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# 2023 to 2027 Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Executive Summary

The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB or the Board) is Canada's largest independent administrative tribunal. It is responsible for making well-reasoned decisions on immigration and refugee matters efficiently, fairly, and in accordance with the law.

In December 2020, the [\*Federal Sustainable Development Act\*](#)<sup>i</sup> was amended. One of the amendments was to expand the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) mandate from 42 federal organizations to 101, one of which is the IRB. As per the Act, federal organizations must table a Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy (DSDS) one year after an FSDS is tabled. The 2022 to 2026 FSDS was tabled on November 2, 2022. Although sustainable development is not new to the IRB, this will be the Board's first DSDS.

The 2023 to 2027 DSDS details the Board's individual departmental actions that support the following goals and implementation strategies of the 2022 to 2026 FSDS:

- Goal 10: Advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and take action on inequality
  - Implementation strategy: Implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*
- Goal 12: Reduce waste and transition to zero-emissions vehicles
  - Implementation strategy: Strengthen green procurement criteria
- Goal 13: Take action on climate change and its impacts
  - Implementation strategy: Implement the Greening Government Strategy through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve climate resilience, and green the government's overall operations

## SECTION 1

# Introduction to the Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy

The [2022 to 2026 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy](#)<sup>ii</sup> (FSDS) presents the Government of Canada's sustainable development goals and targets, as required by the [Federal Sustainable Development Act](#)<sup>i</sup> (FSDA). This is the first FSDS to be framed using the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and provides a balanced view of the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainable development.

In keeping with the purpose of the Act, to make decision-making related to sustainable development more transparent and accountable to Parliament, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB or the Board) supports the goals laid out in the FSDS through the activities described in this Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy (DSDS).

The FSDA also sets out 7 [basic principles](#)<sup>iii</sup> that must be considered in the development of the FSDS as well as DSDS's. These basic principles have been considered and incorporated in the IRB's DSDS.

To promote coordinated action on sustainable development across the Government of Canada, this departmental strategy integrates



efforts to advance Canada's implementation of the 2030 Agenda National Strategy, supported by the Global Indicator Framework (GIF) and Canadian Indicator Framework (CIF) targets and indicators, where applicable. The 2030 Agenda National strategy also now captures SDG initiatives that fall outside the scope of the FSDS to inform the development of Canada's Annual Report on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

## SECTION 2

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada's Sustainable Development Vision

This is the Board's first DSDS as a mandated organization under the updated FSDA that came into force in December 2020. However, sustainable development is not new to the IRB. Prior commitments were included in the Reporting on Green Procurement supplementary information table in the Departmental Plan and Departmental Results Report. The Board had corresponding departmental actions that supported the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 13 (Climate Action).

As a small federal organization, the Board is required to report on the following:

- Goal 10: Advance reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and take action on inequality
  - Implementation strategy: Implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*
- Goal 12: Reduce waste and transition to zero-emissions vehicles
  - Implementation strategy: Strengthen green procurement criteria
- Goal 13: Take action on climate change and its impacts
  - Implementation strategy: Implement the Greening Government Strategy through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve climate resilience, and green the government's overall operations

The IRB remains committed to advancing sustainable development practices in support of the above three goals. Goal-specific departmental actions, which are described in Section 4 of this strategy, set the standards the IRB adheres to.

The Board will continue to build a culture of sustainable practices that reflect all three dimensions of sustainable development – environmental, economic, and social. For example, in 2021, the IRB developed its first Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan to promote a diverse and inclusive culture; build a diverse and inclusive workplace; and embed diversity and inclusion in the Board’s policies and programs. Further to this, the [IRB Accessibility Plan 2023 to 2025](#)<sup>iv</sup> is being implemented, which details the Board’s commitments to removing barriers for people with disabilities, including employees and those who appear before it. The Board also identifies and supports engagement efforts developed by Board champions for Indigenous Employees, Visible Minorities, 2SLGBTQI+ communities, and Persons with Disabilities and promotes participation in both IRB-led and government-wide awareness and cultural shifting discussions. Central to these efforts is a deliberate recognition of the reconciliation process.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the IRB accelerated the development and adoption of its Digital Strategy. This included pivoting from a paper-based tribunal to a digital one. The shift to electronic case files, coupled with the adoption of a virtual hearings operating model ensures access to justice for clients while also reducing negative environmental effects. The model also allows the Board to leverage a diverse workforce across Canada to help the Board meet its targets for employment equity groups and increase the representation of visible minorities/racialized persons, Indigenous Peoples, women, and persons with disabilities. The continuation of successfully executing digital initiatives could contribute to sustainable development by promoting the further reduction of the IRB’s carbon footprint.



## SECTION 3

# Listening to Canadians

As required by the FSDA, the IRB has considered comments on the draft 2022 to 2026 FSDS made during the public consultation held from March 11 to July 9, 2022.

During the public consultation, more than 700 comments were received from a broad range of stakeholders, including governments, Indigenous organizations, non-governmental organizations, academics, businesses, and individual Canadians in different age groups and of various backgrounds. The draft FSDS was also shared with the appropriate committee of each House of Parliament, the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, and the Sustainable Development Advisory Council for their review and comment.

## What We Heard

Canadians provided comments across the 17 FSDS goals, with a focus on socio-economic concerns within Canada. While none of the comments received during the FSDS public consultations pertain to the Board's mandate, the IRB is taking into consideration the following views that were expressed during the Environment and Climate Change Canada led public consultations:

- The importance of recognizing Indigenous rights and knowledge, and the need for consultations and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples.
- Strengthen green procurement and implement net-zero procurement to help encourage company's voluntary engagement in the race to net zero.
- Education on climate change impacts and related adaptation measures to help transition to more climate-friendly practices.

## What We Did

The IRB considered the emphasis that Canadians placed on reducing waste and adopting green procurement policies. The Board is aware of the importance of the ongoing dialogue with Canadians to further enhance sustainable development across the Government of Canada. The IRB will continue to monitor and consider feedback from Canadians as it relates to the Board's departmental actions.

Please find more information on the FSDS public consultation and its results in the [FSDS Consultation Report](#).<sup>v</sup>

SECTION 4

## Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada's Commitments





## Goal 10: Advance Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and Take Action on Inequality

### **FSDS Context:**

The IRB is committed to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. As progress down the path to truth and reconciliation is made, it's important to acknowledge the significant roles Indigenous Peoples have played and continue to play in shaping Canada. It is also vital that we continue to learn about past injustices that have been committed against the Indigenous population in Canada. Only by understanding can a better, and more inclusive future be created. As such, the Board ensures that its employees have access to Indigenous cultural competency training as identified in the IRB's mandatory training framework.

Most of the IRB's contracting activity is facilitated using Public Services and Procurement Canada's mandatory ProServices, which includes prequalified Indigenous business vendors. However, the Board is unable to meet all targets using these tools. To address this, the Board has explored ways to broaden its outreach to Indigenous vendors. Further to this, the IRB procurement strategies encourage procurement officers to include one or more of these Indigenous vendors in every solicitation request processed. This has proven successful in reaching annual incremental percentage growth in awarding IRB contracts to Indigenous businesses. The Board's annual procurement plan also includes engagement strategies to help promote and support participation of Indigenous businesses in competing for IRB contracts. As of the fiscal year 2023 to 2024, the IRB generates quarterly reports to effectively monitor the status of the dollar value of contracts awarded to Indigenous businesses.

**Target theme:** Advancing reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis communities

**Target:** Between 2023 and 2026, and every year on an ongoing basis, develop and table annual progress reports on implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada).

FSDS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	DEPARTMENTAL ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR STARTING POINT TARGET	HOW THE DEPARTMENTAL ACTION CONTRIBUTES TO THE FSDS GOAL AND TARGET AND, WHERE APPLICABLE, TO CANADA'S 2030 AGENDA NATIONAL STRATEGY AND SDGS
<p>Implement the <i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i>.</p>	<p>Include Indigenous cultural competency training within the IRB's mandatory training framework.</p> <p><b>Program:</b> Internal Services</p>	<p><b>Performance indicator:</b> Percentage of staff who have completed Indigenous cultural competency training (internal or external).</p> <p><b>Starting point:</b> 41% as of June 2023</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 80% on an ongoing basis</p>	<p>Public servants are in a unique position to help build respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples in Canada. This action encourages public service employees to increase their cultural competency skills and awareness of issues related to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in Canada, and their knowledge of the UN Declaration. This action also contributes to the development of necessary competency knowledge to implement the UN Declaration.</p> <p><b>Relevant targets or ambitions:</b>  <i>CIF Target:</i> 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard.</p>

<p><b>FSDS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY</b></p>	<p><b>DEPARTMENTAL ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR STARTING POINT TARGET</b></p>	<p><b>HOW THE DEPARTMENTAL ACTION CONTRIBUTES TO THE FSDS GOAL AND TARGET AND, WHERE APPLICABLE, TO CANADA'S 2030 AGENDA NATIONAL STRATEGY AND SDGS</b></p>
<p>Implement the <i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i>.</p>	<p>Promote and support the participation of Indigenous businesses in competing for IRB contract awards.</p> <p><b>Program:</b> Internal Services</p>	<p><b>Performance indicator:</b> Percentage of contracts with Indigenous businesses.</p> <p><b>Starting point:</b> 0.23% in 2021 to 2022</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 5% by April 1, 2024</p>	<p>In accordance with Appendix E: <i>Mandatory Procedures for Contracts Awarded to Indigenous Businesses in the Directive on the Management of Procurement</i> (effective April 1, 2022), all federal organizations under Schedules I, I.1, and 2 of the <i>Financial Administration Act</i> must produce a procurement plan to identify opportunities for Indigenous businesses.</p> <p><b>Relevant targets or ambitions:</b> <i>CIF Target:</i> 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard.</p>



## GOAL 12: Reduce Waste and Transition to Zero-Emission Vehicles

### **FSDS Context:**

The IRB is aware of and considers government-wide climate change commitments when procuring goods and services. In support of strengthening green procurement, the Board's procurement and material management specialists and acquisition card holders are required to take specific training that incorporates environmental considerations into purchasing decisions.

**Target theme:** Federal Leadership on Responsible Consumption

**Target:** The Government of Canada's procurement of goods and services will be net-zero emissions by 2050, to aid the transition to a net-zero, circular economy (All Ministers).

<p><b>FSDS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY</b></p>	<p><b>DEPARTMENTAL ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR STARTING POINT TARGET</b></p>	<p><b>HOW THE DEPARTMENTAL ACTION CONTRIBUTES TO THE FSDS GOAL AND TARGET AND, WHERE APPLICABLE, TO CANADA'S 2030 AGENDA NATIONAL STRATEGY AND SDGS</b></p>
<p>Strengthen green procurement criteria.</p>	<p>Ensure procurement and material management specialists, and project and accommodation managers and supervisors are trained in green procurement (such as the Canada School of Public Service course on green procurement, or equivalent).</p> <p><b>Program:</b> Internal Services</p>	<p><b>Performance indicator:</b> Percentage of procurement and material management specialists, and project and accommodation managers and supervisors trained in green procurement.</p> <p><b>Starting point:</b> 100% in 2020 to 2021</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 100% on an ongoing basis</p>	<p>Green procurement incorporates environmental considerations into purchasing decisions and is expected to motivate suppliers to reduce the environmental impact of goods and services they deliver, and their supply chains.</p> <p><b>Relevant targets or ambitions:</b>  <i>CIF Ambition:</i> Canadians consume in a sustainable manner.   <i>CIF Indicator:</i> 12.2.1 Proportion of business that adopted and selected environmental protection activities and management practices.   <i>GIF Target:</i> 12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.</p>



<p><b>FSDS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY</b></p>	<p><b>DEPARTMENTAL ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR STARTING POINT TARGET</b></p>	<p><b>HOW THE DEPARTMENTAL ACTION CONTRIBUTES TO THE FSDS GOAL AND TARGET AND, WHERE APPLICABLE, TO CANADA'S 2030 AGENDA NATIONAL STRATEGY AND SDGS</b></p>
<p>Strengthen green procurement criteria.</p>	<p>Ensure all procurement and material management specialists, and project and accommodation managers and supervisors are trained in green procurement (such as the Canada School of Public Service course on green procurement, or equivalent).</p> <p><b>Program:</b> Internal Services</p>	<p><b>Performance indicator:</b> Percentage of the IRB's acquisition card holders who have taken training that incorporates green procurement considerations.</p> <p><b>Starting point:</b> 100% in 2020 to 2021</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 100% on an ongoing basis</p>	<p>Green procurement incorporates environmental considerations into purchasing decisions and is expected to motivate suppliers to reduce the environmental impact of goods and services they deliver, and their supply chains.</p> <p><b>Relevant targets or ambitions:</b>  <i>CIF Ambition:</i> Canadians consume in a sustainable manner.</p> <p><i>CIF Indicator:</i> 12.2.1 Proportion of business that adopted and selected environmental protection activities and management practices.</p> <p><i>GIF Target:</i> 12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.</p>



## Goal 13: Take Action on Climate Change and its Impacts

### **FSDS Context:**

The IRB does not own any real property. However, the Board aligns, where applicable, with Government of Canada policies, regulations, directives, and best practices related to climate change impacts, risks, and adaptation actions. In support of this, the IRB will ensure that employees occupying a position within the accommodation services team receive training on climate-resilient operations.

**Target theme:** Federal Leadership on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions and Climate Resilience

**Target:** The Government of Canada will transition to net-zero carbon operations for facilities and conventional fleets by 2050 (All Ministers).

<p><b>FSDS IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY</b></p>	<p><b>DEPARTMENTAL ACTION</b></p>	<p><b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR STARTING POINT TARGET</b></p>	<p><b>HOW THE DEPARTMENTAL ACTION CONTRIBUTES TO THE FSDS GOAL AND TARGET AND, WHERE APPLICABLE, TO CANADA'S 2030 AGENDA NATIONAL STRATEGY AND SDGS</b></p>
<p>Implement the Greening Government Strategy through measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve climate resilience, and green the government's overall operations.</p>	<p>Ensure that all IRB employees occupying a position within the accommodation services team are trained on assessing climate change impacts, undertaking climate change risk assessments, and developing adaptation actions.</p>	<p>Percentage of IRB employees occupying a position within the accommodations services team that completed training on climate-resilient operations.</p> <p><b>Starting point:</b> 0% on April 1, 2023</p> <p><b>Target:</b> 80% on an ongoing basis</p>	<p>To combat climate change, the Government of Canada has committed to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. In order to achieve this ambitious objective, the federal government must adopt climate-resilient operations. This action will ensure that employees responsible for staff accommodations are trained to identify risk to critical program delivery, and develop responses to increase the resilience of operations to impacts of climate change.</p> <p><b>Relevant targets or ambitions:</b> <i>GIF Target:</i> 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.</p>

## SECTION 5

# Integrating Sustainable Development

The IRB aims to ensure that its corporate policies, procedures, and decision-making tools include consideration of FSDS goals and targets through its Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process. A SEA for a policy, plan or program proposal includes an analysis of the impacts of the given proposal on the environment, including on relevant FSDS goals and targets.

As an independent, accountable administrative tribunal, the Board works to resolve immigration and refugee cases fairly, efficiently and in accordance with the law. The Board has four programs, namely Refugee Protection Decisions, Refugee Appeal Decisions, Immigration Appeal Decisions, and Admissibility and Detention Decisions. As a result, the Board rarely develops and proposes new policies and programs, especially policies that would impact the environment and the achievement of FSDS goals and targets. However, in fiscal year 2022 to 2023, when the Board updated its Immigration Appeal Division Rules, which came into force on January 14, 2023, a preliminary scan was completed. The results concluded that a SEA was not required for these rules, as they had no impact on the environment, including the achievement of FSDS goals and targets.



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<sup>i</sup> *Federal Sustainable Development Act* <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-8.6/index.html>

<sup>ii</sup> 2022 to 2026 Federal Sustainable Development Strategy <https://www.fsds-sfdd.ca/en>

<sup>iii</sup> Basic principles <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/F-8.6/page-1.html#h-240618>

<sup>iv</sup> *IRB Accessibility Plan 2023 to 2025* <https://irb.gc.ca/en/transparency/accessibility/Pages/2023-2025-accessibility-plan.aspx>

<sup>v</sup> FSDS Consultation Report <https://www.fsds-sfdd.ca/en/listening-to-canadians>