

Standing Committee on Public Accounts Report 14: Protecting Canada’s Food System

Fisheries and Oceans Canada Progress Report on Recommendation 2

Introduction

In December 2021, the Auditor General’s report on *Protecting Canada’s Food System* was tabled in Parliament, with recommendations directed to Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC).

Subsequently, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (PACP) studied the Auditor General’s report, and in May 2022, presented its 14th report, *Protecting Canada’s Food System*, for which the Government tabled its Government Response in September 2022. The PACP recommendation specific to DFO and subsequent government response were the following:

	Committee Recommendation	Government Response and Status
Recommendation 2	That, by 31 December 2022, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with reports outlining their progress on ensuring that their future food support programs measure and report on their contributions toward sustainable development commitments and to gender and diversity in order to improve program assessment and outcomes. Final reports should also be provided by 30 April 2023.	<p>The Government supports this recommendation, and suggests that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and AAFC provide a single final report by April 30, 2023, in lieu of providing two separate reports. The submission of a single report aligns with existing reporting commitments related to the OAG Report, the tabling of the 2022-2026 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) in November 2022, and subsequent development of a new AAFC Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy (DSDS).</p> <p>Both DFO and AAFC are committed to ensuring food support programs track progress on contributions toward sustainable development, and gender and diversity, in order to improve program assessment and outcomes.</p> <p>Once the 2022-2026 FSDS is tabled in November 2022, DFO and AAFC will develop their respective new DSDS to establish targets and indicators that best reflect departmental contributions to the FSDS and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>Both DFO and AAFC are committed to ensuring all programs take into account gender and diversity considerations. In response to the Management</p>

		<p>Response Action Plan response to the OAG Report, DFO developed guidance to assist programs to develop targets and indicators related to sustainability and Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) outcomes for relevant new initiatives. The guidance materials set out processes and supporting information to ensure, when relevant, that programs are demonstrating how their results link to Canada’s sustainable development commitments (both in the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and DFO’s DSDS, as well as with GBA+). All new initiatives, including food support initiatives, are expected to apply this guidance as part of the results development process.</p>
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Progress Report on Recommendation 2

The following submission outlines progress made by DFO in ensuring that its future food support programs measure and report on their contributions toward sustainable development commitments and to gender and diversity in order to improve program assessment and outcomes.

While the initial Government Response to PACP had indicated that a single progress report would be provided to update on Recommendation 2, AAFC and DFO have elected to provide separate reports in order to provide a more fulsome response.

Key measures taken to respond to the Auditor General’s report

DFO considers sustainable development commitments during the planning and development stage of all programs through the Strategic Environmental Assessment process, as required by the *Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals*. DFO has also included examples of how programs contribute to sustainable development goals in its Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports, as required by the Treasury Board of Canada. Additional information on what the Department is doing to support sustainable development and the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is provided through the DFO’s Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy (DSDS).

Now that the 2022-2026 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) has been tabled, DFO is developing a new 2023-2027 DSDS to establish targets and indicators that best reflect departmental contributions to the FSDS and the United Nations SDGs. As compared to previous iterations, the 2023-2027 DSDS will include broader supporting information on work underway at DFO to support the United Nations SDGs and Canada’s sustainable development commitments. This will be completed by November 2023.

DFO is committed to incorporating gender and diversity considerations into the design, development and delivery of all programs. Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) assessments are mandatory for the Budget Proposal, Memoranda to Cabinet, and Treasury Board Submission processes. Ongoing GBA Plus

related work is described through the Departmental Plan, and the distribution of benefits and key diversity impacts by individual programs are reported through the Departmental Results Report.

The Department will continue to ensure that future food-related initiatives are developed in line with the directives of the *Policy on Results*. This will include a GBA Plus Data Collection and Reporting Plan, outlining how GBA Plus impacts will be measured, as well as plans to collect and use new or additional sources of data for future GBA Plus analysis.

Further, DFO has developed additional internal guidance to assist programs in the development of targets and indicators related to sustainability and GBA Plus outcomes for relevant new initiatives. The guidance materials set out processes and supporting information to ensure, when relevant, that programs are demonstrating their results' linkages to Canada's sustainable development commitments, as well as to GBA Plus.