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MARCH 2023

ALL TOGETHER

*The Role of Gender-based Analysis
Plus in the Policy Process:
reducing barriers to an inclusive
intersectional policy analysis*

Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology

The Honourable Ratna Omidvar, Chair

The Honourable Patricia Bovey, Deputy Chair



For more information please contact us:

by email: soci@sen.parl.gc.ca

by mail: The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology
Senate, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 0A4

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Order of Reference

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate* of Thursday, February 10, 2022:

The Honourable Senator Omidvar moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator Dasko:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, in accordance with rule 12-7(9), be authorized to examine and report on such issues as may arise from time to time relating to social affairs, science and technology generally; and

That the committee submit its final report on this study to the Senate no later than June 12, 2025.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Gérald Lafrenière
Interim Clerk of the Senate

Committee Members



THE HONOURABLE

Ratna Omidvar

Chair



THE HONOURABLE

Patricia Bovey

Deputy Chair

The Honourable Senators



THE HONOURABLE
Wanda Thomas Bernard



THE HONOURABLE
Sharon Burey



THE HONOURABLE
Donna Dasko



THE HONOURABLE
Stan Kutcher



THE HONOURABLE
Frances Lankin, P.C.



THE HONOURABLE
Marilou McPhedran



THE HONOURABLE
Rosemary Moodie



THE HONOURABLE
F. Gigi Osler



THE HONOURABLE
Chantal Petitclerc



THE HONOURABLE
Rose-May Poirier

Ex-officio members of the committee:

The Honourable Marc Gold, P.C., or Raymonde Gagné
The Honourable Donald Plett or Yonah Martin

Other Senators who have participated in the study:

The Honourable Patrick Brazeau
The Honourable Andrew Cardozo
The Honourable Bernadette Clement
The Honourable Jane Cordy
The Honourable Brian Francis
The Honourable Nancy J. Hartling
The Honourable Tony Loffreda
The Honourable Yonah Martin
The Honourable Mary Jane McCallum
The Honourable Marie-Francoise Mégie
The Honourable Kim Pate
The Honourable Dennis Patterson
The Honourable Josée Verner, P.C.

Parliamentary Information, Education and Research Services, Library of Parliament:

Laura Blackmore, Analyst

Senate Committees Directorate:

Emily Barrette, Committee Clerk
Lori Meldrum, Administrative Assistant

Senate Communications Directorate:

Amely Coulombe, Communications Officer, Committees

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01

Executive
Summary

Gender-based Analysis (GBA) is an analytical policy assessment process created by the Government of Canada as an attempt to support greater gender equality in Canada. With the addition of the “Plus,” (GBA Plus) it has grown to encompass not only considerations of gender and sex diversity, but also many other intersecting identity factors such as Indigeneity, race and ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, and disability, among others.

Various commitments and mandates towards a full implementation of GBA Plus throughout the federal government have been made since gender-based analysis was first introduced in 1995. However, three reports from the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, in 2009, 2016, and 2022, have all identified that implementation remains inconsistent and incomplete across the government.

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (the committee) began its study on the role of GBA Plus in the policy process by hearing reflections from the Office of the Auditor General regarding their May 2022 report. The committee then heard testimony from various GBA Plus and intersectional analysis experts, as well as representatives from civil society and community organizations, which also reflected the Auditor General’s findings. While acknowledging the progress of GBA Plus, this report discusses the barriers that continue to limit its implementation in the federal government, and makes 15 recommendations to reduce these barriers and support a more fulsome intersectional analysis.

The intent of GBA Plus is to ensure that various intersecting identity factors are considered throughout the policy design process, from initial problem identification through to implementation and evaluation. The Auditor General’s May 2022 report confirms that significant barriers continue to prevent an effective implementation of GBA Plus within the federal government. If these barriers are not addressed, GBA Plus will remain an afterthought: a simplified, under-utilized tool that is no more than a box-ticking exercise. Performative GBA Plus does not accomplish its purpose in ensuring that none of the diverse people encountering Canadian federal policies and programs are unintentionally harmed by them or excluded from them.



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List of
Recommendations

Rebranding

01

That the Government of Canada, led by Women and Gender Equality Canada, rebrand GBA Plus as Gender and Diversity Analysis.

Partnerships

02

That the Government of Canada partner with a) Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, and expert-advocates; and b) civil society organizations and academics to build the knowledge, tools, and infrastructure required for meaningful implementation and evaluation to improve GBA Plus and enhance its application.

Auditor General's Reports

03

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology endorses the conclusions of the Office of the Auditor General's three reports on GBA Plus and therefore recommends that the Government of Canada commit to implementing all recommendations from the Auditor General's 2009, 2016, and 2022 reports on GBA Plus.

Training and Capacity

04

That the Government of Canada improve GBA Plus training and expand the competencies of GBA Plus analysts in all federal departments by:

- partnering with a) Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, and expert-advocates; and b) civil society organizations and academics to offer new programs and tools;
- supporting the establishment of interdisciplinary policy professional networks within the federal public service; and
- identifying, documenting and evaluating federal training programs and tools as part of the public reporting put forward by Recommendation 12.

Timing

05

That the Government of Canada identify GBA Plus as a priority in initial policy design, in addition to subsequent policy development, implementation and evaluation.

06

That the Government of Canada, through Women and Gender Equality Canada, prioritize improving the timeliness of GBA Plus, including by creating a strategic plan identifying measurable outcomes and ensuring that the tools and resources necessary for early GBA Plus consideration are available through the federal government.

07

That, in order for GBA Plus to be included as a consideration for parliamentarians during the legislative process:

- the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament study the feasibility of providing GBA Plus of government bills, when relevant data are publicly available;
- the Government of Canada table GBA Plus for all government bills when introduced in either chamber of Parliament;
- parliamentarians are encouraged to include GBA Plus when drafting House of Commons private members' bills and Senate public bills; and
- Women and Gender Equality Canada establish resources for parliamentary committees to support their use of GBA Plus when considering legislation.

Resources

08

That the Government of Canada ensure adequate funding is provided to a) Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, and expert-advocates; and b) civil society organizations and academics to facilitate their engagement and partnership with the government on GBA Plus.

Data

09

That the Government of Canada ensure identity indicators are built into federal programs in order to provide disaggregated data on program recipients and impacts.

10

That Statistics Canada, in cooperation with federal departments and agencies, enhance the collection, analysis and dissemination of data useful for GBA Plus.

11

That the Government of Canada ensure that data is collected using a culturally-relevant approach, developing best practices in consultation with a) Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, and expert-advocates; and b) civil society organizations and academics regarding both data collection and use, with a specific emphasis on including qualitative, diverse data.

Federal Leadership and Accountability

12

That Women and Gender Equality Canada report to Parliament annually on the results of the GBA Plus departmental implementation survey, and the use and application of GBA Plus by all federal agencies and departments; and that this report evaluate a) the impact of GBA Plus on policy and program decisions and outcomes and b) federal training programs and tools.

13

That the Clerk of the Privy Council be a Champion for GBA Plus, leading the Privy Council Office, and working with the Treasury Board Secretariat and Women and Gender Equality Canada to support GBA Plus implementation throughout the federal government.

14

That by 31 December 2023, each federal department and agency appoint a GBA Plus Champion who will work to:

- develop a centre of excellence with resources and tools specific to the needs of their work;
- implement best practices for GBA Plus; and
- improve departmental performance on GBA Plus, as measured by Women and Gender Equality Canada's annual implantation surveys and reported as per Recommendation 12.

15

That the Government of Canada factor the quality of departmental implementation of GBA Plus into senior management performance evaluations.

03

Introduction

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) is a made-in-Canada framework designed to evaluate how federal policies, programs and legislation impact various Canadian populations in different ways. In its original form of gender-based analysis (GBA), it was intended to support greater gender equality. With the addition of “Plus” considerations, analysis is intended to examine more diverse identity factors. However, critics – from multiple Auditors General of Canada to various academics and advocates – have noted their concern with the lack of intersectional emphasis in the current implementation of GBA Plus. Some of these advocates and experts have responded by developing their own GBA Plus or intersectional policy analysis tools.

In addition to the lack of focus on intersectionality, a significant obstacle towards realizing the impacts of strong GBA Plus are major sustained barriers to its implementation within the federal government. These barriers have been identified since 2009 when the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) released their first audit on GBA Plus use and implementation across various federal departments and agencies. Many of the barriers identified in that audit 14 years ago remain unaddressed today.

In May 2022, the OAG released a third audit on GBA Plus implementation. In addition to ongoing concerns regarding the effective application of GBA Plus, this report sparked concerns among committee members and an interest in studying the role of GBA Plus in the policy process in more depth. The committee held four meetings on the subject, under the committee’s general order of reference, to “examine and report on such issues as may arise from time to time relating to social affairs, science and technology generally.”¹ The committee heard from the Auditor General of Canada and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, in addition to a diversity of perspectives including academic experts, advocates representing disabled women, the 2SLGBTQ2I community, First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and racialized communities.

This report provides an overview of the committee’s findings, and outlines recommendations it hopes will finally lead to a full implementation of high-quality GBA Plus throughout the federal government and in all steps of policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

1 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Order of Reference](#), 10 February 2022.

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A History of GBA
Plus in Canada

Timeline of Developments Towards GBA Plus

- 16 February 1967 ● The Royal Commission on the Status of Women is established
- 7 December 1970 ● The final *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* is tabled in Parliament
- 11 June 1971 ● The first Minister of Status of Women is appointed
- 1 April 1976 ● The Office of the Coordinator, Status of Women becomes a departmental agency
- 1977 ● The *Canadian Human Rights Act* comes into force
- 10 December 1981 ● Canada ratifies the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*
- 17 April 1982 ● The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is signed into law as part of the Constitution of Canada
- August 1995 ● *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality (1995-2000)* is released
- 15 September 1995 ● The United Nations World Conference on Women results in the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*
- 8 May 2000 ● Canada adopts the *Agenda for Gender Equality*
- 19 October 2004 ● The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women meets for the first time
- 19 April 2005 ● *Gender-based Analysis: Building Blocks for Success* report is tabled by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women
- December 2005 ● The Expert Panel on Accountability Mechanisms for Gender Equality's final report, *Equality for Women: Beyond the Illusion*, is released
- 2007 ● The Treasury Board Secretariat encourages that GBA considerations be included in submissions to the agency
- 12 May 2009 ● The Auditor General reports on GBA implementation across various departments and agencies
- Late 2009 ● The Privy Council Office, the Treasury Board Secretariat and Status of Women Canada release the *Departmental Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis*
- 2011 ● GBA becomes GBA Plus and the wheel/flower model is introduced
- 4 November 2015 ● The first full Minister of Status of Women is appointed
- 2 February 2016 ● The Auditor General's report on *Implementing Gender-Based Analysis* is tabled
- 2016 ● The Government of Canada responds to the Auditor General's report with the *Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis (2016–2020)*
- 22 March 2017 ● Budget 2017 includes a Gender Statement for the first time
- 13 December 2018 ● The *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act* comes into force
- 13 December 2018 ● Status of Women Canada gains full federal department status as Women and Gender Equality Canada
- 31 May 2022 ● The Auditor General releases *Follow-up on Gender-Based Analysis Plus*

In September 1995, the United Nations held the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China and member states adopted the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, calling for countries to focus on accelerating progress towards full equality between men and women. In preparation for the Conference, the Government of Canada developed *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality (1995-2000)*, outlining for the first time, a commitment to implement GBA throughout federal departments and agencies, and to conduct GBA on all future legislation, policies, and programs. Since the inception of gender-based analysis, there has been an enduring commitment from one government to the next, to supporting an evolving inclusive policy analysis.

When the first five-year plan on gender equality expired in 2000, the Government of Canada adopted the *Agenda for Gender Equality* – a new five-year strategy to accelerate the implementation of GBA led by then-Status of Women Canada (now Women and Gender Equality Canada – WAGE), in cooperation with Health Canada, the Department of Justice and then-Human Resources Development Canada (now Employment and Social Development Canada).

In October 2004, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) was established with a mandate to “study the policies, programs, expenditures (budgetary estimates) and legislation of departments and agencies, including the Department for Women and Gender Equality, that conduct work related to the status of women and gender equality.”² In April 2005, FEWO tabled a report, *Gender-based Analysis: Building Blocks for Success*, which concluded that while there had been some progress made in the decade towards gender equality since the Beijing Platform, “there are many challenges remaining” and that GBA would provide the tools towards “a greater level of substantive equality.”³

In response, the Government of Canada appointed the Expert Panel on Accountability Mechanisms for Gender Equality. The panel's final report, *Equality for Women: Beyond the Illusion*, issued in December 2005, recommended establishing legislation to enforce the “use of gender-based analysis, monitoring and reporting” by the federal government. The recommendation went as far as outlining the specifics of a suggested bill that “would consist of two parts to come into effect five years apart” focusing first on embedding GBA throughout the executive branch, then on establishing accountability measure including an independent agent of Parliament.⁴

2 House of Commons, Standing Committee on the Status of Women, “Mandate” in [About](#).

3 House of Commons, Standing Committee on the Status of Women, [Gender-based Analysis: Building Blocks for Success](#), Second Report, April 2005, p. 47-48.

4 The Expert Panel on Accountability Mechanisms for Gender Equality, [Equality for Women: Beyond the Illusion](#), Final Report, December 2005, p. 33.



In Spring 2009, at the request of FEWO, the OAG reported on GBA implementation across various federal departments and agencies.⁵ Ultimately, the audit found that “despite the government commitment to GBA that has continued since 1995, there is no government-wide policy requiring that departments and agencies perform it” and that GBA was not being considered in policy decision making.⁶ In response to the Auditor General’s report, then-Status of Women Canada, the Privy Council Office (PCO), and the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) developed the *Departmental Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis*, which had various goals aimed at supporting more fulsome implementation of GBA across government.

Gender-based analysis did not specifically include other identity factors until 2011, when then-Status of Women Canada “rebranded” Gender-based Analysis as Gender-based Analysis Plus to “encourage consideration of the multiple factors that shape experiences and outcomes, beyond sex and gender.”⁷ It was with this rebranding that the GBA Plus wheel or flower model was first introduced.

5 The federal entities audited were the Department of Finance Canada, Health Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (now Employment and Social Development Canada), Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (now Indigenous Services Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations), the Department of Justice Canada, the Privy Council Office, Status of Women Canada, Transport Canada, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, and Veterans Affairs Canada.

6 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, [Gender-based analysis](#), Chapter 1 in *Spring 2009 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons*.

7 Government of Canada, [Introduction to GBA Plus](#).

In February 2016, the OAG released its Fall 2015 report, *Implementing Gender-Based Analysis*,⁸ which resulted in commitments from the PCO, TBS, and then-Status of Women Canada to strengthen the GBA Plus training and tools available to all departments to address barriers to GBA Plus of the policy process. The OAG report also resulted in an *Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis (2016–2020)* in which the PCO, TBS and Status of Women Canada further defined the steps they would take to address the gaps identified by the OAG, including introducing a requirement to conduct GBA Plus in Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board submissions.⁹

In 2018, the *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act* came into force, requiring, in part, that the Minister of Finance conduct and publish a GBA Plus for the budget and related documents.¹⁰ That year also saw the creation of Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), transitioning Status of Women Canada from agency to official department of the Government of Canada.¹¹

In May 2022, the OAG released the report *Follow-up on Gender-Based Analysis Plus*, which was designed to assess whether PCO, TBS and WAGE had “advanced the implementation of [GBA Plus] in government in their responses to selected recommendations” from the 2016 report.¹² The audit concluded that while PCO, TBS and WAGE:¹³

have taken some action to identify and address the barriers to implementing [GBA Plus] they need to do more to help departments and agencies fully integrate [GBA Plus] into the design of government policies, programs, and initiatives, and to improve monitoring and reporting on outcomes for diverse groups of women, men and gender-diverse people.

8 While the title of this audit does not make reference to the “plus” of GBA Plus and it focuses more broadly on gender-based analysis, the auditing was based on the implementation of the federal government’s Gender-based Analysis Plus Framework.

9 Women and Gender Equality Canada, [Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis \(2016-2020\)](#).

10 For more information on the *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act* and its enacting legislation, see “[Division 9: Enactment of the Canadian Gender Budgeting Act](#)” in *Legislative Summary of Bill C-86: A second Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 27, 2018 and other measures*, Publication no. 42-1-C86-E, Library of Parliament, 14 December 2018.

11 Government of Canada, [Women and Gender Equality Canada mandate](#).

12 “[Focus of the audit](#)” in Office of the Auditor General of Canada, [Follow-up on Gender-Based Analysis Plus](#), Report 3 in 2022 *Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada*.

13 “[Findings, Recommendations, and Responses](#)” in Office of the Auditor General of Canada, [Follow-up on Gender-Based Analysis Plus](#), Report 3 in 2022 *Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada*.

Reflecting on that 2022 report, Karen Hogan, the Auditor General of Canada, stated that “long-standing challenges that we previously identified continue to hinder the full implementation of GBA Plus across government.”¹⁴

When appearing before the committee, officials from WAGE recalled that the 2016 OAG report had resulted in the *Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis (2016–2020)* and confirmed that as a result of the 2022 OAG report, WAGE is “working on a new action plan to respond to the recommendations in that audit report with PCO and TBS.”¹⁵ An official from WAGE later confirmed to the committee¹⁶ that this action plan was to be tabled by the end of November 2022.¹⁷



“It’s been 25 years since the government committed to GBA Plus. Progress on identifying and addressing barriers has been slow. Despite our previous work and recommendations, it is unclear whether actions are achieving better gender equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes.”

Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada

14 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

15 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

16 Women and Gender Equality Canada, [Follow-up Information](#), Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 14 November 2022.

17 No action plan was available by January 2023.

05

What is Gender-
based Analysis Plus?

At its most basic, GBA Plus is the Government of Canada’s interpretation of intersectional policy analysis, designed to investigate how federal policies, programs and initiatives affect different Canadians in different ways, and to use this information to prevent people from being harmed or excluded. When it comes to understanding GBA Plus, one of the main challenges is that it is a Government of Canada-branded approach to federal policy analysis. It is seldom discussed outside of federal departments, agencies and programs and does not exist outside of Canada.

As a formal definition, WAGE states that GBA Plus is “an analytical process that provides a rigorous method for the assessment of systemic inequalities, as well as a means to assess how diverse groups of women, men, and gender diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives.”¹⁸ At her appearance before the committee, the Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth added that “GBA Plus is the primary tool used by the government to help inform government initiatives and to ensure they are inclusive and responsive to the needs of diverse people.”¹⁹



18 Women and Gender Equality Canada, [What is Gender-based Analysis Plus](#), October 2022.

19 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (The Honourable Marci Ien, P.C., M.P., Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

Witnesses also provided their own conceptualizations of both GBA Plus and intersectional policy analysis, adding nuance. The Auditor General characterized GBA Plus as “the main tool used by the government to consider how gender and other identity factors can impact how Canadians experience the delivery of programs and services.”²⁰ Kimberly Nesbeth of Elevate Policy stated that “GBA Plus is used as a central tool for equity analysis, yet it treats race as a diversity factor that resides in the background of an approach that focuses on gender.”²¹ Anna Cameron, Research Associate of Fiscal and Economic Policy at the University of Calgary, emphasized “the importance of shifting to a critical intersectional approach to policy analysis and development,” both moving beyond gender and engaging with the “systems, processes and power structures that give identity meaning.”²²

Like Anna Cameron, many witnesses shared their different perspectives with the committee on the branding and understanding of “GBA Plus” as well as considerations for how it might evolve towards being a better tool.



“Gender-based Analysis Plus remains the federal government’s primary mechanism for attending to issues of equality and diversity in public policy. GBA Plus, however, only weakly incorporates intersectionality and is insufficient as a framework for intersectional policy analysis. In particular, GBA Plus overlooks core concepts of power and bias and considers identity issues in only an additive, not intersectional, way.”

Lindsay Tedds and Jennifer Robson in *Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women in Canada*, a Royal Society of Canada Collection of Essays

20 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

21 Kimberly Nesbeth, [Response to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on the Role of Gender-based Analysis Plus in the Policy Process](#), Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 16 September 2022.

22 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Anna Cameron, Research Associate, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

Intersectionality and the “Plus”

With the addition of the “Plus” to GBA in 2011, the tool was redesigned to consider “many other identity factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical disability, and how the interaction between these factors influences the way we might experience government policies and initiatives.”²³

The committee acknowledges the complexities and challenges of all identity factors, including both those listed here and others. In the committee’s discussion of GBA Plus, certain considerations – Indigeneity, race/ethnicity, gender, disability, and 2SLGBTQI+ – were brought forward, however, these considerations should not be considered an exhaustive list. Frances McRae, Deputy Minister for WAGE, echoed these sentiments, stating that GBA Plus is “fundamentally about equity, fairness and inclusion” and that “with different initiatives, different parts of intersectionality have more emphasis than others.”²⁴

It should be noted that with the exceptions of women and Indigenous peoples, who have specific departments mandated to address their needs, the other three groups highlighted here (2SLGBTQI+ Canadians,

Canadians with a disability and racialized Canadians) are all targeted by recent federal government strategies/action plans.

Witnesses discussed the importance of not leaving boys and men out of discussions on gender. Minister Ien shared a metaphor in which an eagle cannot fly with only one wing, similarly, gendered considerations should factor in boys and men too, when appropriate.²⁵ Regarding the full spectrum of gender, Egale Canada stated in their brief that “it is promising to see explicit references to non-binary and gender diverse people” in existing models of GBA Plus.²⁶ However, Egale noted that there is not enough consideration of 2SLGBTQI+ experiences and needs in policy design. Egale had numerous recommendations to address these gaps, including that GBA Plus be expanded to include 2SLGBTQI+ cultural competency and Positive Space training.²⁷ Egale concluded that “queering” GBA Plus would align with the mandate of the Federal *2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan 2022*, specifically priority area six, which aims to “embed 2SLGBTQI+ issues in the work of the Government of Canada.”²⁸

23 Women and Gender Equality Canada, [What is Gender-based Analysis Plus](#), October 2022.

24 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Frances McRae, Deputy Minister, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

25 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (The Honourable Marci Ien, P.C., M.P., Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

26 Egale Canada, [2SLGBTQI Considerations in GBA+ Policy Processes](#), Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 23 September 2022.

27 Egale Canada, [2SLGBTQI Considerations in GBA+ Policy Processes](#), Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 23 September 2022.

28 “Embed 2SLGBTQI+ issues in the work of the Government of Canada,” in Women and Gender Equality Canada, [Federal 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan 2022](#), 2022.

Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer of the DisAbled Women’s Network of Canada (DAWN Canada), shared data from Statistics Canada indicating that 24% of women in Canada live with a disability, and that is not accounting for undiagnosed and underreported disabilities.²⁹ In a brief submitted to the committee, Bonnie Brayton cautioned against considering women with disabilities as a homogeneous population given that their needs and lived experiences are quite diverse.³⁰ DAWN Canada also shared concerns that Canada’s Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) “introduced intersectionality without strategic action to support women, girls, and non-binary people with disabilities.”³¹ In this case, DAWN Canada is concerned that the DIAP will serve to further silo disability considerations rather than mainstreaming them into an intersectional approach.



“I understand the intention of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan is to ensure that we realize the goal of full implementation by 2040. But in practical terms, I work with departments, with senior policy people, with program people and with the people who work with us on individual grants. In all of those conversations, what always comes clearly to me is that there’s a real challenge, because of the way departments and staff change, to keep something consistent with GBA Plus. I have no doubt it will be the same type of challenges with the DIAP.”

Bonnie Brayton, DAWN Canada

29 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer, DisAbled Women’s Network of Canada).

30 Bonnie Brayton et al. for DisAbled Women’s Network (DAWN) Canada, [The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly of GBA+: We are Not a +](#), Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 17 October 2022.

31 Bonnie Brayton et al. for DisAbled Women’s Network (DAWN) Canada, [The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly of GBA+: We are Not a +](#), Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 17 October 2022.



Officials from WAGE discussed how GBA Plus intersects with the product of another federal strategy; the Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat, operated out of Canadian Heritage. Lisa Smylie, Director General of the Research, Results and Delivery Branch at WAGE shared that when updating GBA Plus tools in 2021, WAGE worked in conjunction with the Secretariat to consider aspects of “race, racialization and religion.”³² However, in a brief submitted to the committee, Kimberly Nesbeth stated that “the treatment of race and racialization [in GBA Plus] is inadequate” and that it does not address the role of federal systems and institutions “in perpetuating various forms of discrimination.”³³

Elevate Policy has developed an *Anti-Racism Policy Analysis Framework*, which places a central focus on “eradicating all forms of racial discrimination, and illuminates the ways in which systemic and institutional racism may function in policy systems.”³⁴

“The continued use of GBA Plus in its current form, where race and racism are continually marginalized in policy processes, is in some ways, perpetuating systemic and institutional racism.”

Kimberly Nesbeth, Elevate Policy

32 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

33 Kimberly Nesbeth, *Response to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on the Role of Gender-based Analysis Plus in the Policy Process*, Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 16 September 2022.

34 Kimberly Nesbeth, *Response to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on the Role of Gender-based Analysis Plus in the Policy Process*, Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 16 September 2022.

In her brief, Kimberly Nesbeth shared the original intent of “intersectionality,” coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 as a response “to the failure of anti-discrimination legal instruments and systems to understand the multidimensional and complex interactions of race and sex in the experience of Black women.”³⁵ In 2017, Kimberlé Crenshaw maintained that “intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects.”³⁶

However, Kimberlé Crenshaw herself noted that questions of intersectionality are not limited to Black women’s experiences alone. Witnesses shared their understandings of intersectionality with the committee, and how diverse lived experiences are currently represented in GBA Plus. Lisa J. Smith of the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) emphasized the importance of intersectionality, stating that intersecting identities are the foundation of GBA Plus and that one must remember that the whole person comprises many intersecting identity factors.³⁷



35 Kimberly Nesbeth, [Response to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology on the Role of Gender-based Analysis Plus in the Policy Process](#), Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 16 September 2022.

36 Columbia Law School, “Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality, More than Two Decades Later,” 8 June 2017.

37 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Lisa J. Smith, Senior Director, Governance, International and Parliamentary Relations, Native Women’s Association of Canada).

In the May 2022 report, the Auditor General identified a “lack of focus on intersectionality” as one of three main barriers to effective GBA Plus implementation in the federal government.³⁸ Many witnesses agreed:

- Egale Canada stated that a key gap of current GBA Plus is “the lack of a truly intersectional approach.”³⁹
- Sarah Kaplan, Director of the Institute for Gender and the Economy at the University of Toronto, stated that “intersectionality is not yet effectively applied” and that the ‘Plus’ “focuses on adding race or income or disability or Indigeneity to gender rather than considering them simultaneously to understand the ways policy impacts, either negative or positive, can be amplified or dampened because of these intersections.”⁴⁰
- Anna Cameron stated that it was critical to move GBA Plus to intersectionality because GBA Plus does not adequately consider systems of oppression, power structures, institutions and the state.⁴¹

Ultimately, Anna Cameron concluded that in order to transform GBA Plus into intersectional analysis, “what is needed is a collective effort to bridge this gap, that is, the investment and infrastructure to launch and nurture a pan-Canadian network of scholars, practitioners and sector and community leaders who are working at the nexus of policy and intersectionality.”⁴²

38 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

39 Egale Canada, [2SLGBTQI Considerations in GBA+ Policy Processes](#), Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 23 September 2022.

40 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

41 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Anna Cameron, Research Associate, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

42 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Anna Cameron, Research Associate, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

The GBA Plus “Flower” Model – Still Relevant?

With the rebranding of GBA to GBA Plus, the flower model was introduced in order to highlight intersectionality in the “range of factors that can work together to shape experiences and outcomes.”⁴³ It expanded beyond sex and gender to include language, ethnicity/race, religion, age, disability, geography, culture, income, sexual orientation, and education. Witnesses shared concerns with this model of GBA Plus with the committee, particularly regarding how it implies additive identity characteristics rather than an intersectional framework.

Lindsay Tedds, Scientific Director of Fiscal and Economic Policy at the University of Calgary stated that “one of the biggest problems and challenges that we face is that the representation of gender-based analysis is in that flower, which tries to indicate that our identities are fixed and our identities are additive.”⁴⁴ Anna Cameron added that it would be a good time to move “beyond the flower.”⁴⁵

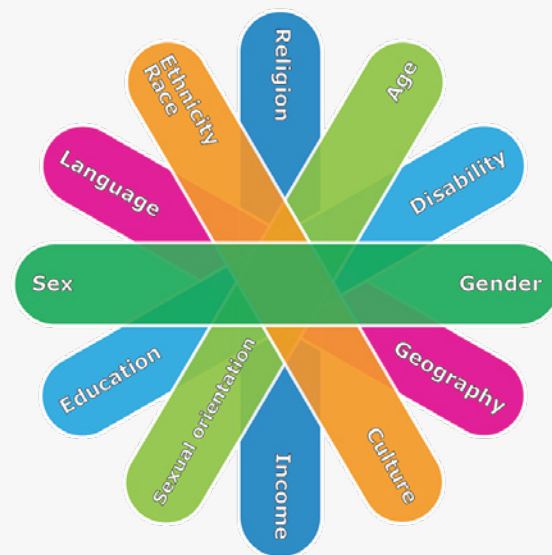


Image of GBA Plus “flower” model, introduced in 2011 by then-Status of Women Canada

43 “Introduction to GBA Plus” in Women and Gender Equality Canada, [Module 3 – What is Gender-based Analysis Plus \(GBA Plus\)?](#).

44 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

45 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Anna Cameron, Research Associate, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

Yolande Bouka, Assistant Professor of Political Studies at Queen’s University stated that one of the challenges with the flower illustration is that:⁴⁶

There are three components that are often omitted from that framework, and that is time, place and space. These analyses vary based on time, and often you want to have some kind of longitudinal study. They change based on the space in which the individuals, group or groups of individuals are located but also their places in societies, geographies and the international system, depending on who is doing the analysis.

Rebranding GBA Plus?

If GBA Plus is not adequately representing what the Government of Canada hopes to achieve with it, committee members questioned whether it should be rebranded. Witnesses suggested a rebranding could be “problematic”⁴⁷ and not likely to be the long-term solution towards a more fulsome intersectional analysis.⁴⁸ However, other witnesses, like Yolande Bouka, pointed out that “the level of comfort of the population with regard to issues of gender and sexual equality in our country”⁴⁹ may be the real issue.

In terms of the emphasis on gender-based analysis vs. the “Plus,” witnesses all agreed that despite the complexity of intersectional analysis inherent to GBA Plus, GBA should not be split from the “Plus.” Jane Stinson, Research Associate with the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women stated that while “it’s difficult to do it all; to do gender and all of the ‘plus’ considerations,” it is “important to keep it together and to struggle with how we do GBA Plus.”

46 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 6 October 2022, (Yolande Bouka, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University, as an individual).

47 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

48 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer, DisAbled Women’s Network of Canada).

49 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 6 October 2022, (Yolande Bouka, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University, as an individual).

The Auditor General stated that, “splitting [GBA Plus] up now would mean there are two things to think about. My concern would be one getting forgotten.”⁵⁰ Yolande Bouka added that she does not know how one would “do GBA without the ‘plus’” given that the “analytical framework itself is rooted or has its foundation in an intersectional approach.”⁵¹ Paulette Senior, President and CEO of the Canadian Women’s Foundation, stated that GBA without the Plus becomes exclusionary but cautioned that in order to be truly inclusive, “we mustn’t just add the ‘Plus,’ we must name the ‘Plus.’”⁵²

If GBA Plus were rebranded, witnesses suggested using “intersectional” in its name in order to recentre the focus of analysis. Paulette Senior stated that she thinks that “the best we can do and the best we have done is intersectionality.”⁵³ Jane Stinson and Bonnie Brayton agreed, with the latter noting that the “plus symbol limits the diverse lived experiences and needs of various marginalized and equity-seeking groups by putting them into one entity.”⁵⁴ Lindsay Tedds presented the idea of an “inclusive intersectional policy analysis framework” as taking the “usual policy framework – efficiency, equity and that kind of thing – and adding a social justice lens and an intersectional lens.”⁵⁵

Finally, Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director of the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University shared that her solution to that challenge “would be to simply rebrand it as gender and diversity analysis or something that makes it clear that the ‘Plus’ isn’t an add-on.”⁵⁶

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Recommendation: That the Government of Canada, led by Women and Gender Equality Canada, rebrand GBA Plus as Gender and Diversity Analysis.

50 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

51 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Yolande Bouka, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University, as an individual).

52 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Paulette Senior, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Women’s Foundation).

53 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Paulette Senior, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Women’s Foundation).

54 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer, DisAble Women’s Network of Canada).

55 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

56 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

Culturally-Relevant GBA Plus

When it comes to intersectional analysis, people of diverse cultures approach the analytical process from diverse perspectives. Various witnesses shared that the current model of GBA Plus does not adequately consider many Canadians' lived experiences and knowledge, particularly that of Indigenous peoples and communities. First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations all shared how they had developed their own culturally-relevant gender-based analysis (CRGBA) tools.

Lisa Smith described culturally-relevant gender based analysis as:⁵⁷

An important analytical tool that evaluates the impact of policies, programs and legislation on Indigenous women and girls, and two-spirit, transgender and gender-diverse people.

It centres traditional knowledge and considers the historical and current issues faced by Indigenous peoples, including the impacts that colonization and intergenerational trauma have caused. The CRGBA approach takes into account the patriarchal histories, structures and social norms imported from

Europe that have been imposed on Indigenous communities since contact, which have had devastating consequences for their governance, community and family relations, with direct impacts on health and wellness.

It also integrates the specific cultural, geographical, historical and spiritual contexts and strengths of diverse Indigenous communities that have survived and resisted the imposition of patriarchal worldviews. It is more inclusive as well as socially just. A culturally relevant gender-based perspective is one way of minimizing the potential for harm as well to increase safety.

Lisa Smith stated that in the absence of culturally-relevant GBA, "there is a risk of perpetuating further marginalization and further oppression and/or violence against Indigenous women. It is essential to consider the impacts of policy and programs, specifically as they pertain to First Nations, Métis and Inuit women."⁵⁸ She also emphasized that given the importance of understanding trauma and how it affects Indigenous peoples' lived experiences, the current interpretation of GBA Plus falls short and should include a trauma-informed approach.⁵⁹

57 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Lisa J. Smith, Senior Director, Governance, International and Parliamentary Relations, Native Women's Association of Canada).

58 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Lisa J. Smith, Senior Director, Governance, International and Parliamentary Relations, Native Women's Association of Canada).

59 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Lisa J. Smith, Senior Director, Governance, International and Parliamentary Relations, Native Women's Association of Canada).

Sarah Kaplan noted that GBA Plus should be incorporating more culturally-relevant tools; “departments and agencies should be investing time in getting access to those and building capabilities in using them or in engaging some of these community-based organizations in helping them use them.”⁶⁰ She also added that while “part of it is engaging [Indigenous] communities, [...] there needs to be a much greater attention to building up those skills.”⁶¹



“I have a formal colonial education from law school. I have to constantly deconstruct my own thoughts.”

Lisa J. Smith, Native Women’s Association of Canada

First Nations-Specific Culturally-Relevant GBA Plus

Lisa Smith presented four key pillars for CRGBA from a First Nations perspective:⁶²

First, it must be distinctions based by recognizing the distinct lived experiences of First Nations on and off reserve, status and non-status, Inuit, land-claim beneficiary or not, and Métis. Second, it must be inclusive of gender diversity – cisgender, transgender, gender fluid or agender. Third, it must account for the intersectionality of cultural identity, race, class, ability, sexual orientation and so on. Finally, fourth, it must place value on Indigenous women’s ways of knowing.

60 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

61 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

62 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Lisa J. Smith, Senior Director, Governance, International and Parliamentary Relations, Native Women’s Association of Canada).

Lisa Smith shared that NWAC would have a toolkit ready in Fall 2022 “that will hopefully help all senators and everyone.”⁶³ She added that the toolkit is influenced by grassroots members of NWAC from across Canada and will “speak to regional and cultural differences within that governance structure.”⁶⁴

Inuit-Specific Culturally-Relevant GBA Plus

Gerri Sharpe, President of Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, shared that in 2019, Pauktuutit began developing an Inuit-specific GBA Plus framework “as a policy and research tool to fully incorporate an intersectional approach to understanding the many personal, psychosocial, economic and political factors that shape the lived reality of Inuit women.”⁶⁵ She also emphasized that the Inuit-specific GBA Plus framework “takes a strengths-based approach and is based on the belief that the people and the communities have existing strengths, experiences and capacities, have the resources and can learn new skills and solve problems, and can use existing competencies to identify and address their own concerns.”⁶⁶

Gerri Sharpe characterized the Inuit-specific GBA Plus framework as follows:⁶⁷

- It is a tool for developing policy and programs that result in advanced equity outcomes for Inuit women, children and families;
- It positions the agency of Inuit and their resistance to oppressive forces such as colonialism, racism and sexism as central;
- It is based on a deep respect for Inuit worldviews, values and knowledge;
- It requires the sharing of power whereby Inuit determine the policies and programs that affect Inuit lives; and
- It is centred around IQ – Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (Inuit traditional knowledge).

63 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Lisa J. Smith, Senior Director, Governance, International and Parliamentary Relations, Native Women’s Association of Canada).

64 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Lisa J. Smith, Senior Director, Governance, International and Parliamentary Relations, Native Women’s Association of Canada).

65 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Gerri Sharpe, President, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada).

66 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Gerri Sharpe, President, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada).

67 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Gerri Sharpe, President, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada).

Amanda Fletcher, Senior Policy and Research Analyst for Pauktuutit, added that the Inuit-specific GBA Plus framework was created with Inuit communities and that Pauktuutit will continue to engage with the communities in order to “build a lot of those pieces around how to utilize the framework in a more standardized, holistic way on the ground.”⁶⁸

Métis-Specific Culturally-Relevant GBA Plus

Melanie Omeniho, President of Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak (LFMO), shared that in 2019, the organization developed a Métis-specific GBA Plus toolkit because culturally-relevant gender-based analysis toolkits did not exist and those that did “missed the mark on the issues.”⁶⁹

The Métis-specific GBA Plus toolkit was developed “using similar approaches as [WAGE], but taken further to include Métis ways of thinking, values, and worldviews, and to reflect the unique personalities of Métis women and gender-diverse folks.”⁷⁰

In particular, the Métis-specific GBA Plus toolkit:⁷¹

- is based around consultation, bringing women, youth, elders and gender diverse folks to the table;
- refers to current, historical and political Métis realities; and
- is collaborative, strength based and distinctions based, and equally values mainstream and traditional forms of knowledge.



68 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Amanda Fletcher, Senior Policy Analyst, GBA+, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada).

69 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Melanie Omeniho, President, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak).

70 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Melanie Omeniho, President, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak).

71 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Melanie Omeniho, President, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak).

Melanie Omeniho shared that the Métis-specific GBA Plus is used by Métis governments, as well as provincial governments and federal government departments.⁷² Unfortunately, in terms of reception by federal departments, she noted that while some have been “open and receptive,” others, including Environment and Climate Change Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and Employment and Social Development Canada had not been “as open and receptive.”⁷³

The Role of Civil Society Organizations and Academia

Experts from civil society organizations and academia discussed their respective roles in mainstreaming GBA Plus and providing more capacity for conducting it. Lisa Smylie from WAGE stated that in designing tools and resources for GBA Plus, the department worked with various civil society organizations, Indigenous peoples, and academics, including the Institute for Gender and the Economy, the Canadian Women’s Foundation, and DAWN Canada.⁷⁴ She also added that Indigenous Services Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs had worked with Pauktuutit, LFMO and NWAC to design culturally-relevant GBA Plus materials.⁷⁵ While acknowledging that some work had been done, Sarah Kaplan stated that federal departments and agencies should be investing more time and funding into supporting culturally-relevant and diverse GBA Plus resources and building capabilities in using them.⁷⁶

72 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Melanie Omeniho, President, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak).

73 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Melanie Omeniho, President, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak).

74 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

75 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

76 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

Bonnie Brayton shared that WAGE is currently engaging with various civil society organizations, Indigenous communities, and academic institutions through contract GBA Plus work. While this enables more diverse voices to be consulted, the current reality faced by these groups is that “the heavy lifting with GBA Plus continues to be with the civil society organizations that work with the government and policy people.”⁷⁷



“We don’t have this giant machine behind us to do GBA Plus, but we have to. We’re placed in a position constantly of having to look at just about every call for proposals that comes out to see if we can find a partner or a fit or somebody to step into the space to ensure that women with disabilities, who are this huge population, are going to be addressed and to see that if we can’t be at the table, someone who cares can be.”

Bonnie Brayton, DAWN Canada

Lindsay Tedds also agreed that civil society organizations are facing capacity challenges: “teaching, research, service – there’s only so much to go around.”⁷⁸ She added that “capacity within academia is lacking as well.”⁷⁹ Anna Cameron noted that in order to evolve towards more effective and meaningful intersectional analysis and to have the capacity to do so, “we need to train policy students in intersectionality and GBA Plus right when we’re teaching them how to write briefing notes, right when we’re teaching them the elements of the policy cycle, right when we’re teaching them about policy windows.”⁸⁰ It needs to be more than an elective.

77 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer, DisAbleD Women’s Network of Canada).

78 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

79 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

80 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Anna Cameron, Research Associate, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).



“I’m working on a vision within the public policy community, not only academia but also civil societies. I am looking at bringing us together into transdisciplinary intersectional public-policy study analysis that includes both design and implementation. Bringing that network together requires effort. Bringing that network together takes time.”

Lindsay Tedds, Scientific Director of Fiscal and Economic Policy at the University of Calgary

Sarah Kaplan recommended that in order to address existing capacity challenges, the government should engage more deeply with and financially support “grassroots and academic organizations that hold GBA Plus knowledge, involving them in both data collection and the co-design of policies and programs.”⁸¹ She added that “there is a real opportunity here for the government to support those organizations to be bringing that training and sharing that knowledge with communities.”⁸²

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Recommendation: That the Government of Canada partner with a) Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, and expert-advocates; and b) civil society organizations and academics to build the knowledge, tools, and infrastructure required for meaningful implementation and evaluation to improve GBA Plus and enhance its application.

81 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

82 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).



Strengths of GBA Plus and Success Stories

While mostly focused on improving GBA Plus implementation in the federal government, witnesses did share observations about the strengths of GBA Plus as it currently exists. Sarah Kaplan stated that “Canadians can be proud that intersectional GBA Plus is recognized by the Canadian government as a key competency in support of the development of effective programs and policies.”⁸³

Sarah Kaplan further emphasized that “the introduction of GBA Plus into government policy analysis has been an essential step forward in assuring that policies, regulations and programs are advancing gender equity in Canadian society” and that this has been “further reinforced by the *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act* and the Gender Results Framework introduced in Budget 2018.”⁸⁴

On specific success stories, Wendy Cukier added that there have been programs that have implemented changes after GBA Plus was performed, including work done on the Black Entrepreneurship Program, the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy, and the 50-30 Challenge.⁸⁵ The Deputy Minister of WAGE also commented on the role of GBA Plus in developing the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy and its Women Entrepreneurship Fund.⁸⁶ Lisa Smylie shared that GBA Plus was implemented in the policy design process for the COVID-19 emergency response and that given that it was conducted at the outset of policy design, it had a real impact on the programs/funding offered in order to target the most vulnerable populations.⁸⁷

83 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

84 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

85 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

86 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Frances McRae, Deputy Minister, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

87 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

Regarding overall GBA Plus implementation, WAGE shared the following successes, measured from 2019 to 2020:⁸⁸

- 12% increase in resources within departments dedicated to GBA Plus.
- 6% increase in GBA Plus Champions within departments;
- 9% increase in the number of departments with GBA Plus implementation plans; and
- 12% increase in the number of departments with a formal GBA Plus policy.

WAGE also shared progress related to GBA Plus implementation in the federal budget:⁸⁹

- in Budget 2019, 8% of proposals employed GBA Plus;
- in Budget 2021, 15% of proposals employed GBA Plus; and
- in Budget 2022, 85% of proposals employed GBA Plus.

With the 2018 adoption of the *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act*, it became the Government of Canada’s legislated policy to “consider gender and diversity in taxation and resource allocation decisions,” and to make “information available to the public on the impacts of Government decisions in terms of gender and diversity.”⁹⁰

88 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

89 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

90 *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act*, S.C. 2018, c. 27, s. 314, ss. 2(b) and 2(c).





Barriers to Fully
Implementing
GBA Plus

With the 2022 Auditor General’s report concluding that significant barriers remain to fully implementing GBA Plus, it is no surprise that many witnesses commented on these various barriers, in addition to proposing solutions for addressing them. The major barriers identified by both the Auditor General and by witnesses at committee are training, timing, capacity, funding, data, measuring outcomes, accountability and leadership, and perceptions and resistance. The Auditor General also stated that “it’s important to note that many of these barriers remain from our previous audit work.”⁹¹



“In our stakeholder analysis and the consultations we did in government, we asked everyone for examples of successes and no one could give us any.”

Sarah Kaplan, Director of the Institute for Gender and the Economy



91 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

Recommendation: The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology endorses the conclusions of the Auditor General’s three reports on GBA Plus and therefore recommends that the Government of Canada commit to implementing all recommendations from the Auditor General’s 2009, 2016, and 2022 audits on GBA Plus.

Training Effectiveness and Availability

Formal GBA Plus training is offered solely through WAGE and the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS). WAGE offers an Introduction to GBA Plus course, designed for members of the public and federal public servants to gain a basic understanding of GBA Plus. The CSPS also offers a course on Gender-based Analysis Plus: Applying Tools and Best Practices, which is designed to provide the tools necessary to assess whether GBA Plus has been integrated into a program or policy. The CSPS and WAGE also provide various additional resources to support GBA Plus.

Barriers related to training include both capacity and quality issues, with witnesses also questioning how effective it is. Sarah Kaplan stated that “many people within the government did not have the knowledge about how to undertake true GBA Plus.”⁹² The Auditor General shared a similar sentiment, identifying that the training provided through WAGE and CSPS is overly focused on analyzing submissions to Cabinet, and that training provided in the departments does not go into adequate depth to support subject-specific GBA Plus.⁹³

Without tracking program changes and outcomes, it is difficult to evaluate how effective existing training is. Jane Stinson agreed, indicating that another opportunity to improve GBA Plus training may be through evaluating and measuring the existing training, as there is no “system for evaluating the training that’s going on right now, certainly not across government.”⁹⁴

92 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

93 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

94 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 6 October 2022, (Jane Stinson, Research Associate, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women).

Regarding internal training provided by federal departments, Amanda Fletcher agreed that while GBA Plus training is available, it is “geared to more of a broad look,” which fails to account for both cultural and job-specific needs.⁹⁵ Sarah Kaplan added that without adequate training, “the staff charged with GBA Plus may not have the skills or the time to use [it] in the most appropriate ways,” making it more of a box-checking exercise than a fulsome analysis.⁹⁶ Jane Stinson also stressed the importance of ongoing training and learning as GBA Plus is “an ongoing process of understanding and deepening that understanding.”⁹⁷

One way for departments to deepen GBA Plus competencies and offer more specific training is to partner with organizations external to WAGE and the CSPS. Melanie Omeniho shared that various federal departments⁹⁸ are starting to use parts of the Métis-specific GBA Plus toolkit and contact LFMO for training specific to their tools.⁹⁹ Sarah Kaplan noted that the Institute for Gender and the Economy is offering a gender-based analysis training designed, not just for government, but also for NGOs and corporate enterprises.¹⁰⁰ However, she pointed out that a barrier to accessing external training within the federal government is that in order for public servants to be considered certified in GBA Plus, their training needs to be provided by either WAGE or CSPS. Sarah Kaplan noted that this presents an opportunity to investigate “who could offer the training in these competencies, and how can those be certified and made official so that the government officials can take advantage of them?”¹⁰¹

95 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Amanda Fletcher, Senior Policy Analyst, GBA+, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada).

96 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

97 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 6 October 2022, (Jane Stinson, Research Associate, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women).

98 In particular, Melanie Omeniho mentioned CIRNAC, CMHC and WAGE as departments that have come to LFMO for culturally-relevant GBA Plus training.

99 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Melanie Omeniho, President, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak).

100 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

101 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

Recommendation: That the Government of Canada improve GBA Plus training and expand the competencies of GBA Plus analysts in all federal departments by:

- partnering with a) Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, and expert-advocates; and b) civil society organizations and academics to offer new programs and tools;
- supporting the establishment of interdisciplinary policy professional networks within the federal public service; and
- identifying, documenting and evaluating federal training programs and tools as part of the public reporting put forward by Recommendation 12.

Importance of Timing

On the timing of GBA Plus, the Auditor General stated that:¹⁰²

Ideally, using the GBA Plus tool should happen right at the outset when you're defining the problem or the issue that you're trying to resolve with a policy or program. That's the critical place to do it. It doesn't mean that you can't do it later, but that's really the crucial place. [...] When you miss the critical stage of definition at the beginning, then you're always trying to play catch-up.

Other witnesses also commented on when GBA Plus should be conducted in policy development. Melanie Omeniho stated that GBA Plus is essential throughout as its intent is not to be "like a Band-Aid on something else in the middle of a program."¹⁰³ Yolande Bouka agreed that it is challenging to apply GBA Plus after policy design, adding that in her experience, she often met with "researchers and scholars after they've conducted their research and they're trying to shape their policy responses *ex post facto* the research."¹⁰⁴

102 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

103 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Melanie Omeniho, President, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak).

104 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Yolande Bouka, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen's University, as an individual).

Data collected by WAGE from the 2021 GBA Plus Implementation Survey and reported in the May 2022 Auditor General’s report confirms timing challenges. The Auditor General shared that “only 39% of departments did it at that early stage and only 60% of the time.”¹⁰⁵ When GBA Plus is being conducted after policy decisions, “then it is too late, or it requires a lot of adjustment, to ask what kind of data should we have gathered, how we should go about getting it and how we make sure we are informing any modifications to the policy.”¹⁰⁶



“By only applying GBA Plus late in the process, policy-makers miss out on opportunities to use intersectional gender-based insights to identify policy priorities and shape policy design. Instead, GBA Plus tends to be used to identify impacts after the priorities and policies are established and then to suggest some incremental modifications around the margins that could mitigate gendered, racial or other impacts. Thus, the true potential of GBA Plus is missed.”

Sarah Kaplan, Director of the Institute for Gender and the Economy

Officials from WAGE informed the committee that in order to address timing challenges, in June 2021, WAGE launched new tools to encourage GBA Plus “before people think about options for an initiative or the direction of an initiative.”¹⁰⁷ Given the relative newness of these tools, WAGE noted that while they have noticed some progress, there is still “more room to improve.”¹⁰⁸

105 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

106 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

107 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

108 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

Multiple witnesses stated that a solution to the timing issues of GBA Plus is better integration within policy development in the departments. Sarah Kaplan recommended that GBA Plus be reframed as “central to policy and program planning rather than an add-on requirement.”¹⁰⁹ Wendy Cukier stated that, at present, GBA Plus is an afterthought and therefore, a “strong recommendation is to embed a gender and diversity perspective into the very framing of policy.”¹¹⁰ Paulette Senior also agreed, stating that “the work towards GBA Plus needs to be integrated in every department so that the analysis occurs as the earliest stage of policy development and is integrated into the choices made from the outset.”¹¹¹

The Auditor General noted that it’s equally important to apply GBA Plus to existing policies as it is for new policies, stating that “you can start to gather data now about existing programs and use it to inform adjustments or future changes.”¹¹²

05

Recommendation: That the Government of Canada identify GBA Plus as a priority in initial policy design, as well as subsequent policy development, implementation, and evaluation.

06

Recommendation: That the Government of Canada, through Women and Gender Equality Canada, prioritize improving the timeliness of GBA Plus, including by creating a strategic plan identifying measurable outcomes and ensuring that the tools and resources necessary for early GBA Plus consideration are available throughout the federal government.

Legislative Analysis

GBA Plus can be conducted at many different stages of the policy development process, and it is essential that it be initiated early on. However, it is also important that GBA Plus be considered when bills are being introduced and studied in Parliament.

109 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

110 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

111 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 6 October 2022, (Paulette Senior, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Women’s Foundation).

112 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).



In the 1995 *Federal Plan for Gender Equality*, the Government of Canada acknowledged that “legislation and policy can have different effects on women and men” and that the Government is therefore “committed to making these outcomes transparent.”¹¹³ In particular, the federal government committed to “ensuring that all future legislation and policies include, where appropriate” a gender-based analysis.¹¹⁴ Responsibility for determining “appropriateness” was left to the individual departments.

In all federal plans, audits, and documents relating to GBA Plus since 1995, the definition of GBA has included a commitment to assess the impact of “policies, legislation and programs.” In the first OAG report on GBA, the Auditor General evaluated a sample of 28 Memoranda to Cabinet and 21 Treasury Board submissions from various departments. Of the 28 Memoranda to Cabinet, 13 reported gender impacts and of the 21 TBS submissions, 13 also reported gender impacts.¹¹⁵

The Auditor General could not assess whether GBA was not conducted, or whether the departments felt that certain policies or programs did not require it.

While GBA Plus is being conducted with more regularity now (although not throughout the entire policy development process), the information used to evaluate legislation remains confidential. The only GBA Plus consistently available to parliamentarians and the broader public is contained within federal budgetary documents, as a result of the 2018 *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act*. The Auditor General noted that under these current circumstances, “the implementation of policies stemming from a bill does not undergo analysis until the bill has passed.”¹¹⁶

113 Status of Women Canada, [Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality](#), August 1995, Paragraph 3.

114 Status of Women Canada, [Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality](#), August 1995, Paragraph 24.

115 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, [Gender-based analysis](#), Chapter 1 in *Spring 2009 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the House of Commons*, p. 18.

116 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

To mandate greater GBA Plus accessibility when bills are proposed in Parliament, the Honourable Senator Mary Jane McCallum tabled Bill S-218, An Act to amend the Department for Women and Gender Equality Act, in the first session of the 44th Parliament.¹¹⁷ If passed in its current iteration, this bill would mandate the Minister of Women and Gender Equality to table a GBA Plus of all government bills within two days of their introduction in Parliament.¹¹⁸ It would further create a requirement for the Minister to do the same for all private members' business referred to a committee, within ten sittings days of the referral.¹¹⁹ Bill S-218 is currently at second reading in the Senate and has yet to be referred to a committee.

When asked whether WAGE or other federal entities would commit to sharing the confidential information used to conduct GBA Plus analysis for Cabinet with parliamentarians, Minister Ilen stated a commitment to “continue the work that is ongoing [with Cabinet colleagues] to push forward” exactly that.¹²⁰ She then indicated that she could not fully commit to sharing the information, or summaries of it, as WAGE works in partnership with the PCO and TBS, but that she heard the committee’s concerns about information sharing.¹²¹



117 Similar bills had been introduced in the 43rd Parliament. See [Bill S-209, An Act to Amend the Department for Women and Gender Equality Act](#), 43rd Parliament, 1st Session, and [Bill S-213, An Act to Amend the Department for Women and Gender Equality Act](#), 43rd Parliament, 2nd Session, for more detail.

118 [Bill S-218, An Act to amend the Department for Women and Gender Equality Act](#), 44th Parliament, 1st Session, cl. 1.

119 [Bill S-218, An Act to amend the Department for Women and Gender Equality Act](#), 44th Parliament, 1st Session, cl. 1.

120 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (The Honourable Marci Ilen, P.C., M.P., Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

121 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (The Honourable Marci Ilen, P.C., M.P., Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

Recommendation: That, in order for GBA Plus to be included as a consideration for parliamentarians during the legislative process:

- the Standing Joint Committee on the Library of Parliament study the feasibility of providing GBA Plus of government bills, when relevant data are publicly available;
- the Government of Canada table GBA Plus for all government bills when introduced in either chamber of Parliament;
- parliamentarians are encouraged to include GBA Plus when drafting House of Commons private members' bills and Senate public bills; and
- Women and Gender Equality Canada establish resources for parliamentary committees to support their use of GBA Plus when considering legislation.

Lack of Capacity

Despite acknowledging that “Women and Gender Equality Canada took action by developing tools and delivering training to build capacity across government to perform GBA Plus,” the Auditor General identified a lack of capacity as a major barrier to implementing GBA Plus. The Auditor General defined this capacity deficiency as a “lack of time and availability of tools or resources.”¹²² Results from the 2021 WAGE implementation survey confirm this, with 76% of departments reporting a “lack of time and capacity.”¹²³

The Auditor General observed that despite WAGE having provided 30 training sessions in addition to available tools and guidance, “departments were still self-identifying as not having the right tools, enough tools or not knowing what to do with the tools.”¹²⁴ However, Lindsay Tedds stated that a barrier is not always in terms of resources, but rather access: “WAGE has a preferred list of individuals that they tell departments to engage with.”¹²⁵ Not only does a limited selection restrict capacity, but it also reduces the opportunity for more diversity, innovation and expertise in training programs and tools.

122 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

123 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

124 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

125 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

Witnesses suggested that in order to improve capacity, GBA Plus experts be better integrated into departmental structures. The Auditor General stated that if it were feasible, staffing each department with a GBA Plus specialist “would be a good thing.”¹²⁶ Sarah Kaplan recommended that capacity be built for GBA Plus, “including at the most senior levels, not just in service of administrative procedures for completing budget submissions but in how to use GBA Plus to set priorities, question assumptions, design policies and programs and monitor impact.”¹²⁷

Another suggestion to improve capacity was to centralize the analysis itself under one single organization that would be a centre of excellence for conducting all GBA Plus. Lisa Smylie from WAGE cautioned against it, stating that “GBA Plus is best done by those who are developing initiatives.”¹²⁸ She elaborated that WAGE’s current approach is that “it is every department’s role to do GBA Plus in every aspect of decision-making”.¹²⁹ Ultimately, Lisa Smylie worried that the impact of GBA Plus would diminish if it fell only to one centralized agency.

Stable, Adequate Funding

While not one of the major barriers identified outright by many witnesses, a lack of financial resources can have a significant indirect impact on capacity and ability to conduct GBA Plus.

For civil society organizations, stable, adequate funding is essential to their being able to contribute their expertise in GBA Plus. Bonnie Brayton stated that while DAWN Canada is working to build capacity, they are currently faced with “a huge interest from the private sector, from federally regulated entities and a wide range of actors” and, therefore, “the obvious thing to say in terms of resources is that we need to be better funded.”¹³⁰ Lindsay Tedds agreed, adding that without funding, the support of civil society organizations on GBA Plus is not possible: “Whether it’s civil society, academia or even the federal government engaging us, whether we like it or not, funding and resources are an essential component of this.”¹³¹

126 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

127 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

128 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

129 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

130 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer, DisAble Women’s Network of Canada).

131 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

Increased funding was also identified as a means by which to obtain more quality data. Lindsay Tedds stated that the federal government should have a role in funding a pan-Canadian network of scholars and students committed to learning GBA Plus and intersectional analysis.¹³² She added that while Statistics Canada “has a role to play, the federal government should be leading the effort to bring this network together and be funding it.”¹³³ However, Sarah Kaplan stated that Statistics Canada also needs better funding in order to improve their data collection and dissemination. “There would be a lot more opportunity if there were greater funding and more staff. They could do these studies and provide the data in a much more timely fashion than they’re doing now.”¹³⁴

While an increase in funding may reduce barriers, Bonnie Brayton cautioned that it was important to have an evaluation mechanism “to ensure that the budget intentions and the commitments in place are fulfilled,” which would then allow for “the opportunity to properly evaluate where budget and resources should be directed to have meaningful results and change.”¹³⁵

08

Recommendation: That the Government of Canada ensure adequate funding is provided to a) Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, and expert-advocates; and b) civil society organizations and academia to facilitate their engagement and partnership with the government on GBA Plus.

132 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

133 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

134 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

135 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer, DisAbleD Women’s Network of Canada).



Questions about Data Gaps

The Auditor General stated that a major barrier to GBA Plus implementation identified by most departments and agencies was the availability of data, specifically, the lack of disaggregated data, which “makes it impossible to understand how diverse groups experience inequality.”¹³⁶ She further added that PCO, TBS, and WAGE all identified this issue as a “significant challenge.”¹³⁷

Quality data can be collected by each department delivering programs and services. However, the Auditor General stated that “many departments didn’t understand the importance of gathering data, especially disaggregated data, or when they did gather it, they didn’t use it.”¹³⁸

Wendy Cukier agreed, noting that while Statistics Canada data is great, if departments are not collecting and analyzing data regarding programs and services delivered, then it is not possible to know “who is benefiting from all the programs that are being offered by the federal government.”¹³⁹

In order to enhance departmental data collection, Wendy Cukier suggested that the government compel federal departments and agencies to collect data.¹⁴⁰ She also noted that a way to improve data collection is by “building in identity markers to every single program so we know what programs are being delivered to whom, and what the impacts are.”¹⁴¹ The Auditor General recommended that, “the next big action that would help address those barriers would have to be data collection strategies.”¹⁴²

136 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

137 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

138 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

139 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

140 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

141 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

142 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).



“You need to know what data you have to gather, what data you have and how to store it, use it and retrieve it. Then, you also have to actually do something meaningful with it.”

Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada

Regarding the role of Statistics Canada specifically, witnesses suggested that it enhance its collection of disaggregated data, in conjunction with other cooperating departments and governments. Wendy Cukier proposed it play a role in linking data collected through its surveys to program administrative data, to better illuminate connections between investments and programs and measurable outcomes.¹⁴³ Sarah Kaplan also recommended that the government invest in better collection of intersectional data through Statistics Canada and other mechanisms.¹⁴⁴ Jane Stinson added that “rather than relying on the provinces” for data, she would “much rather see a strong role for Statistics Canada in doing this to make sure that we have consistent data across the country.”¹⁴⁵ However, Carey Agnew, Principal at the Auditor General’s office, cautioned that Statistics Canada is experiencing its own capacity challenges relating to data collection and analysis.¹⁴⁶

09

Recommendation: That the Government of Canada ensure identity indicators are built into federal programs in order to provide disaggregated data on program recipients and impacts.

10

Recommendation: That Statistics Canada, in cooperation with federal departments and agencies, enhance the collection, analysis and dissemination of data useful for GBA Plus.

143 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

144 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

145 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Jane Stinson, Research Associate, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women).

146 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Carey Agnew, Principal, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Data

Many witnesses discussed a trend they had observed: an over-emphasis on quantitative data and the barrier imposed by the lack of such data. Sarah Kaplan acknowledged the current lack of quantified data and more particularly, that “the collection of disaggregated data on diverse groups has been slow.”¹⁴⁷ However, she cautioned that “a focus only on numbers may divert attention from consultations with and support of feminist, community, Indigenous and social justice organizations who have originated – and are keepers of – GBA Plus knowledge,” concluding that “even as we talk about the dearth of quantitative data, the part that policy-makers really struggle with is how to do a good job with qualitative data collection.”¹⁴⁸ Wendy Cukier agreed, noting that “there is such a bias in government toward quantitative data, and there tends to be a marginalization of other forms of knowledge” and that this is “an embedded bias that we have to address.”¹⁴⁹

Anna Cameron stated that in order to move towards a more fulsome intersectional analysis, “we need to value diverse forms of evidence and not remain fixated on the lack of data.”¹⁵⁰ She added that “quantitative approaches are but one way of answering questions and understanding the world, and we need to build capacity to be creative and engage in different types of analysis.”¹⁵¹

147 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

148 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).

149 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

150 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Anna Cameron, Research Associate, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

151 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Anna Cameron, Research Associate, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

Witnesses put forward suggestions addressing the collection of better and culturally-relevant qualitative data. Sarah Kaplan recommended that the federal government invest “in better collection of intersectional data through Statistics Canada and other mechanisms, while at the same time recognizing that quantified data is not the only important input to a good GBA Plus analysis.” Anna Cameron suggested considering “diverse ways of understanding problems” and discussed using surveys, storytelling, historical analysis, and sociology, among other options.¹⁵² Melanie Omeniho recommended that, “in order to effectively use GBA Plus in any policy process and to close these data gaps, there must be available data that is gathered by the groups themselves.”¹⁵³ Lisa Smylie also acknowledged that to “engage with people, to speak with people, to gather lived experiences,” it is essential to “have diverse people around the table asking the questions and having the conversations.”¹⁵⁴

11

Recommendation: That the Government of Canada ensure that data is collected using a culturally-relevant approach, developing best practices in consultation with a) Indigenous communities, equity-seeking groups, and expert-advocates; and b) civil society organizations and academics regarding both data collection and use, with a specific emphasis on including qualitative, diverse data.

Measuring Outcomes and Evaluating Progress

According to the Auditor General, there is no framework for information sharing between the central agencies (PCO and TBS) and WAGE that tracks the progress of GBA Plus implementation throughout the government over time.¹⁵⁵ She stated that since “GBA Plus is the main tool used by government to consider gender and other identity factors, Canadians should know whether it is effectively implemented and having real impacts on programs and service delivery.”¹⁵⁶

152 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Anna Cameron, Research Associate, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

153 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Melanie Omeniho, President, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak).

154 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).


155 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

156 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

In response to a recommendation made in the 2016 OAG report, *Implementing Gender-based Analysis*, then-Status of Women Canada, in collaboration with the PCO and TBS, committed to “report on a regular basis on the status of GBA implementation across government based on information gathered in annual GBA progress reports from deputy ministers.”¹⁵⁷ In April 2016, then-Status of Women Canada sent a GBA Plus implementation survey to 30 deputy ministers and later presented the results to the Public Service Management Advisory Committee.¹⁵⁸ The most recent high-level results of a GBA Plus Implementation Survey shared publicly date to 2019.¹⁵⁹ In follow-up information provided to the committee, WAGE indicated that “the results of the remaining two GBA Plus implementation surveys will be posted on WAGE’s departmental website by the end of December 2022.”¹⁶⁰¹⁶¹

The Auditor General observed that it is important to “measure outcomes and then report against them,” stating that “we see a lot of output measurement, activities that are done, but not necessarily measuring whether or not there is a change to a program or policy,

and whether or not there is a real impact on Canadians.”¹⁶² Carey Agnew added that where there are targets, they are not specific or measurable and one is often operating without a baseline, making actual progress nearly impossible to track.¹⁶³



“WAGE could do a much better job in talking about what they’re seeing and the outcomes and being more transparent about what they have seen, because they haven’t reported on that in a while.”

Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada

157 Office of the Auditor General of Canada, [Implementing Gender-based Analysis](#), Report 1 in *Fall 2015 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, Recommendation 1.62.

158 Women and Gender Equality Canada, [Interim Progress Report on the Implementation of the Gender-based Analysis Plus Action Plan](#).

159 Women and Gender Equality Canada, [Gender-based Analysis Plus implementation survey results 2018-2019](#).

160 Women and Gender Equality Canada, [Follow-up Information](#), Brief submitted to the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 14 November 2022.

161 The results of the two GBA Plus implementation surveys were not publicly available by January 2023.

162 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

163 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Carey Agnew, Principal, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

Witnesses suggested that a progress measurement framework be established to evaluate outcomes related to GBA Plus. Bonnie Brayton stated that such a framework is critical because “there is nothing at this point that tells us what actually got spent on women and girls with disabilities by department” and that “there are promises and there are commitments in budgets, but the actual follow-through to show measurable results” is not happening.¹⁶⁴

In terms of outcome measurement, the Auditor General noted that it would be beneficial if departments conducted more effective evaluation of their own GBA Plus, and then submitted this evaluation to WAGE for further comment and consolidation across government.¹⁶⁵ Jane Stinson agreed, stating that “departments and federal agencies should be asked to provide examples of how applying GBA Plus to their work has led to different outcomes” and that this information should include whether substantive or structural changes were made to policies and programs.¹⁶⁶

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Recommendation: That Women and Gender Equality Canada report to Parliament annually on the results of the GBA Plus departmental implementation survey, and the use and application of GBA Plus by all federal agencies and departments; and that this report evaluate a) the impact of GBA Plus on policy and program decisions and outcomes and b) federal training programs and tools.

Accountability and Leadership

One of the challenges with mandating GBA Plus implementation across government is that one of its main leaders, WAGE, is considered hierarchically equal to the other federal departments. For that reason, mandating changes or commitments can be challenging for the department. The Auditor General noted that “when the government does a horizontal program, what we hear is that while one department is accountable, they can’t compel other deputy heads.”¹⁶⁷

164 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer, DisAbleD Women’s Network of Canada).

165 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

166 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 6 October 2022, (Jane Stinson, Research Associate, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women).

167 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, *Evidence*, 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

The Auditor General felt that ultimately, although accountability rests with the deputy heads of each department, WAGE should play the role of centralized accountability.¹⁶⁸ However, she noted that at the moment, the department is “hindered by not having consistent information or any information across different factors.”¹⁶⁹ The Auditor General concluded that, ultimately, she would recommend that WAGE “occupy a bit more space in that field and have a louder voice to make sure this becomes a priority.”¹⁷⁰

Jane Stinson acknowledged that “WAGE plays an important role,” but expressed concern that the department has adequate authority to ensure that things are being done, noting that it would “need to have authority recognized in government as well.”¹⁷¹

Lindsay Tedds shared her experience as an expert advocate:¹⁷²

I caution against designating one centre because this is such a disparate sort of topic. We get contacted by Finance Canada, Global Affairs on trade agreements and Innovation, Science and Economic Development on small- and medium-sized enterprises, policy. No one person will have all of that.



168 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

169 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

170 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada).

171 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Jane Stinson, Research Associate, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women).

172 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

Instead of a single accountable department, Lindsay Tedds suggested that “to get the bureaucracy to take this seriously, the Clerk of the Privy Council has to be a champion of this, without a shadow of a doubt.”¹⁷³ Wendy Cukier also observed that “the Clerk of the Privy Council and Treasury Board have far more influence over setting priorities in federal departments” because they control the purse.¹⁷⁴ She added that if the federal departments and agencies “really believe that doing this well is going to have an impact on the budgets that they receive, I think that will move behaviour faster than many other initiatives focused on raising awareness, for example.”¹⁷⁵

The Deputy Minister for Women and Gender Equality Canada, Frances McRae, confirmed that it is the PCO and TBS “that have the levers within government [...] in terms of setting the rules around how Memoranda to Cabinet are to be constructed, how Treasury Board submissions are to be constructed and what types of information are required, so ministers and Cabinet can make good decisions.”¹⁷⁶

“Our department doesn’t necessarily have the levers to force people to do things.”

**Lisa Smylie, Women and Gender
Equality Canada**

Lindsay Tedds recommended that all departments appoint champions for GBA Plus, stating that departments that had done so (including Global Affairs Canada) were producing and using “amazing research.”¹⁷⁷ Lisa Smylie, of WAGE, noted that the GBA Plus Champions network and Focal Point are important tools to “incentivize and promote the uptake of GBA Plus” and that WAGE works to “incentivize them by understanding that this is just part of the fabric of public service.”¹⁷⁸

173 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

174 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

175 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

176 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Frances McRae, Deputy Minister, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

177 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

178 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 27 October 2022, (Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada).

Discussing other GBA Plus incentives, Lisa Smylie noted that WAGE is currently looking to the United Kingdom (U.K.)’s Behavioural Insights Team for best practices on encouraging more fulsome GBA Plus. Originally established as part of the U.K. Cabinet Office, the Behavioural Insights Team, or “Nudge Unit”¹⁷⁹ is now a global company, jointly owned by the U.K. government, Nesta and employees with a mission “to improve people’s lives by applying behavioural insights to improve public policies and public services.”¹⁸⁰

In addition to the Toronto branch of the Behavioural Insights Team – which cites working with the Government of Canada, the Government of British Columbia and the Rideau Hall Foundation, among others – the Government of Canada created its own version of a behavioural insights team.¹⁸¹ Established in 2017, the Impact and Innovation Unit (IIU) of the PCO works to “support the implementation of inventive programs and services designed to improve social, economic, and environmental outcomes for citizens.”¹⁸² The unit includes a behavioural sciences team staffed by Behavioural Science Fellows embedded within cooperating departments and supported by the PCO IIU. As of January 2023, the federal government entities partnered with the IIU are the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Canadian Space Agency, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Employment and Social Development Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, Infrastructure Canada, Global Affairs Canada, Health Canada, Natural Resources Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and Public Safety Canada.¹⁸³ Women and Gender Equality Canada is not currently a partner.

13

Recommendation: That the Clerk of the Privy Council be a Champion for GBA Plus, leading the Privy Council Office, and working with the Treasury Board Secretariat and Women and Gender Equality Canada to support GBA Plus implementation throughout the federal government.

179 For more information on the history of the Behavioural Insights Team, please see Zeina Afif, “[‘Nudge units’ – where they came from and what they can do](#),” World Bank Blogs, 25 October 2017.

180 The Behavioural Insights Team, [Home](#).

181 The Behavioural Insights Team, [Canada](#).

182 Impact Canada, [Our people](#).

183 Impact Canada, [About Impact Canada](#).

14

Recommendation: That by 31 December 2023, each federal department and agency appoint a GBA Plus Champion who will work to:

- develop a centre of excellence with resources and tools specific to the needs of their work;
- implement best practices for GBA Plus; and
- improve departmental performance on GBA Plus, as measured by Women and Gender Equality Canada’s annual implantation surveys and reported as per Recommendation 12.

15

Recommendation: That the Government of Canada factor the quality and implementation of GBA Plus into performance evaluations for senior management.

Perceptions and Resistance

Many witnesses discussed how perceptions can play a role in resistance to GBA Plus, both inside and outside of government. Lindsay Tedds noted that a barrier she and other economists had encountered is persuading colleagues that a policy framework developed “a hundred years ago in a discipline that is not representative itself cannot, in fact, lead to policy that is representative.”¹⁸⁴ Wendy Cukier agreed, noting that from her perspective as a professor at a business school, “people are often moved through enlightened self-interest” and, therefore, “organizations are more likely to respond if they see how this will help them do a better job of what they are trying to accomplish, as opposed to driving it through a compliance model.”¹⁸⁵



“Policy is dominated by White male economists who don’t see GBA Plus as a priority, or even understand what it’s like to live life and experience policy with any other identity. So there’s a very major cognitive challenge to overcome.”

Lindsay Tedds, Scientific Director of Fiscal and Economic Policy at the University of Calgary

184 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 21 September 2022, (Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, as an individual).

185 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, as an individual).

Yolande Bouka noted that in her work, while some participants are willing to engage and learn, there is still “quite a bit of resistance among academics and policy advisers alike.”¹⁸⁶ Jane Stinson shared that in each group of employees her organization trains, “maybe a third of the participants aren’t really interested and resist” concluding that “there will always be resistance” to GBA Plus.¹⁸⁷

Yolande Bouka indicated that at the moment, “one of the challenges is how early or how late the concept of GBA Plus is introduced to the general population, the same way equity, diversity and inclusion started to be introduced in high school or primary school discussions.”¹⁸⁸ She added that, “for some people, it’s not once you arrive in government that these types of issues and conversations are going to change the mind of those who already have deep-rooted opinions about whether or not these things are relevant.” Ultimately, she recommended that “the normalization of these types of conversations in public discourse would help implementation in policy and in government.”¹⁸⁹ Sarah Kaplan also argued that there are ways to encourage universities to offer more GBA Plus training: “what will drive it is if employers start asking for it,” if “you have to actually show that you have GBA Plus competency, that will drive it through all of the programs.”¹⁹⁰

186 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Yolande Bouka, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University, as an individual).

187 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Jane Stinson, Research Associate, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women).

188 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Yolande Bouka, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University, as an individual).

189 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 6 October 2022, (Yolande Bouka, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen’s University, as an individual).

190 Senate, Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, [Evidence](#), 28 September 2022, (Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, as an individual).





Conclusion

GBA Plus was created to ensure that diverse communities and peoples in Canada are not negatively impacted or excluded from federal programs, policies, and initiatives. Since 2009, three audits by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada have confirmed that significant barriers persist to the federal government's ability to conduct meaningful and effective GBA Plus.

Witness testimony emphasized that, despite some success stories, the full potential of GBA Plus cannot be realized with such major barriers remaining. Building on the Office of the Auditor General's work, witnesses identified eight gaps that prevent exhaustive GBA Plus: training, timing, capacity, funding, data, outcome evaluation, accountability and leadership, and negative perceptions and resistance. The committee notes that many of the solutions witnesses proposed for reducing these gaps have been recommended for over a decade, and that many of the suggested solutions do not impose additional financial burdens and can, therefore, be implemented with relative ease.

Canada has been proud to be a pacesetter in implementing the concept of GBA Plus throughout the federal government. However, in order to continue to be a leader in making policies, programs, and initiatives inclusive, the federal government needs to commit to not only conducting exhaustive and effective GBA Plus reviews, but also to mainstreaming the concept, so that Canadians both understand it, and demand it.

Appendix 1: List of Witnesses

Wednesday, September 21, 2022

- Karen Hogan, Auditor General of Canada, Office of the Auditor General of Canada
- Carey Agnew, Principal, Office of the Auditor General of Canada
- Stephanie Moores, Director, Office of the Auditor General of Canada
- Bonnie Brayton, Chief Executive Officer, The DisAbled Women's Network of Canada
- Sarah McLeod, Human Rights Officer, The DisAbled Women's Network of Canada
- Anna Cameron, Research Associate, Fiscal and Economic Policy, The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, As an Individual
- Lindsay Tedds, Associate Professor, Economics, Scientific Director, Fiscal and Economic Policy, The School of Public Policy, University of Calgary, As an Individual

Wednesday, September 28, 2022

- Gerri Sharpe, President, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
- Amanda Fletcher, Senior Policy and Research Analyst, GBA+, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
- Melanie Omeniho, President, Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak
- Lisa J. Smith, Senior Director, Governance, International and Parliamentary Relations, Native Women's Association of Canada
- Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director, Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, As an Individual
- Sarah Kaplan, Distinguished Professor and Director, Institute for Gender and the Economy, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, As an Individual

Thursday, October 6, 2022

- Yolande Bouka, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Studies, Queen's University, As an Individual
- Paulette Senior, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Women's Foundation
- Jane Stinson, Research Associate, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women

Thursday, October 27, 2022

- The Honourable Marci Ien, P.C., M.P., Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Women and Gender Equality Canada
- Frances McRae, Deputy Minister, Women and Gender Equality Canada
- Lisa Smylie, Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Women and Gender Equality Canada

Appendix 2: List of Briefs

The committee received the following briefs and follow-up information during this study:

- [Brief](#) from Kimberly Nesbeth, on behalf of Elevate Policy
- [Brief](#) from Egale Canada
- [Follow-up information](#) from the DisAbled Women’s Network of Canada
- [Follow-up information](#) from Lindsay Tedds, Scientific Director of Fiscal and Economic Policy at the University of Calgary
- [Follow-up information](#) from Wendy Cukier, Founder and Director of the Diversity Institute
- [Follow-up information](#) from Women and Gender Equality Canada

Appendix 3: Timeline of Developments Towards GBA Plus

- 16 February 1967** ● The Royal Commission on the Status of Women is established
- 7 December 1970** ● The final *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* is tabled in Parliament
- 11 June 1971** ● The first Minister of Status of Women is appointed
- 1 April 1976** ● The Office of the Coordinator, Status of Women becomes a departmental agency
- 1977** ● The *Canadian Human Rights Act* comes into force
- 10 December 1981** ● Canada ratifies the *United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*
- 17 April 1982** ● The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is signed into law as part of the Constitution of Canada
- August 1995** ● *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality (1995-2000)* is released
- 15 September 1995** ● The United Nations World Conference on Women results in the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*
- 8 May 2000** ● Canada adopts the *Agenda for Gender Equality*
- 19 October 2004** ● The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women meets for the first time
- 19 April 2005** ● *Gender-based Analysis: Building Blocks for Success* report is tabled by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women
- December 2005** ● The Expert Panel on Accountability Mechanisms for Gender Equality's final report, *Equality for Women: Beyond the Illusion*, is released
- 2007** ● The Treasury Board Secretariat encourages that GBA considerations be included in submissions to the agency
- 12 May 2009** ● The Auditor General reports on GBA implementation across various departments and agencies
- Late 2009** ● The Privy Council Office, the Treasury Board Secretariat and Status of Women Canada release the *Departmental Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis*
- 2011** ● GBA becomes GBA Plus and the wheel/flower model is introduced
- 4 November 2015** ● The first full Minister of Status of Women is appointed
- 2 February 2016** ● The Auditor General's report on *Implementing Gender-Based Analysis* is tabled
- 2016** ● The Government of Canada responds to the Auditor General's report with the *Action Plan on Gender-based Analysis (2016–2020)*
- 22 March 2017** ● Budget 2017 includes a Gender Statement for the first time
- 13 December 2018** ● The *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act* comes into force
- 13 December 2018** ● Status of Women Canada gains full federal department status as Women and Gender Equality Canada
- 31 May 2022** ● The Auditor General releases *Follow-up on Gender-Based Analysis Plus*





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