

Canada's strategy for adapting to climate change lacks key elements and progress

Ottawa, 10 June 2025—An audit report released today by Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, Jerry V. DeMarco, on behalf of the Auditor General of Canada concludes that the federal government's National Adaptation Strategy has faced significant challenges in its design and implementation. Environment and Climate Change Canada coordinated the development of the strategy to respond to the growing impacts of climate change and extreme weather, such as wildfires, floods, and droughts.

The audit found that the National Adaptation Strategy, released in 2023, lacked essential elements to make it effective. The missing elements included a prioritization of Canada's climate change risks, an economic analysis to assign appropriate resources to different federal adaptation actions, a comprehensive federal action plan, and an effective framework for measuring and monitoring results.

The Government of Canada Adaptation Action Plan, which was meant to be the centrepiece component of the strategy, was neither systematic nor comprehensive. The 73 actions included in the plan were a mix of new and existing federal programming, and the department did not assess the outcomes for vulnerable populations. Regarding the 7 key actions assessed in the audit, implementation was limited. In addition, the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Bilateral Action Plans and the Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda—the other 2 components of the strategy—were still works in progress.

"We first recommended the development of a strategy to adapt to Canada's changing climate nearly 20 years ago," said Mr. DeMarco. "Although the release of the National Adaptation Strategy in 2023 was an important first step, urgent attention is still needed to achieve impactful action. The sooner that Canada acts, the more sustainable the outcomes for people's health, safety, and livelihoods."

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The 2025 Report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, National Adaptation Strategy, is available on the Office of the Auditor General of Canada website.

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