

SENIOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – June 2020

Audit and Evaluation Branch

Results at a Glance – Evaluation of Genome Canada, 2014-15 to 2018-19

PROGRAM CONTENT





Genome Canada (GC) is a not-for-profit organization established in 2000 to develop and implement a national strategy in genomics research for the benefit of all Canadians. GC fulfills its mandate through a network of six independently incorporated regional Genome Centres.

Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) directly funds GC through Contribution Agreements.

From 2000-01 to 2017-18, ISED has committed \$1.5 billion in funding to GC.

EVALUATION APPROACH

This evaluation examined the continued relevance, performance and efficiency of GC in accordance with the Treasury Board Secretariat *Policy on Results*. It focused on the period from April 1, 2014 to December 31, 2018, utilizing several lines of evidence:

| | |
|---|---|
|  Document review |  Administrative and financial data review |
|  Key informant interviews |  Literature Review |
|  Case studies |  Two surveys |
|  Data analysis | |

WHAT THE EVALUATION FOUND

The evaluation found that government support to GC was important to ensure the coverage of Canada's strategic sectors and alignment with the national science vision, which could not have been accomplished through dispersed funding support from other sources.

GC contributes to the increased breadth of knowledge in the field of genomics by supporting research in a number of multidisciplinary topics and sectors that address the needs of different regions across Canada and foster international collaborations. GC and the research it supports has also contributed to the depth of genomics knowledge, which was subsequently used in practical applications in GC strategic sectors.

Moreover, GC-funded researchers benefited from the availability and quality of services provided to them by the GC-supported technology platforms. However, the continued technological competitiveness of the platforms may be further improved by focusing GC funding on technology development and better aligning operating funding for the five platforms, which also receive Canada Foundation for Innovation funding.

Overall, GC has contributed to Canada being among the top ten performing countries in genomics research. That being said, Canada is outperformed by other nations in sequencing research that covers large populations, indicating that more support would be required to develop and reach international standards. GC's 2019 Strategic Vision report outlines strategies to help address this challenge.

GC is more capable of funding large-scale genomics projects than other key Canadian players, due to the GC mandate focusing solely on genomics and the strong regional presence through its Centres. Funded researchers consider GC funding applications to be clear and supported by an international peer review process that is transparent and equitable. However, a number of opportunities were identified for improving the efficiency of the operations (e.g., areas related to project reporting requirements and data consistency).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Technology Platforms:** ISED's Science and Research Sector should ensure Genome Canada coordinates with the Canada Foundation for Innovation to better align the operating funding they provide to the technology platforms, in order to minimize duplication of effort and focus Genome Canada's funding on the technology development and competitiveness of the platforms.
- Efficiency of Service Delivery:** To improve the efficiency of service delivery, ISED's Science and Research Sector will ensure Genome Canada:
 - Considers making project reporting requirements commensurate with the project funding level to limit the reporting burden on researchers; and
 - Develops systematic data gathering techniques and defines concepts related to knowledge translation to better measure the socio-economic impacts of funded projects, in collaboration with the Centres.