

2018 Evaluation of the International Law Research Program at CIGI by Goss Gilroy Inc.

Management Response and Action Plan

14 March 2018

Recommendation 1: The ILRP should strengthen its internal planning processes to include mechanisms for strong annual consultation (internal and external); clarity regarding its intended audiences and communications strategies; and a more formal project selection process.

Management Response & Action Plan:

Partially agreed. The International Law Research Program (ILRP) is committed to clarifying its objectives through regular planning exercises. Project approvals within the program are decided during CIGI's annual preparation of the Program of Work and Budget, which is an iterative process whereby senior staff determines planned activities and resource allocations. At the same time, the ILRP also consults internally and with its Advisory Committee to compile an annual plan of work to submit to the Government of Ontario, as required by the funding agreement. Final decisions are ultimately vetted and approved by CIGI's Board of Directors.

As has been the practice for the past five years, the ILRP will consult both members of its core audience within the Province of Ontario and its Advisory Committee while proposing activities for the coming year to ensure their relevance and sound investment. All activities are planned according to the overall impacts and respond to a wide variety of issues that are included in the funding agreement with the Government of Ontario.

It should also be noted that ILRP recognizes there are tradeoffs with increasing formal planning and, in some cases, it can be counterproductive. Careful consideration is given to striking an appropriate balance in allocating time and resources toward planning, on the one hand, and execution and results, on the other.

Further, throughout the year, the ILRP often responds to the interests of several departments within the Government of Ontario and consults with other leading decision makers to ensure the relevance of their program of work. It is the program's flexibility and nimbleness in work planning that allows it to accommodate these requests and changing priorities. A more formal project selection process may lead to a rigidity that would inhibit the ILRP's ability to remain responsive to the needs of its funder.

Additional attention will be paid to improving internal project planning processes. As the ILRP continues to grow both in size and complexity, so too does the need for robust project planning. This includes how contracts are managed through to completion and ensuring that internal services (legal, human resources, communications, events and publications) are all functioning in a coordinated manner toward stated outcomes, as outlined in the logic model.

Responsibility Centre: Director, ILRP

Time Frame: Ongoing

Recommendation 2: The ILRP should continue to increase its focus on areas of work in which it adds the most value.

Management Response & Action Plan:

Agreed. A heavy focus will continue to be placed on original research that is closely tied to both the policy agenda of the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada.

Early on in the planning process, the ILRP recognized that it cannot take on an encyclopedic approach to international law and has focused its research efforts on topics mandated by the Province and those that are closely linked. The first five years of the program involved a broad spectrum of work as the team developed its expertise and explored optimal areas of impact. Those areas continue to evolve over time to focus more intensely on issues where the ILRP can have most direct policy influence, where it can offer a strategic advantage (such as on topics of governance of innovation and technology), and where Canadian perspectives and expertise are particularly valuable.

Priority will continue to be placed on refining the ILRP's areas of focus for the remaining five years of the program, and efforts will be driven to those areas where the program can best contribute to increasing capacity and to advancing international law both domestically and globally.

Responsibility Centre: Director, ILRP

Time Frame: Ongoing

Recommendation 3: The ILRP should continue to clarify and communicate the role of the post-doctoral fellowship program, and find ways to more fully engage the scholarship students in the program while they are in residence.

Management Response & Action Plan:

Agreed. Based on the evaluation findings, it is clear that both the scholarship and postdoc programs could be improved with a few minor adjustments. For the postdoc program, the ILRP will commit to providing further clarity on expectations at the outset of recruitment. It will also be important to refine the selection process to ensure a tight alignment of research interests with the ILRP's focus and objectives.

For the scholarship students, the ILRP will commit to revising the structure of the program in response to their stated willingness for greater interaction. It will look to introduce ways to better integrate the students and offer opportunities for meaningful participation.

It should be noted that the scholarship program was designed in consultation with law deans across Canada to address a funding dilemma: unless additional funding is available for the best graduate students to study in Canada, they are tempted to leave Canada to pursue lucrative academic opportunities in the United States and elsewhere. The result is a program that squarely fills a need to augment support for law students in Canada, but that may appear to duplicate opportunities and funding already available.

This clarification may help to explain the juxtaposition of evaluation results identifying the demonstrated value and unique policy focus of the capacity building program against the evaluation finding that student and postdoc research would have otherwise been funded.

The ILRP is launching a new consultation with law deans to reassess this dilemma and, if necessary, redesign the program in light of the experience of the last four years and the expressed interest of some students for greater opportunities for involvement during their residency at CIGI.

Responsibility Centre: Director, ILRP

Time Frame: FY 2018/9 – FY 2019/20

Recommendation 4: The ILRP should begin to position itself for a future in which additional funders are brought on board, giving thought to how to maintain its position as a trusted source of information and advice in doing so.

Management Response & Action Plan:

Agreed. The ILRP is committed to achieving its ultimate outcomes of contributing to the knowledge economy in Ontario and improving Canada's position in shaping global rules. The findings of this evaluation demonstrate that the program is producing high-value results to its external stakeholders, who have expressed interest in seeing the excellent work continue.

It is also recognized that the evaluators explored various possible funding models beyond the current 10-year funding period that will expire in 2023. As the evaluators noted, most of the proposed models may work to compromise what are currently viewed as some of the program's strengths—including, its ability to present research without undue influence of stakeholders, to be agile in reacting to current and developing issues of importance, and to present international research and analysis with a uniquely Canadian perspective.

Over the medium-term, CIGI's senior management team, including the Director of the ILRP, will explore funding opportunities that would see the important work of the international law program continue beyond 2023.

Responsibility Centre: President, CIGI; Director, ILRP

Time Frame: Ongoing