POEs on a discretionary basis through Biometrics Expansion. Expansion of the capacity to verify biometrics at POEs, and in particular SFV, will take fuller advantage of the biometric tools available, and is expected to further strengthen identity management at POEs.

The evaluation also found that many BSOs were not aware of functional guidance related to biometric verification, and that they tended to learn how to verify biometrics through informal ways rather than training. Furthermore, there were no quality assurance mechanisms in place



to monitor their decision-making in the biometric verification process. Given the increased client volumes that will come with Expansion, there is a need to disseminate adequate guidance on biometric verification to support effective decision-making at POEs.

**Recommendation 5: CBSA should review, enhance and promote functional guidance, training and support for biometric verification.**

#### **Biometric enrolment: Service coverage and accessibility**

At the time of the evaluation, most biometric enrolment was conducted abroad by VACs. While VAC country coverage was generally adequate for clients from the 29 countries and one territory subject to this requirement, there was an indication of possible gaps related to the proximity of service locations. The evaluation did not directly capture information on the client experience related to biometric enrolment, so challenges related to service coverage were based on the perspectives of IRCC representatives.

Biometrics expansion is extending the enrolment requirement to TR and PR client populations from all countries. Eventually, clients within Canada will also have to enrol their biometrics, broadening the demand for enrolment services domestically beyond the asylum system. With more and more clients being impacted by biometric enrolment, it will be critical to better understand the client experience with respect to service coverage and accessibility.

**Recommendation 6: IRCC should put in place a strategy to measure and monitor the quality of client services related to biometric enrolment, taking into account enrolment services provided abroad, as well as those eventually provided in Canada.**



## **Appendix A: Nationalities of Temporary Residents requiring biometrics under Steady State**

29 countries and one territory\*

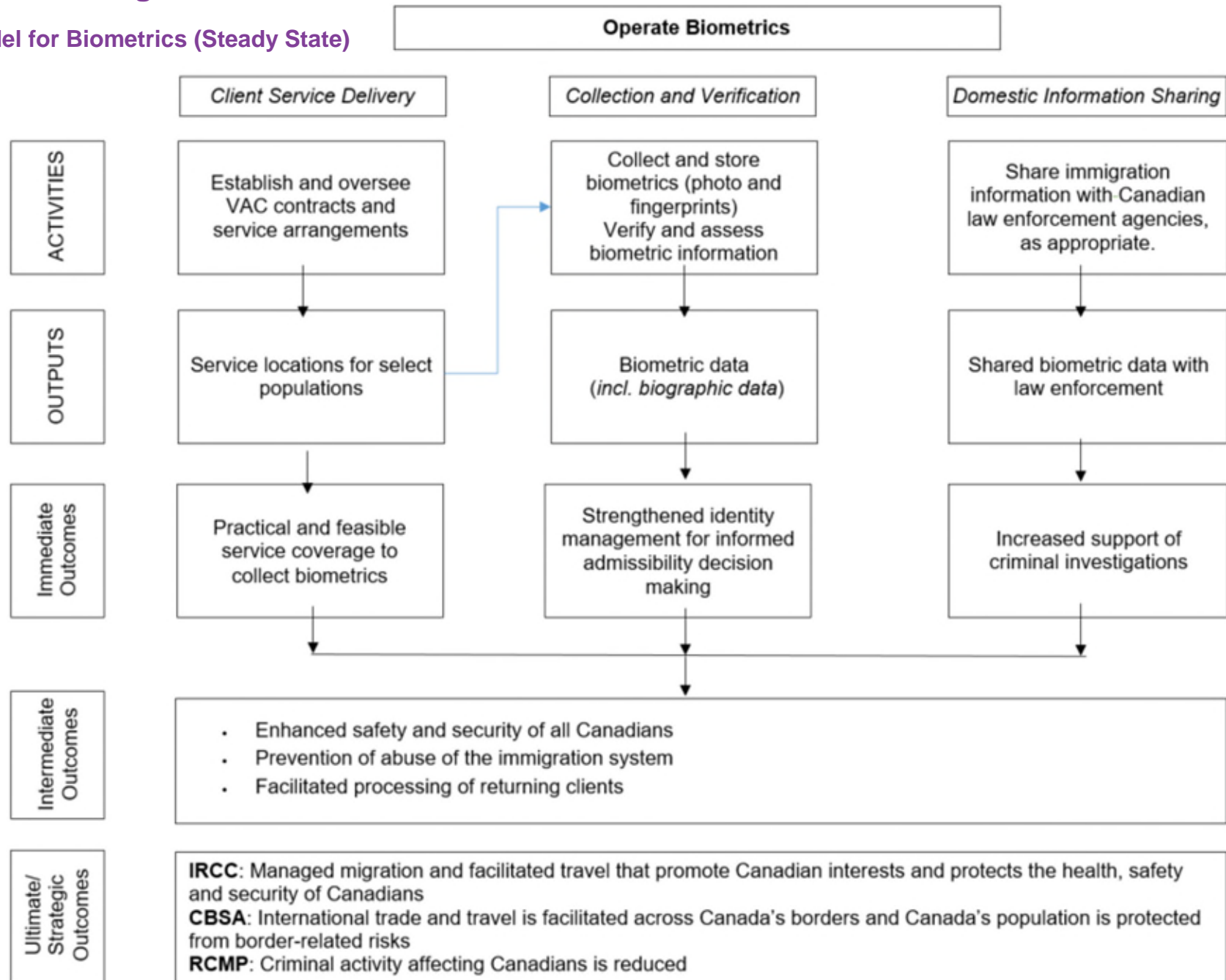
Afghanistan  
Albania  
Algeria  
Bangladesh  
Burma (Myanmar)  
Cambodia  
Colombia  
Democratic Republic of Congo  
Egypt  
Eritrea  
Haiti  
Iran  
Iraq  
Jamaica  
Jordan  
Laos  
Lebanon  
Libya  
Nigeria  
Pakistan  
Saudi Arabia  
Somalia  
South Sudan  
Sudan  
Sri Lanka  
Syria  
Tunisia  
Vietnam  
Yemen

\*Palestinian Authority.

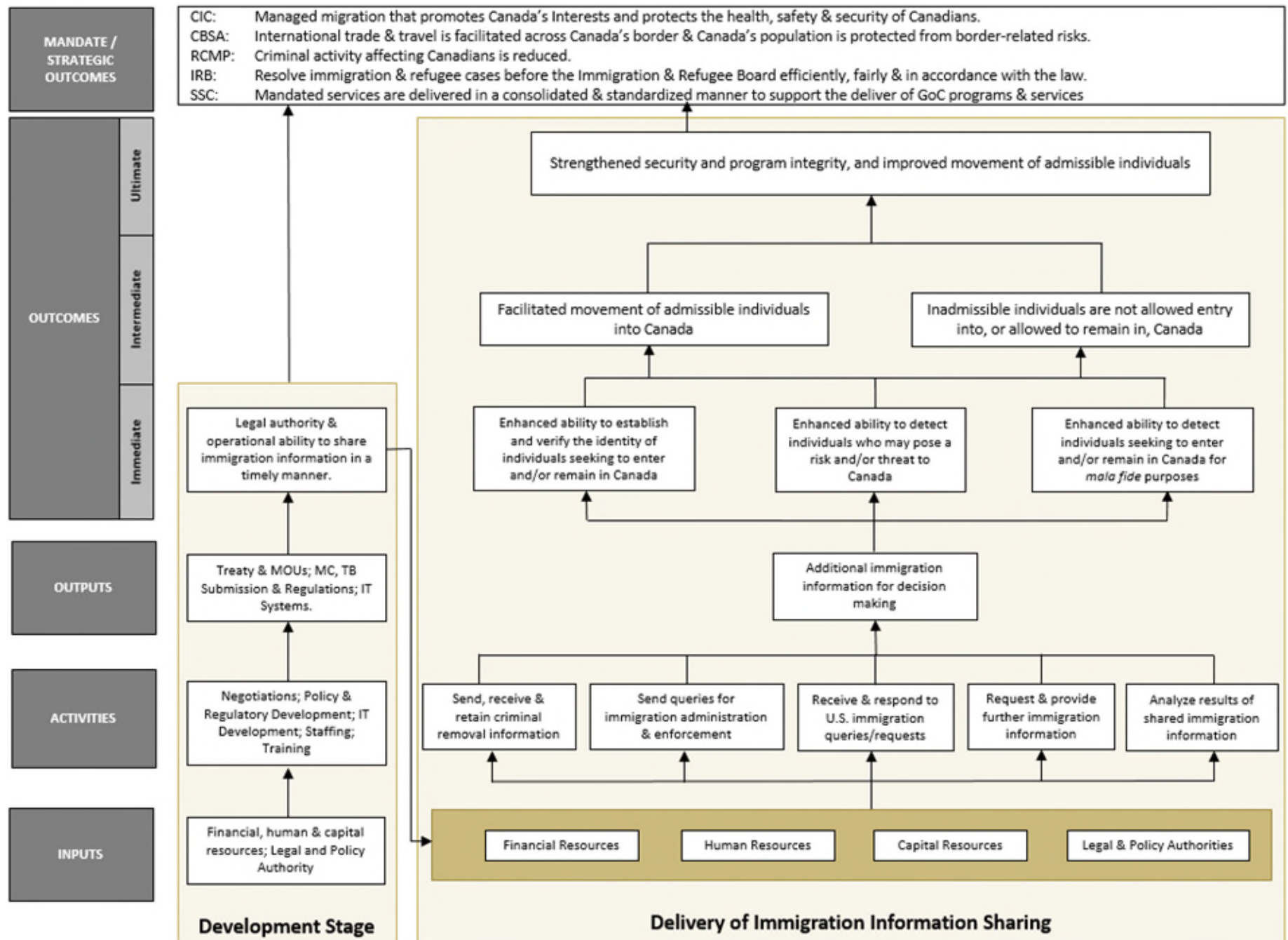


## Appendix B: Logic models

### Logic Model for Biometrics (Steady State)



## Logic Model for Immigration Information Sharing (Canada-United States)



## Appendix C: Overview of the surveys used in the evaluation

Three online surveys were administered as part of the evaluation to gather information on capacity and use related to Biometrics and IIS with the US in Migration Offices abroad and at Ports of Entry (POE) in Canada.

1. Survey of Migration Officers (MOs): Administered online – February 21 to March 19, 2018.
  - Potential participants were identified in consultation with International Network representatives based on a list of MOs currently posted abroad, and sent an email with a unique survey link inviting them to participate in the survey.
    - A total of 234 MOs were identified at various levels who were currently working in a Migration Office abroad responsible for processing applications.
    - After bounce-backs and out-of-office replies, there were a total of 215 possible respondents for the survey.
  - Participation was voluntary. A total of 101 MOs across 39 different Migration Offices responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 47%.
    - The survey was designed for MOs involved in application processing and using Biometrics and IIS with the US in their decision-making.
    - While the survey was sent to all MOs on the list, it was expected that some would decide not to participate, as they were not currently involved in application processing (given their level and duties) or did not have experience processing applications involving Biometrics (given the locations of their postings abroad and client populations associated with these locations).
  - At the time of the survey, respondents were currently working in Migration Offices representing all four world regions: Africa and the Middle East (21), Asia and Pacific (38), Europe (22) and the Americas (20).
    - Included respondents from 14 of the 15 top Migration Offices for processing resettled refugees (based on 2014 to 2017 admissions) and 16 of the 19 Migration Offices that were responsible for processing TR applicants from biometric-required countries.
  - 95 respondents indicated experience processing applications involving Biometrics.
    - 51 respondents had experience processing applications for biometric-required TRs only, 3 with applications for resettled refugees only and 41 with applications for both client groups.
  - 62 respondents indicated experience processing applications prior to 2014 and 60 indicated both prior experience and experience with Biometrics.
    - 2014 was the first full year in which Biometrics and IIS (biographic only) information from the US were available for immigration decision-making.
    - MOs with experience processing applications prior to 2014 were asked in the survey to reflect on changes (pre-post) as result of the introduction of Biometrics and IIS with the US.

- The survey questions examined issues related to: coordination and communication related to the initiatives; policies, procedures, functional guidance, training and support related to Biometrics and IIS with the US; the value and contribution of Biometrics and IIS with the US to immigration decision-making, program integrity and safety and security; and the efficiency of the initiatives.
2. Survey of Migration Program Managers (MPMs): Administered online – February 21 to March 19, 2018.
- An email invitation with a unique survey link was sent to 49 MPMs who were currently working in Migration Offices abroad responsible for processing applications.
    - After bounce-backs, there were a total of 47 possible respondents for the survey.
  - Participation was voluntary. A total of 32 MPMs (or delegates) responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 68%.
    - The survey was designed for MPMs to complete on behalf of their Migration Office.
  - At the time of the survey, respondents were currently working in Migration Offices representing all four world regions: Africa and the Middle East (9), Asia and Pacific (11), Europe (5) and the Americas (7).
    - Included respondents from 12 of the 15 top Migration Offices for processing resettled refugees (based on 2014 to 2017 admissions) and 15 of the 19 Migration Offices that were responsible for processing TR applicants from biometric-required countries.
  - All respondents indicated that their Migration Office processed applications involving Biometrics.
    - All respondents indicated that their Migration Office processed applications for biometric-required TRs and 21 indicated that it processed applications for resettled refugees.
  - The survey questions examined issues related to: coordination and communication related to the initiatives; learning and training related to using Biometrics and IIS with the US; IT systems and network and related support; quality assurance practices; equipment and capacity for biometric enrolment; and the value and contribution of Biometrics and IIS with the US to immigration decision-making, program integrity, and safety and security.



3. Survey of Border Services Officers (BSOs): Administered online – April 5 to May 15, 2018.

- Potential participants were identified in consultation with CBSA representatives, and sent an email with a unique survey link inviting them to participate in the survey.
  - A total of 901 BSOs were identified who were currently working in one of the eight major airport POEs which were equipped as part of the Temporary Resident Biometrics Project (TRBP).
  - After bounce-backs and out-of-office replies, there were a total of 858 possible respondents for the survey.
- Participation was voluntary. A total of 194 BSOs responded to the survey, representing a response rate of 23%.
  - The survey was designed for BSOs involved in biometric verification and/or enrolment, and/or reviewing the results of Biometrics and IIS with the US in the asylum context.
  - While the survey was sent to all BSOs on the list, it was expected that some would decide not to participate, as they were not currently involved in work related to Biometrics and IIS with the US.
- Survey respondents were obtained for all eight major airport POEs: Halifax (8), Montreal (17), Ottawa (21), Toronto (86), Winnipeg (10), Edmonton (2), Calgary (22) and Vancouver (28).
- 119 respondents indicated experience with biometric enrolment and 135 indicated experience with biometric verification
  - 105 indicated experience verifying digital photographs at Primary Inspection and 113 with verifying digital fingerprints at Secondary Inspection.
- 148 respondents indicated general experience with Biometrics (either enrolment or verification), and 76 indicated experience both with Biometrics and working as a BSO or Superintendent prior to 2014.
  - 2014 was the first full year of implementation of Biometrics and IIS with the US (biographic only).
  - BSOs with experience prior to 2014 were asked in the survey to reflect on changes (pre-post) as result of the introduction of Biometrics and IIS with the US.
- 58 respondents indicated experience reviewing the results of automatic IIS with the US.
  - Though they hadn't used it, 35 respondents indicated an awareness of automatic IIS with the US.
- The survey questions examined issues related to: policies, procedures, functional guidance, training and support related to Biometrics (enrolment and verification) and IIS with the US; equipment and capacity to enrol and verify biometrics; the value and contribution of Biometrics and IIS with the US to decision-making at the POE, program integrity, and safety and security; and the efficiency of the initiatives.

## Appendix D: Limitations and considerations

### **Difficulties in extracting and using the data captured in the Global Case Management System (GCMS):**

- The evaluation marked the first time that raw data related to Biometrics and IIS were extracted from GCMS for analysis purposes.<sup>63</sup> As such, considerable time and effort were needed to extract and provide the data in a usable format. Once provided, considerable manipulation was required to clean the data, as some clients had multiple biometric enrolment entries for the same application, resulting in multiple enrolment dates, enrolment locations, and/or RCMP status codes for the same application.<sup>64</sup>
- To mitigate these issues, data were cleaned in consultation with IRCC's Operations Planning and Performance Branch (OPPB)<sup>65</sup> to ensure that there was only one enrolment date, enrolment location and RCMP status code per applicant. Due to this cleaning, numbers reported in the evaluation vary somewhat from numbers previously reported, and thus, were reviewed and validated with OPPB to ensure that they were sound.

### **Challenges in obtaining the perspectives of Border Services Officers (BSOs):**

- The Port of Entry (POE) site visit indicated that there was variability among POEs and BSOs in terms of operations and experience related to Biometrics and IIS with the US. BSOs use Biometrics in various contexts at POEs, and can receive POE-specific instructions. They also have access to other data sources from the US in addition to the information returned through the IIS initiative.
- To mitigate this issue, follow-up consultations were conducted with BSOs from other POEs to better understand similarities and differences between POEs, and the survey of BSOs was designed in such a way to accommodate BSOs with different levels of experience related to using Biometrics (i.e., enrolment and/or verification) and IIS information from the US.
- In addition, at the time of the evaluation, operational pressures related to increased volumes of asylum claimants made it difficult for BSOs at the Montreal airport POE to participate in the survey of BSOs. As such, only a partial list of potential survey participants was provided for the evaluation. To mitigate this issue, extra effort was undertaken to facilitate their participation (e.g., the survey completion period was extended).

---

<sup>63</sup> Previous reporting related to the initiatives had been done using aggregate data obtained using system tools.

<sup>64</sup> For example, about 1% of applicants had multiple RCMP status codes.

<sup>65</sup> OPPB is the branch within IRCC responsible for analysis and reporting using GCMS data related to the Biometrics and IIS initiatives.

**Gaps in financial data:**

- Complete data on actual expenditures related to the initiatives were not available for IRCC or CBSA, limiting the analysis related to resource utilization.<sup>66</sup>
- To mitigate this issue, the analysis related to resource utilization focused more on the impact of using the information obtained through these initiatives on application processing (e.g., processing times) and the qualitative benefits of having the information for decision-making. Estimated costs recovered through the biometric fees were also considered.

---

<sup>66</sup> These data were only available for the RCMP. The availability of financial data is discussed in more detail in section 5.7 on Resource Utilization.

## Appendix E: Survey findings on the contribution of Biometrics and IIS with the US to safety, security and immigration program integrity in Canada

**Table E1: Contribution of Biometrics to Safety, Security and Immigration Program Integrity in Canada**

Biometrics contribute to:	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Don't Know (%)
<b>Detecting individuals who may pose a risk/threat to Canada</b>			
Migration Officers (n=95)	86	7	6
Migration Program Managers (n=32)	91	6	3
Border Services Officers (n=148)	89	9	1
<b>Detecting abuse/fraud of Canada's immigration system</b>			
Migration Officers (n=95)	88	5	6
Migration Program Managers (n=32)	91	6	3
Border Services Officers (n=148)	91	7	2
<b>Enhancing the safety/security of Canada</b>			
Migration Officers (n=95)	82	8	9
Migration Program Managers (n=32)	94	6	3
Border Services Officers (n=148)	89	9	2

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

**Table E2: Contribution of IIS with the US to Safety, Security and Immigration Program Integrity in Canada**

IIS with the US contributes to:	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Don't Know (%)
<b>Detecting individuals who may pose a risk/threat to Canada</b>			
Migration Officers (n=101)	91	7	2
Migration Program Managers (n=32)	100	0	0
Border Services Officers (n=93)	90	9	1
<b>Detecting abuse/fraud of Canada's immigration system</b>			
Migration Officers (n=101)	93	5	2
Migration Program Managers (n=32)	94	0	6
Border Services Officers (n=93)	86	10	4
<b>Enhancing the safety/security of Canada</b>			
Migration Officers (n=101)	91	7	2
Migration Program Managers (n=32)	100	0	0
Border Services Officers (n=93)	88	10	2

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

## Appendix F: Survey findings on formal and informal avenues for discussion for IRCC migration offices abroad

**Table F1: Presence of formal avenues for discussion**

Within the Migration office	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Migration Officer (n=101)	47	38	16
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	47	47	6
With other Migration office	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Migration Officer (n=101)	21	48	32
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	34	56	9
With IRCC-NHQ	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Migration Officer (n=101)	29	27	45
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	38	34	28

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

**Table F2: Presence of informal avenues for discussion**

Within the Migration office	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Migration Officer (n=101)	97	2	1
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	97	0	3
With other Migration office	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Migration Officer (n=101)	68	12	20
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	100	0	0
With IRCC-NHQ	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Migration Officer (n=101)	48	17	36
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	81	6	13

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

**Table F3: Need for more formal avenues for discussion**

Within the Migration Office	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Migration Officer (n=101)	36	57	7
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	13	78	9
With other Migration Offices	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Migration Officer (n=101)	53	36	11
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	25	66	9
With IRCC-NHQ	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
Migration Officer (n=101)	72	16	12
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	66	16	19

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

**Table F4: Effectiveness of avenues for discussion**

<b>Within the Migration Office</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>
Migration Officer (n=98)	77	23
Migration Program Manager (n=31)	74	26
<b>With other Migration Offices</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>
Migration Officer (n=70)	73	27
Migration Program Manager (n=32)	69	31
<b>With IRCC-NHQ</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>
Migration Officer (n=59)	63	37
Migration Program Manager (n=26)	69	31

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

## Appendix G: Survey findings on the value of biometrics and IIS with the US in decision-making

**Table G1: Extent to which Biometrics are Valuable to Decision-Making**

Decision making	A Great Deal (%)	Quite a Bit (%)	Somewhat (%)	Very Little (%)	Not at All (%)
Migration Officers (n=95)	37	37	21	5	0
Migration Program Managers (n=32)	34	47	19	0	0
Border Services Officers (n=148)	44	39	12	4	1

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*

**Table G2: Extent to which IIS with the US is Valuable to Decision-Making**

Decision making	A Great Deal (%)	Quite a Bit (%)	Somewhat (%)	Very Little (%)	Not at All (%)
Migration Officers (n=101)	27	46	25	3	0
Migration Program Managers (n=32)	19	63	16	3	0
Border Services Officers (n=93)	40	37	17	3	3

*Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.*