



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

Open and Transparent Agency

FRAMEWORK

2019-2022

EMPOWER.EQUIP.RESPOND.

Our Goal

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is open by design. To preserve trust in Canada's regulatory system for food, plants and animals, it proactively provides:

- Relevant, accurate and timely information
- Meaningful and transparent engagement opportunities

Preserving Trust

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is dedicated to safeguarding food, animals and plants, which enhances the health and well-being of Canada's people, environment and economy.

In delivering regulatory programs and services, the CFIA seeks to excel as a science-based regulator that is trusted and respected by Canadians and the international community. To realize this vision, public confidence in its activities and decisions is paramount.

The Open and Transparent Agency Framework 2019-2022 is part of the CFIA's commitment to increase openness and transparency, accountability and engagement.

Providing relevant, accurate and timely information to Canadians will allow them to better understand how and why the Agency's regulatory decisions are made and, in turn, use this information to make informed choices for themselves, their families and businesses.

Our Intent

Through its 'Open Government' initiative, the Government of Canada is increasing openness and transparency by asking all departments and agencies to take steps to maximize the release of government information to Canadians.

The CFIA recognizes and understands the right of Canadians to information, given the role it plays in protecting human health, animal welfare, the environment and the economy.

From the time its Transparency Agenda was first initiated in 2011, transparency and openness have been key considerations underpinning the CFIA's values. The Agency will continue to expand its existing transparency and openness practices and take on new ones to meet growing public expectations.

Over the long term, in addition to consistently making more information available, the CFIA will strive to become 'open by design' by embedding openness and transparency into all of its programs and services from their inception. Further, these efforts will be undertaken while maintaining a focus on users' needs.

Guiding Principles

The following principles will guide the CFIA's thinking during this new chapter in its Transparency Agenda. The Agency's approach to openness and transparency is:

Open by Design

- Openness and transparency are integrated throughout the entire lifecycle of CFIA programs, policies, services and enabling technologies. From inception, consideration is given to how information generated will be publically released.

User-Centric

- Relevant, accurate, and timely information is shared proactively with stakeholders, without waiting for an access to information request.
- Context is provided so that both potential possibilities and limitations of use are clearly communicated.

Inclusive

- Stakeholders and end-users are consulted and engaged as required to ensure openness and transparency initiatives are service-oriented and meet their intended objectives.
- The Agency maintains, and is seen as maintaining, its regulatory independence.

Diligent

- Consequences and impacts (both positive and negative) of providing information are fully considered and balanced prior to release.
- Private and confidential information belonging to individuals and third parties is protected.

Agile

- The CFIA's transparency agenda evolves and is responsive both to shifts in public and government expectations and changes in its operating environment as part of ensuring it is sustainably implemented.

Our Objectives

This framework provides the blueprint for specific actions the CFIA will take to visibly increase openness and transparency from 2019-2022, as part of its longer-term goal of becoming open by design.

It is also a foundational piece that supports the Agency in delivering on its five strategic priorities, as articulated in *Responding to Today, Building for the Future*:

- 1. **Modern regulatory toolkit**
- 2. **Integrated risk management**
- 3. **Consistent and efficient inspections**
- 4. **Digital-first tools and services**
- 5. **Global leadership**

The objectives of this framework are to:

- **Empower Canadians to make informed decisions by releasing relevant, accurate and timely information and providing more opportunities to engage with the Agency.**
- **Equip all stakeholders with information that will help them navigate the regulatory system and in turn comply with regulations.**
- **Communicate how the CFIA responds to incidents of non-compliance and explain how it makes regulatory decisions as part of its compliance, enforcement and scientific activities.**

The framework is composed of three themes that together map out a program of work to achieve these objectives:

1. EMPOWER

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2. EQUIP

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3. RESPOND

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1 EMPOWER

Expected Outcome

Canadians have more information about food safety, animal health and plant protection to help them make informed decisions, and increased opportunities to engage with the CFIA.

The public expects to be able to know how the Agency protects them from risks to their health and safety, and to have a say in and see how government policies, programs, and services are designed and delivered.

Therefore, the CFIA will:

- 1. Describe the Agency's role and educate the public about how it delivers its mandate**
- 2. Release science-based information, including results from CFIA science activities and research, that will assist Canadians to make informed decisions about the food, animal and plant products they purchase and consume**
- 3. Increase access to and transparency of consultation and engagement activities on the CFIA's regulatory, service and strategic initiatives.**

Informing and Engaging Canadians

The CFIA will work to consistently provide relevant information to Canadians, ensuring quality and timeliness. Resources currently available on the CFIA website include:

- General information on CFIA's vision, mission, mandate and role, and answers to common questions
- Information on current and completed consultations on our program, regulatory and modernization initiatives, as well as completed public opinion research
- Information about the CFIA's internationally-recognized scientific outputs and expertise, and its network of 13 laboratories across Canada
- The CFIA's Scientific Research Strategy 2018-2021, which maps out the Agency's approach to conducting research to support evidence-based decisions to safeguard food, animals and plants
- The CFIA's proactive disclosure page that shows completed access to information requests, as well as information about contracts, grants and contributions, and travel expenditures

EQUIP

Expected Outcome

Stakeholders have the information and tools they need to achieve compliance with regulatory requirements.

The CFIA, the public, industry, and other partners all play a role in contributing toward a culture of compliance. Providing access to information, tools, and opportunities to engage with the CFIA help promote compliance with rules put in place to protect Canada's food, plants and animals.

Therefore, the CFIA will:

1. **Provide up-to-date guidance to support compliance with regulatory requirements**
2. **Release scientific information and tools that can be used to influence compliance and regulatory decisions**
3. **Release more information about the CFIA's international and market access activities**

Promoting Compliance

Protecting food, plants, animals and human health is a shared responsibility and the CFIA works with industry and other stakeholders to achieve this.

Resources the CFIA already provide on their website include:

- 'Notices to Industry' that provide information to industry and stakeholders about changes to CFIA programs and services, and upcoming consultations
- The 'My CFIA' portal that provides convenient and secure access to online services
- The CFIA's 'Guidance Document Repository' that provides guidance to regulated parties about program and regulatory requirements
- Operational guidance and a toolkit for businesses as part of supporting regulated parties to comply with new regulations under the *Safe Food for Canadians Act*.
- Interactive tools that act as references to support regulatory compliance, such as the Industry Labelling Tool

RESPOND

Expected Outcome

Canadians can see how and why the CFIA takes action to safeguard their interests as part of enhancing their well-being, and that of the environment and the economy.

The CFIA takes a preventative, risk-informed approach to target and manage non-compliance. The CFIA has a number of tools it can use to respond to non-compliance.

Therefore, the CFIA will:

1. **Release more complete information about regulatory processes, actions and decisions**
2. **Communicate outcomes of compliance and enforcement actions across all three areas regulated by the CFIA – food, animals and plants**
3. **Demonstrate how the CFIA applies a risk-informed approach to protect the well-being of Canadians**

Delivering Our Mandate

The CFIA will expand information about its compliance and enforcement activities and general operations. Information currently available on the CFIA website includes:

- Information about our inspection capacity: Annual full-time equivalents (FTE) dedicated to safeguarding food, animals and plants
- Food recall warnings which provide information on food recalls and allergy alerts.
- Quarterly reports for Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) issued under the *Health of Animals Act* and *Plant Protection Act*, and information about suspended and cancelled certifications, licences and registrations
- Prosecution Notices to provide notification of charges laid by the CFIA for offences under legislation and regulations it enforces
- Prosecution Bulletins that provide information on convictions obtained
- 'Monthly Reportable Disease Reports' that provide information on the number of confirmed farmed herds or flocks affected by reportable animal diseases in Canada



**Open. Transparent.
Accountable.**

The CFIA is committed to demonstrating its achievements as it implements this framework. The Agency will publish an overview of its plans each year, as well as an annual report outlining its progress.