

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS AND STATUS UPDATE

Committee Recommendation	Government Response and Status
<p>1. <i>That, by 31 December 2022, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a progress report on working with its federal, provincial, and territorial partners and stakeholders, including First Nations, Inuit, and Metis groups, to complete a national emergency preparedness and response plan for a crisis affecting Canada’s entire food system, taking into consideration the food security of Canadians. A final report should also be provided by 31 March 2023.</i></p>	<p>The Government supports this recommendation, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is on track to provide a progress report by 31 December 2022 detailing work with federal, provincial, and territorial (FPT) partners and stakeholders, including First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation, on a national emergency preparedness and response plan. AAFC will submit a final report on the plan by 31 March 2023 which will summarize AAFC's consultation efforts and outline a path forward for developing a completed plan by 2024.</p> <p>AAFC has begun the first of two phases of work in response to this. Phase 1 is to work with FPT governments, as well as industry and Indigenous partners, to identify framework options and agree on an implementation approach. This is to be completed by March 2023. Phase 2 is to implement the path forward with FPTs and stakeholders for which the outcome will be the implementation of a national emergency preparedness and response plan for a crisis affecting Canada’s entire food system. The estimated completion date for this is 2024.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of protecting Canada’s food systems from crises. AAFC is committed to forward planning to mitigate future disruptions to the production, distribution and consumption of food.</p> <p>To date, AAFC has begun its first phase of work bringing together stakeholders from across the food supply chain to develop a comprehensive national emergency preparedness and response plan. The purpose of the first phase of work is currently underway to collaborate with provincial and territorial governments, First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation and stakeholders including industry, on how best to support the supply chain’s preparedness and response efforts in Canada. A successful national emergency preparedness and response plan must be inclusive of the unique interests, circumstances, and perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation through engagement and co-development, in support of reconciliation, self-determination, and food sovereignty.</p> <p>The first phase has four key outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raise awareness on the importance of developing a comprehensive emergency response framework for the agriculture and agri-food sector; 2. Establish a Federal, Provincial, and Territorial (FPT) working group to contribute to defining the parameters for an FPT/industry response plan framework, and supporting plans;

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	<p>3. Engage in outreach to Indigenous Peoples, industry partners, and stakeholders to elicit advice on an approach to improving FPT and industry emergency responses;</p> <p>4. Outline a path forward for federal, provincial, and territorial governments, Indigenous Peoples, and stakeholders to identify framework options and agree on an implementation approach.</p> <p>This phase of work will culminate with agreement on emergency framework options, and an implementation approach. AAFC continues to ensure that the emergency framework proposed during this phase links with the Federal Emergency Response Plan, so as to improve Federal Emergency Management cohesiveness, and coordination between federal institutions.</p>
<p>2. <i>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.</i></p>	<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 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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<p>3. <i>That, by 31 October 2022, Agriculture and Agri Food Canada provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a progress report regarding how its future food support programs will be delivered fairly and transparently to all involved, including applicants and recipients.</i></p>	<p>The Government supports this recommendation, and AAFC is on track to provide a progress report by 31 October 2022 detailing how future food support programs will be delivered fairly and transparently.</p> <p>Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic would cause disruptions to food processing and production, and unemployment and wage losses would lead to increasing risks of food insecurity, the Government of Canada took quick and decisive actions to protect Canada’s food supply and respond to increasing risks of food insecurity among Canadians.</p> <p>AAFC uses existing channels to administer programs to protect food systems that ensure oversight. AAFC administers grants and contribution programming according to Government of Canada controls, including the Treasury Board Policy and Directive on Transfer Payments. The department ensured that oversight controls and monitoring were in place to assess that funding was spent as directed, as noted in the OAG’s report.</p> <p>To further strengthen transparency and fairness in programming, AAFC has made several improvements. AAFC continues to develop internal guidance and training to ensure support programs align with the Treasury Board Policy and Directive on Transfer Payments and are delivered consistently throughout AAFC. Guidance documents, including a new Program Operations Guide, have been updated to provide direction to program delivery staff in developing and delivering grants and contributions programming. The Application Form and Applicant Guide were updated to communicate, inform and outline eligible applicants/recipients; the types of eligible activities and expenditures; and program assessment criteria that are used to evaluate applications. AAFC is working with the Treasury Board Secretariat on additional guidance for when a further distribution of funds model is used.</p>
<p>4. <i>That, by 31 December 2022, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, and Pacific Economic Development Canada provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a joint report showing what progress has been made to standardize data collection, analysis, and reporting for future programs that are administered by more than one of these organizations.</i></p>	<p>The Government of Canada supports this recommendation. The information provided below serves as the update on progress achieved by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions (CED), Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada (PacifiCan) that was requested by the PACP by 31 December 2022.</p> <p>DFO and the three implicated Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) recognize the importance of harmonized approaches to data collection, analysis, and reporting for initiatives that are jointly delivered by multiple organizations.</p> <p>Overall, DFO and the RDAs work to achieve and improve the consistency and accuracy of performance indicators, data collection, analysis and reporting. To</p>

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	<p>this end, when designing new joint initiatives, implicated departments work together and consult stakeholders as necessary in developing common approaches, while taking into account their particular regional or local circumstances, needs, and realities. They work on results strategies that meet Treasury Board Secretariat requirements, reporting frameworks, and tools and activities that facilitate the reporting of outcomes consistently across departments, including GBA+, and sustainable development reporting.</p> <p>As standard practice for initiatives administered by more than one organization, all RDAs establish joint policy and program working groups to coordinate the design and delivery of new programs, the results of which are the basis for training, preparing program guides, and developing and monitoring results. This work involves identifying common base indicators and data for which information is collected and reported using common reporting templates. To support these efforts, all RDAs have started to develop and implement new grants and contributions systems, based on a common platform, which will enhance the capacity to collect data and report. This approach recognizes different regional priorities and realities, providing the flexibility that a completely standardized approach would not allow.</p> <p>RDAs have also developed a common data reporting strategy, including standardized templates, shared program indicators, and activities to enhance the accuracy and standardization of data gathered. This also includes regular meetings on performance measurement to develop and advance common reporting approaches, and collaboration with Statistics Canada to explore different sources of data to track results in a way that complements administrative data systems. RDAs also train staff, develop tools for staff, and build quality assurance in data collection and reporting systems. When delivering joint national initiatives, RDAs consult and coordinate with other federal departments.</p> <p>DFO will also work to support a coordinated framework and approach with respect to data collection, analysis and reporting for any future initiatives involving program design and delivery by DFO and the RDAs referenced.</p> <p>As the recommendation was made in the context of the Canadian Seafood Stabilization Fund (CSSF), it is important to note that the initiative, led by DFO, was a special temporary emergency measure announced in April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative was rapidly designed and implemented collaboratively to ensure the industry received timely support in an effective and efficient manner to help protect Canada's food systems during exceptional circumstances. Normally, from design until program</p>

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	<p>launch, these activities can take four months or more, however the CSSF was implemented much quicker.</p> <p>The Government remains committed to continuing to pursue a structured approach to build on current practices to improve the consistency of measurement and reporting, and to use experience from previous programming, and information from audits and evaluations to inform the design of performance measurement strategies for future joint initiatives.</p>
<p>5. <i>That, by 31 October 2022, Agriculture and Agri Food Canada provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a progress report on updated performance measurements that allow it to obtain sufficient, consistent, and relevant data to assess the achievement of outcomes for its food support programs.</i></p>	<p>The Government supports this recommendation, and is on track to provide a progress report by 31 October 2022.</p> <p>AAFC recognizes the importance of robust performance measurement strategies, and is committed to work towards the improvement of its performance information by focusing on early engagement with policy and program leads during the Memorandum to Cabinet and Treasury Board submission stages of new initiatives. As part of this engagement, AAFC ensures that Performance Information Profiles exist, and are being implemented for each program. It also ensures that the approaches contained therein enable AAFC to obtain sufficient, consistent, and relevant data to assess the achievement of outcomes for its programs that support Canada’s food systems. Additionally, AAFC has added new fields in its performance reporting documents for one of its key programs that supports Canada’s food systems. The program, called the Local Food Infrastructure Fund, uses the new fields to collect data to show additional comparability between projects and to analyze the program’s absolute impacts.</p> <p>AAFC will provide the PACP with a progress report on updated performance measurements for its food support programs by 31 October 2022.</p>
<p>6. <i>That, by 31 December 2022, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with a progress report about how it is systematically collecting pre-subsidy prices for all eligible food items under the Nutrition North Canada subsidy program, to assess whether the program is achieving its objective of making food more affordable in the eligible communities. A final report should also be provided by 31 May 2023.</i></p>	<p>The Government of Canada supports this recommendation, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) is on track to provide a progress report by 31 December 2022, and final report by 31 May 2023.</p> <p>CIRNAC recognizes the importance high quality data to assess whether the program is achieving its objective. CIRNAC commits to working directly with retailers registered with the Nutrition North Canada program to collect pre-subsidy prices for all eligible items.</p> <p>To date, CIRNAC has engaged with retailers directly to obtain this new subset of data, working collaboratively on how best to make this transition. CIRNAC is currently reviewing and amending the contribution agreements for retailers to include an additional clause that pre-subsidy prices are to be submitted to the program with their monthly subsidy claims.</p>

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	<p>CIRNAC’s projected timeline to implement this recommendation is the end of fiscal year 2022–2023. CIRNAC will provide an updated progress report at the end of 2022 on the status of this recommendation, as well as at the conclusion of the 2022-2023 fiscal year to meet the requested deadline of 31 May 2023.</p>
<p>7. <i>That Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada ensure any changes to the funding or administration of the Nutrition North Canada subsidy program include consultation with Indigenous groups.</i></p>	<p>The Government of Canada supports this recommendation.</p> <p>The \$25 million investment to Nutrition North Canada’s subsidy program under the federal government’s COVID-19 response provided immediate support to northern isolated communities. While this investment has proven to be effective in addressing critical priorities brought on by the pandemic, ongoing consultations with Indigenous partners is confirming the clear need for sustained investments to Nutrition North Canada to adequately address food insecurity beyond the short-term.</p> <p>Nutrition North Canada works closely with Indigenous and northern partners to understand and address their own food security priorities. Nutrition North Canada programming is directly informed by its Advisory Board to the Minister of Northern Affairs, which comprises of members who have extensive experience living and working across the program’s broad delivery area – and from two working groups, the program’s Indigenous Working Group, and the Inuit Crown Food Security Working Group established under the Inuit Crown Partnership Committee. In addition, Nutrition North Canada’s strong network of Harvesters Support Grant Indigenous recipient organizations represents an additional strategic partnership.</p> <p>Through a suite of programming updates and expansions, Nutrition North Canada continues to demonstrate that direct engagement with Indigenous and community partners is driving tangible results. Recent examples include supporting the creation and delivery of the Harvesters Support Grant; supporting the need for, and the delivery of, additional subsidy funding; and demonstrating the need for funding to support community-driven food security solutions. In addition, Budget 2021 investments to expand the program towards food security have been fully co-developed with Indigenous partners. These enhancements will be implemented in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.</p>