

# Military Grievances External Review Committee



2019–20

Departmental Results Report

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The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan, PC, OMM, MSM, CD, MP  
Minister of National Defence

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## Message from the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

As the Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer, I am pleased to submit the 2019-20 Departmental Results Report of the Military Grievances External Review Committee (Committee).

This report presents the results of the Committee's first of its three-year strategic framework, in which major investments were made in its processes, its tools and its people. The 2019-20 fiscal year focused on modernization and continuous improvement. By embracing innovation, my vision for the Committee — a model, digital administrative tribunal and centre of excellence in the independent review of military grievances — is progressively coming to fruition.



Both Operations and Corporate Services succeeded in meeting planned targets. Among other things, we implemented the Committee Telework Directive; we continued to examine the grievance review process for efficiencies; we improved both our case management system and our reporting model; and we advanced the shift to a digital, greener and leaner workplace.

We also focused on the wellness of staff. This included updating our wellness guide, the development of a new mental health action plan and holding several activities for staff. Of note was our Mental Health Awareness Day and Clean Air Operations, an activity tied to physical well-being. Additionally, the Committee reliably and constantly maintains a safe and harassment-free environment for its employees.

I applaud all Committee Members and employees for their dedication and resilience. They consistently fulfill their duties with enthusiasm and the quality of their work is confirmation of their determination and tenacity.

As we continue the implementation of year two of our three-year continuous improvement framework, I am confident that we are well positioned to seize every opportunity to evolve.

Christine Guérette, CPA, CGA  
Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

## Results at a glance and operating context

Actual Spending		Actual Human Resources	
2019-2020 Actual Spending	\$6,375,884	2019-2020 Actual Full-Time Equivalents (FTE)	45 FTE

The Committee made excellent progress throughout year one of its three-year strategic framework. Embracing the spirit of Beyond 2020, the Committee applied its continuous improvement philosophy to mobilizing our employees (the who), building on enabling infrastructure (the tools), and strengthening operational and corporate business processes (the how). Highlights include the Committee:

- welcoming seven new employees in Operations who are fully integrated and trained;
- creating a special team to expedite cases;
- transferring various work tools and processes to digital;
- implementing:
  - wireless telephone services (cut the cord)
  - the integrated financial system SAP
  - a new telework directive; and
- developing a mental health action plan.

For more information on the Military Grievances External Review Committee's plans, priorities and results achieved, see the "Results: what we achieved" section of this report.

## Results: what we achieved

### Core responsibility

#### Description

The Military Grievances External Review Committee – an independent tribunal – reviews military grievances, which are referred to it, pursuant to section 29 of the *National Defence Act* (NDA). Section 29 provides a statutory right for an officer or a non-commissioned member, who has been aggrieved by a decision, an act or an omission in the administration of the affairs of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), to submit a grievance. This is, with certain narrow exceptions, the only formal complaint process available to members of the CAF.

The Committee is required to provide its findings and recommendations (F&Rs) to the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and the member who submitted the grievance. The F&Rs may identify issues with policies or other matters of broad concern. The Committee conducts its review as informally and expeditiously as the circumstances and the considerations of fairness permit.

The Committee reports the results of its activities through its annual report and various publications.

### Results

In 2019-20, the Committee welcomed seven new employees in Operations and supported their full integration by providing the necessary training and context in order to ensure a smooth transition into their new roles. However, other vacancies continued to exist. The Committee has initiated staffing processes to fill these positions that are critical in providing F&Rs. Simultaneously, we looked at succession planning for experienced employees who will be retiring in the near future or could be absent for a determinate period.

The Committee spent the better part of 2019-20 assessing, reviewing and refining its governance structure and operational framework in order to increase the capacity to review grievance files. Of course, we will continue to explore efficiencies moving forward. Altogether, these new approaches strengthen the Committee's ability to deal with the backlog of files and are charting the course to reducing the time it takes to review grievances referred by the CAF.

Due to an existing backlog, staffing challenges and a prediction of an eventual increase in grievance cases, in the last quarter of the fiscal year, the Committee created a special team to expedite cases. While this team has increased the Committee's overall capacity to produce F&Rs, its results for this reporting period are limited due to the

relative ‘newness’ of the team. Nevertheless, this strategy is part of an ongoing effort to issue F&Rs more expeditiously.

It is fair to say that the three aforementioned actions were proactively implemented to mitigate the Committee’s acknowledged risk of not being able to deliver on its mandate in a timely manner, namely in relation to service delivery.

In the spirit of continuous improvement and the commitment to creating a lean and green workplace, the Committee completed its transition of all operational template letters to digital formats, including electronic letterhead signatures to issue F&Rs and all other transmittal letters to the CDS and grievors. The Committee also invested in editing software as it continues to move to a paperless environment. Finally, the Committee implemented an upgraded case management system in early 2019 which generated a more efficient grievance review process. One of the result was new reporting tools and improvements to existing reports. These initiatives not only support a mobile workforce, but also align with the organization’s priority to become modern, digital-based and more environmentally conscious.

In an effort to measure its performance regularly, the Committee includes a survey with each F&R report it issues, rather than relying on DCFGA to distribute the survey on its behalf. The feedback is important to the Committee to assess whether the F&R reports it provides to the final authority (FA) are useful, clear and complete. Similar surveys are issued to individual grievors.

## Results achieved

Departmental results	Performance indicators	Target	Date to achieve target	2019–20 Actual results	2018–19 Actual results	2017–18 Actual results
DR1 – Findings and Recommendations on all referred military grievances are provided in a timely manner	DRI1 – % of written Findings and Recommendations that are issued within four months of receipt (service standard)	75% of Findings and Recommendations issued within 4 months of receipt	March 31, 2020	5.08%	0%	Not available
	DRI2 – Age of grievances that were received more than four months prior and for which Findings and Recommendations have not been issued	75% of grievance files are less than 4 months old	March 31, 2020	26.22% of active grievances are 4 months or less	59.2% of active grievances are 4 months or less	Not available
DR2 – The Chief of the Defence Staff is able to rely on the Committee's Findings and Recommendations in the military grievances decision-making process	DRI3 – Achievement of a rating by the Chief of the Defence Staff of at least 4 out of 5 on each of the following attributes related to Findings and Recommendations issued by the Committee: usefulness, clarity, and completeness	A cumulative minimum average of 4 out of 5 for each attribute	March 31, 2020	Usefulness : 4.96/5 Clarity: 5/5 Completeness: 4.91/5	Usefulness : 5/5 Clarity: 5/5 Completeness: 5/5	Not available

**NOTE:** Due to a combination of reasons, the Committee currently has a backlog of 250 files. As a result, the average age of a file, before it is assessed, is more often in excess of four months. This working reality is reflected in the statistics reported in the table above. The Committee is aggressively reviewing its business processes and human



resource complement with an end goal to optimizing Committee productivity and building a system or way that will support its future vision.

Notwithstanding the current challenges, it should be noted that the CDS finds the Committee's F&Rs offer vital value to the CAF.

### **Budgetary financial resources (dollars)**

2019–20 Main Estimates	2019–20 Planned spending	2019–20 Total authorities available for use	2019–20 Actual spending (authorities used)	2019–20 Difference (Actual spending minus Planned spending)
\$4,421,251	\$4,421,251	\$4,489,099	\$4,157,427	-\$263,824

### **Human resources (full-time equivalents)**

2019–20 Planned full-time equivalents	2019–20 Actual full-time equivalents	2019–20 Difference (Actual full-time equivalents minus Planned full-time equivalents)
34	30	-4

Financial, human resources and performance information for the Military Grievances External Review Committee's Program Inventory is available in [GC InfoBase<sup>i</sup>](#).

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## Internal Services

### Description

Internal Services are those groups of related activities and resources that the federal government considers to be services in support of programs and/or required to meet corporate obligations of an organization. Internal Services refers to the activities and resources of the 10 distinct service categories that support Program delivery in the organization, regardless of the Internal Services delivery model in a department. The 10 service categories are: Management and Oversight Services; Communications Services; Legal Services; Human Resources Management Services; Financial Management Services; Information Management Services; Information Technology Services; Real Property Services; Materiel Services; and Acquisition Services.

### Results Achieved

In 2019-20, the Committee adopted a change management strategy and a continuous improvement philosophy, which generated a renewed commitment, amongst employee and management, to the systematic and continuous review of the organization's processes to ensure sustainable, optimal performance. Coupled with the implementation of a new telework directive and transition to wireless telephone services (Cut the cord initiative), this supports the vision of an efficient, modern administrative tribunal.

With the implementation of the SAP integrated financial management system and the modernization of its financial and materiel management function, the Committee is better positioned to provide timely access to accurate human resource and financial management information and advice to programs and decision-makers.

In its continued effort to support workplace wellness and promote a healthy work environment, the Committee approved a Workplace Wellness Guide that contains, among other things, specialized conflict management resources to help employees deal with difficult situations at work and a Mental Health Action Plan. To this end, a variety of mental health activities were held regularly at monthly all-staff meetings, such as Clear Air Operations Day.

Flowing from the Government of Canada Strategic Plan and Open Government initiatives, the Committee continued the modernization of its information management system and processes. Examples of the accomplishments include an overhaul of the Committee's file plan structure in GCDocs, the digitization of physical records, and information sessions for staff on proper information management protocols. The result

was a more efficient use of information resources, an improved information retrieval system and a robust protection of information resources used by the Committee.

The indicators in the Committee's results framework as well as all employee work objectives were rewritten so that they align more closely to SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goals. It is expected this will generate a significant and meaningful improvement to the Committee's ability to report on its performance.

### **Budgetary financial resources (dollars)**

<b>2019–20 Main Estimates</b>	<b>2019–20 Planned spending</b>	<b>2019–20 Total authorities available for use</b>	<b>2019–20 Actual spending (authorities used)*</b>	<b>2019–20 Difference (Actual spending minus Planned spending)</b>
\$2,380,673	\$2,380,673	\$2,726,507	\$2,218,457	-\$162,216

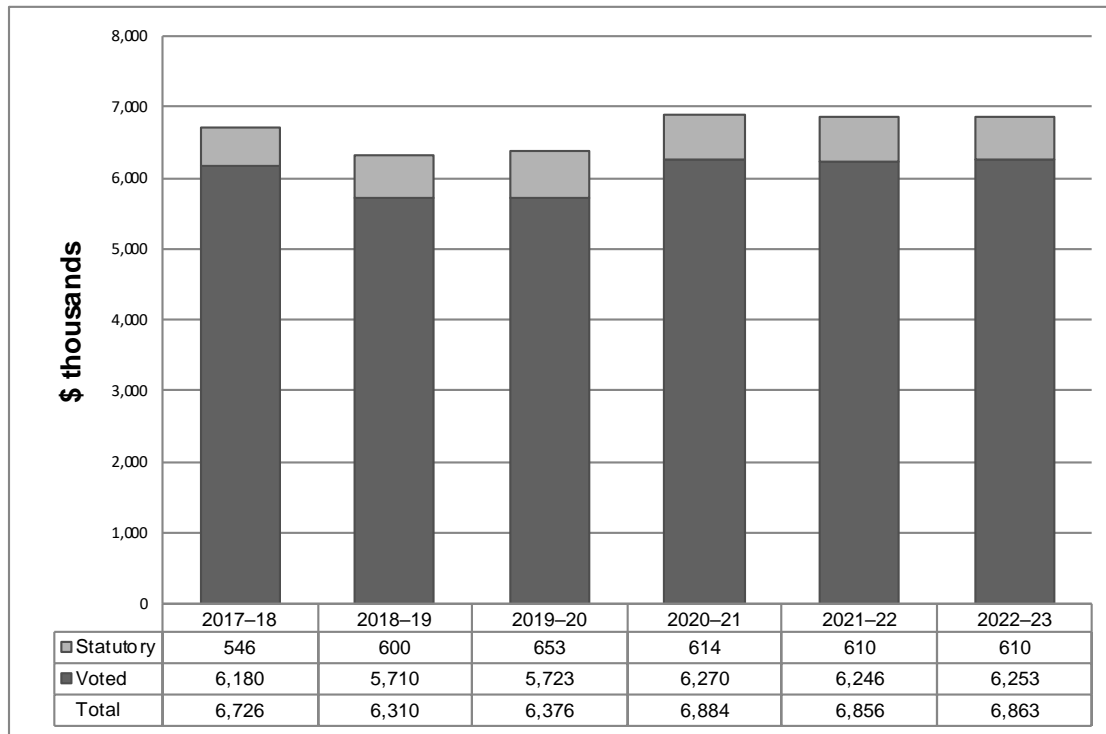
### **Human resources (full-time equivalents)**

<b>2019–20 Planned full-time equivalents</b>	<b>2019–20 Actual full-time equivalents</b>	<b>2019–20 Difference (Actual full-time equivalents minus Planned full-time equivalents)</b>
14	15	1

## Analysis of trends in spending and human resources

### Actual expenditures

#### Departmental spending trend graph



For more information on these results, please refer to the Budgetary performance summary for Programs and Internal Services table below.

### Budgetary performance summary for Core Responsibilities and Internal Services\* (dollars)

Core responsibilities and Internal Services	2019–20 Main Estimates	2019–20 Planned spending	2020–21 Planned spending	2021–22 Planned spending	2019–20 Total authorities available for use	2019–20 Actual spending (authorities used)	2018–19 Actual spending (authorities used)	2017–18 Actual spending (authorities used)
Independent Review of Military Grievances	\$4,421,251	\$4,421,251	\$4,474,342	\$4,456,425	\$4,489,099	\$4,157,427	\$4,053,377	\$3,922,563
Subtotal	4,421,251	4,421,251	4,474,342	4,456,425	4,489,099	4,157,427	4,053,377	3,922,563
Internal Services	2,380,673	2,380,673	2,409,261	2,399,613	2,726,507	2,218,457	2,256,512	2,803,894
Total	\$6,801,924	\$6,801,924	\$6,883,603	\$6,856,038	\$7,215,606	\$6,375,884	\$6,309,889	\$6,726,457

The actual spending of \$6.375 million for 2019-20 is comparable to the actual spending of \$6.309 million for 2018-19, representing an increase of \$66 thousand.

The variance between Planned Spending for 2019-20 and Actual Spending (\$426,000) is largely attributable to a decrease in professional services spending due to a lower cost of security and communications services.

## Actual human resources

### Human resources summary for core responsibilities and Internal Services

Core responsibilities and Internal Services	2017–18 Actual full-time equivalents	2018–19 Actual full-time equivalents	2019–20 Planned full-time equivalents	2019–20 Actual full-time equivalents	2020–21 Planned full-time equivalents	2021–22 Planned full-time equivalents
Independent Review of Military Grievances	26	27	34	30	35	37
Subtotal	26	27	34	30	35	37
Internal Services	10	12	14	15	15	14
Total	36	39	48	45	50	51

The actual full-time equivalents (FTEs) in 2019-20 (45) are higher than in 2018-19 (39) and are mainly due to the fact that the Committee welcomed several new staff in the Operations and Internal Services program in order to increase the production of Findings and Recommendations. As we continue to anticipate an increase in the number of grievance cases that will be referred to the Committee, staffing of positions will continue to be a priority in the coming years, which explains the increase in FTEs for the future.

## Expenditures by vote

For information on the Military Grievances External Review Committee's, organizational voted and statutory expenditures, consult the [Public Accounts of Canada 2019–2020](#).<sup>ii</sup>

## Government of Canada spending and activities

Information on the alignment of the Military Grievances External Review Committee's spending with the Government of Canada's spending and activities is available in [GC InfoBase](#).<sup>iii</sup>

## Financial statements and financial statements highlights

### Financial statements

The Military Grievances External Review Committee's financial statements (unaudited) for the year ended March 31, 2020, are available on the [departmental website](#).<sup>iv</sup>

### Financial statement highlights

#### Condensed Statement of Operations (unaudited) for the year ended March 31, 2020 (dollars)

Financial information	2019–20 Planned results*	2019–20 Actual results	2018–19 Actual results	Difference (2019–20 Actual results minus 2019–20 Planned results)	Difference (2019–20 Actual results minus 2018–19 Actual results)
Total expenses	\$7,317,000	\$6,968,367	\$6,673,446	-\$348,633	\$294,921
Total revenues	1,000	0	214	-1,000	-214
Net cost of operations before government funding and transfers	\$7,316,000	\$6,968,367	\$6,673,232	-\$347,633	\$295,135

The majority of the Committee's expenses relate to salaries, office space rental, and professional services. In line with the increase in actual FTEs in 2019-20, the variance between 2018-19 and 2019-20 actual results is mostly attributed to an increase in employee wages. The increase was partly offset by a significant reduction in

professional services expenditures in 2019-2020 related to informatics services and management consulting.

**Condensed Statement of Financial Position (unaudited) as of March 31, 2020 (dollars)**

Financial information	2019–20	2018–19	Difference (2019–20 minus 2018–19)
Total net liabilities	\$985,553	\$881,185	\$104,368
Total net financial assets	623,469	589,417	34,052
Departmental net debt	362,084	291,768	70,316
Total non-financial assets	894,180	1,004,826	-110,646
Departmental net financial position	\$532,096	\$713,058	-\$180,962

The variance in Departmental net debt is mostly attributable to an increase in allowance for vacation pay of employees.

The variance in non-financial assets is a combination of amortization and a decrease in capital asset acquisitions in 2019-20.



## Additional information

### Organizational profile

**Appropriate minister:** The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan, PC, OMM, MSM, CD, MP

**Institutional head:** Christine Guérette, Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer

**Ministerial portfolio:** National Defence

**Enabling instrument:** [National Defence Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. N-5<sup>v</sup>](#)

**Year of incorporation / commencement:** 2000

**Other:** [About the Committee<sup>vi</sup>](#)

### Raison d'être, mandate and role: who we are and what we do

“Raison d'être, mandate and role: who we are and what we do” is available on the [Military Grievances External Review Committee's website](#).

#### Raison d'être

The raison d'être of the Military Grievances External Review Committee (Committee) is to provide an independent and external review of military grievances. [Section 29 of the National Defence Act](#) (NDA) provides a statutory right for an officer or a non-commissioned member who has been aggrieved, to grieve a decision, an act or an omission in the administration of the affairs of the Canadian Armed Forces. The importance of this broad right cannot be overstated since it is, with certain narrow exceptions, the only formal complaint process available to Canadian Armed Forces members.

#### Mandate and role

The Military Grievances External Review Committee is an independent administrative tribunal reporting to Parliament through the Minister of National Defence.

The Committee reviews military grievances referred to it pursuant to s. 29 of the *National Defence Act* and provides findings and recommendations to the [Chief of the Defence Staff](#) and the Canadian Armed Forces member who submitted the grievance.

For more general information about the department, see the “Supplementary information” section of this report.

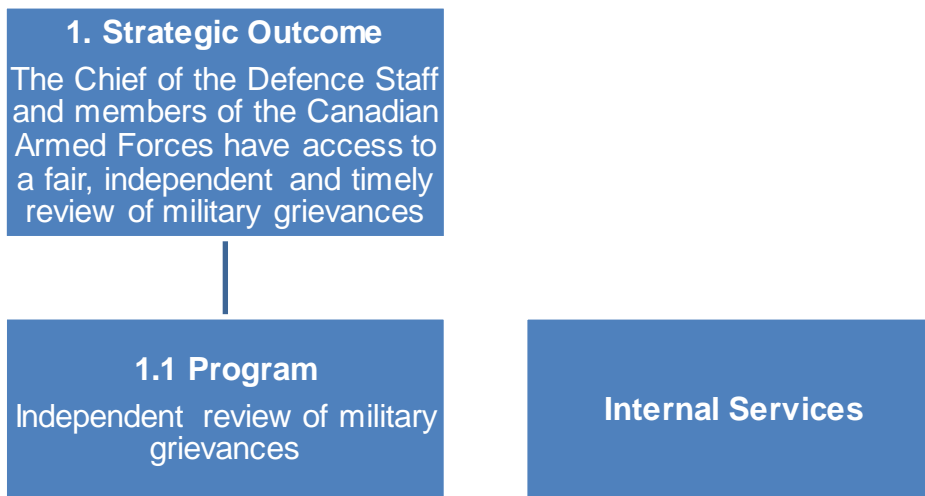
For more information on the department's organizational mandate letter commitments, see the [Minister's mandate letter](#).

## Reporting framework

Military Grievances External Review Committee's Departmental Results Framework and Program Inventory of record for 2019–20 are shown below.

**1. Strategic Outcome:** The CDS and members of the CAF have access to a fair, independent and timely review of military grievances

**1.1 Program:** Independent review of military grievances  
**Internal Services**



## Supporting information on the program inventory

Financial, human resources and performance information for Military Grievances External Review Committee's Program Inventory is available in [GC InfoBase](#).<sup>vii</sup>

## Supplementary information tables

The following supplementary information tables are available on the [Military Grievances External Review Committee's](#)<sup>viii</sup> website:

- ▶ [Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy](#)
- ▶ [Gender-based analysis plus](#)

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## Federal tax expenditures

The tax system can be used to achieve public policy objectives through the application of special measures such as low tax rates, exemptions, deductions, deferrals and credits. The Department of Finance Canada publishes cost estimates and projections for these measures each year in the [Report on Federal Tax Expenditures](#).<sup>ix</sup> This report also provides detailed background information on tax expenditures, including descriptions, objectives, historical information and references to related federal spending programs. The tax measures presented in this report are the responsibility of the Minister of Finance.

## Organizational contact information

60 Queen Street, 10th Floor

Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5Y7

Canada

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Fax: (613) 996-6491

Email: [mgerc-ceegm@mgerc-ceegm.gc.ca](mailto:mgerc-ceegm@mgerc-ceegm.gc.ca)

Web: <https://www.canada.ca/en/military-grievances-external-review.html>

## **Appendix: definitions**

### **appropriation** (crédit)

Any authority of Parliament to pay money out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

### **budgetary expenditures** (dépenses budgétaires)

Operating and capital expenditures; transfer payments to other levels of government, organizations or individuals; and payments to Crown corporations.

### **core responsibility** (responsabilité essentielle)

An enduring function or role performed by a department. The intentions of the department with respect to a core responsibility are reflected in one or more related departmental results that the department seeks to contribute to or influence.

### **Departmental Plan** (plan ministériel)

A report on the plans and expected performance of an appropriated department over a 3-year period. Departmental Plans are usually tabled in Parliament each spring.

### **departmental priority** (priorité)

A plan or project that a department has chosen to focus and report on during the planning period. Priorities represent the things that are most important or what must be done first to support the achievement of the desired departmental results.

### **departmental result** (résultat ministériel)

A consequence or outcome that a department seeks to achieve. A departmental result is often outside departments' immediate control, but it should be influenced by program-level outcomes.

### **departmental result indicator** (indicateur de résultat ministériel)

A quantitative measure of progress on a departmental result.

### **departmental results framework** (cadre ministériel des résultats)

A framework that connects the department's core responsibilities to its departmental results and departmental result indicators.

### **Departmental Results Report** (rapport sur les résultats ministériels)

A report on a department's actual accomplishments against the plans, priorities and expected results set out in the corresponding Departmental Plan.

**experimentation** (expérimentation)

The conducting of activities that seek to first explore, then test and compare the effects and impacts of policies and interventions in order to inform evidence-based decision-making, and improve outcomes for Canadians, by learning what works, for whom and in what circumstances. Experimentation is related to, but distinct from innovation (the trying of new things), because it involves a rigorous comparison of results. For example, using a new website to communicate with Canadians can be an innovation; systematically testing the new website against existing outreach tools or an old website to see which one leads to more engagement, is experimentation.

**full-time equivalent** (équivalent temps plein)

A measure of the extent to which an employee represents a full person-year charge against a departmental budget. For a particular position, the full-time equivalent figure is the ratio of number of hours the person actually works divided by the standard number of hours set out in the person's collective agreement.

**gender-based analysis plus (GBA+)** (analyse comparative entre les sexes plus [ACS+])

An analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people experience policies, programs and services based on multiple factors including race ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability.

**government-wide priorities** (priorités pangouvernementales)

For the purpose of the 2019–20 Departmental Results Report, those high-level themes outlining the government's agenda in the 2019 Speech from the Throne, namely: Fighting climate change; Strengthening the Middle Class; Walking the road of reconciliation; Keeping Canadians safe and healthy; and Positioning Canada for success in an uncertain world.

**horizontal initiative** (initiative horizontale)

An initiative where two or more federal organizations are given funding to pursue a shared outcome, often linked to a government priority.

**non-budgetary expenditures** (dépenses non budgétaires)

Net outlays and receipts related to loans, investments and advances, which change the composition of the financial assets of the Government of Canada.

**performance** (rendement)

What an organization did with its resources to achieve its results, how well those results compare to what the organization intended to achieve, and how well lessons learned have been identified.

**performance indicator** (indicateur de rendement)

A qualitative or quantitative means of measuring an output or outcome, with the intention of gauging the performance of an organization, program, policy or initiative respecting expected results.

**performance reporting** (production de rapports sur le rendement)

The process of communicating evidence-based performance information. Performance reporting supports decision making, accountability and transparency.

**plan** (plan)

The articulation of strategic choices, which provides information on how an organization intends to achieve its priorities and associated results. Generally, a plan will explain the logic behind the strategies chosen and tend to focus on actions that lead to the expected result.

**planned spending** (dépenses prévues)

For Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports, planned spending refers to those amounts presented in Main Estimates.

A department is expected to be aware of the authorities that it has sought and received. The determination of planned spending is a departmental responsibility, and departments must be able to defend the expenditure and accrual numbers presented in their Departmental Plans and Departmental Results Reports.

**program** (programme)

Individual or groups of services, activities or combinations thereof that are managed together within the department and focus on a specific set of outputs, outcomes or service levels.

**program inventory** (répertoire des programmes)

Identifies all the department's programs and describes how resources are organized to contribute to the department's core responsibilities and results.

**result** (résultat)

A consequence attributed, in part, to an organization, policy, program or initiative. Results are not within the control of a single organization, policy, program or initiative; instead they are within the area of the organization's influence.

**statutory expenditures** (dépenses législatives)

Expenditures that Parliament has approved through legislation other than appropriation acts. The legislation sets out the purpose of the expenditures and the terms and conditions under which they may be made.

**target** (cible)

A measurable performance or success level that an organization, program or initiative plans to achieve within a specified time period. Targets can be either quantitative or qualitative.

**voted expenditures** (dépenses votées)

Expenditures that Parliament approves annually through an appropriation act. The vote wording becomes the governing conditions under which these expenditures may be made.

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## Endnotes

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- <sup>i</sup> GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- <sup>ii</sup> Public Accounts of Canada, <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/cpc-pac/index-eng.html>
- <sup>iii</sup> GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- <sup>iv</sup> Committee Website, <https://www.canada.ca/en/military-grievances-external-review.html>
- <sup>v</sup> National Defence Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. N-5, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/n-5/page-4.html#h-29>
- <sup>vi</sup> Committee Website, About the committee page, <https://www.canada.ca/en/military-grievances-external-review/corporate/about.html>
- <sup>vii</sup> GC InfoBase, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#start>
- <sup>viii</sup> Committee Website, <https://www.canada.ca/en/military-grievances-external-review.html>
- <sup>ix</sup> Report on Federal Tax Expenditures, <http://www.fin.gc.ca/purl/taxexp-eng.asp>