

APFC can be given adequate funding to become more strategic in its planning, more long-range in its focus, more in-depth in its analysis, and more sophisticated in the types of services it can offer to Canadians.

7.6 Accountability and Governance

As indicated above, as a unique institution with a very large mandate, it is essential that the APFC is resourced adequately to fulfil this mandate. If such resourcing materializes, it is also necessary to have an effective accountability framework.

At present the APFC complies with the evaluation reporting system required for Pacific 2000 executing agencies. This involves the fulfilment of quarterly reporting requirements to the APFC Board and to DFAIT, more detailed and extensive annual work-plans and program reviews. These reports are mainly at the activities and outputs level. Accountability arrangements for the overall policies and programs of the APFC, including the core-funding provided by DFAIT and CIDA, include oversight by the APFC Board Of Directors, and periodic APFC Reports to Parliament (so far, every five years).

According to what we have heard in interviews, there are strengths and weaknesses in this present system of accountability, and there may be a need to review this system, especially if more government resources are channelled to the APFC for more discretionary and strategic activities.

One idea that might be investigated further is to provide the APFC with guaranteed federal core-funding for periods of five years or more, subject to evaluation at the end of the chosen period in compliance with federal government evaluation working standards. What is inherent in such a suggestion is provision of a flexible evaluation framework at the beginning of the chosen period, which would make it clear what performance measures were going to be used.

It should be noted in this context, however, that such an evaluation framework, while ensuring evaluations up to professionally recognized standards, should be designed to maintain the flexibility and responsiveness of the organization to the rapidly changing Asia Pacific environment. In fact, this flexibility and an ability to respond quickly to developing issues and events is one of the key benefits of having a "non-governmental organization" like the APFC deliver federally-funded programs.

Interviews also emphasized the critical role of the APFC Board in decision-making and strategic guidance. To enable the Board to perform this role effectively, it is important that its members have a level of experience and expertise in the Asia Pacific region, in addition to possessing strong links with the Canadian corporate community.