

Review At a Glance



Review of the ECCC Respect Bureau – Joint Audit and Evaluation Engagement

The Respect Bureau came into existence on February 1, 2018 and serves as ECCC's organizational Ombuds office. Its mandate is to provide a safe place where all ECCC employees can raise, discuss, and seek help to address work-related concerns or issues without fear of judgement and reprisal. There are 6 types of services offered. These include Ombuds, coaching, facilitated discussions, workplace dialogue, exit interviews, and training. Respect Bureau employees conduct activities in accordance with 4 guiding principles: confidentiality, independence, impartiality and informality.

In the [Twenty-Ninth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada](#) (August 2022), the Clerk of the Privy Council stated that taking care of employee health and well-being and delivering results for Canadian should be the top priorities of departments. The report emphasized that there is a need to create safe and collaborative working spaces where anyone can speak up and get the support they are looking for.

The Respect Bureau is an important strategic enabler in supporting the department in achieving its mandate and priorities. Its ultimate goal is to support employees in fulfilling their day-to-day responsibilities in a respectful, healthy workplace.

What the review found

During the 4-year period covered in this report, ECCC's Respect Bureau activities have been implemented to foster and support the promotion of a respectful workplace. A governance structure has been established with a terms of reference document and clear reporting relationship to the Deputy Ministers. In addition, partners are identified and being leveraged to support the delivery of the Respect Bureau's mandate. Officials are undertaking communication and outreach activities, which are important elements in supporting mandate achievement. The Respect Bureau is meeting its mandate and Ombuds Standards of practice and processes and tools are in place to support service delivery.

The review identified areas for improvement that, once addressed, will reinforce an already well-functioning Respect Bureau as it continues to achieve its mandate. These include:

- reviewing and updating the documentation of roles and responsibilities within the Respect Bureau
- enhancing strategic planning practices
- developing communications and outreach plans more strategically, based on identified systemic issues and emerging departmental needs



- refining performance indicators and strengthening reporting on activities and trends

Recommendations and management response

The following recommendations are directed to ECCC's Ombuds and Director, Respect Bureau, as the senior departmental official responsible for the Respect Bureau.

Recommendation 1

The Respect Bureau should review and update the documentation of roles and responsibilities and review its strategic and communication planning practices to ensure that its work plans are linked to its mandate and priorities and adequately resourced, and that the communications materials provide the best information on its services and how it can help employees navigate workplace issues.

Management response

The Ombuds and Director, Respect Bureau agrees with the recommendation. The Respect Bureau will review and update the documentation of roles and responsibilities and the strategic and communication planning process to ensure that work plans are linked to the mandate and priorities. This will ensure that the resources and efforts support the effective delivery of our services and lead to expected outcomes.

Recommendation 2

The Respect Bureau should refine its performance indicators and strengthen reporting on activities and trends, to ensure that it has the information needed to determine whether it is operating as efficiently as possible and has the required resources to meet its mandate and provide timely information to key partners in the Department

Management response

The Ombuds and Director, Respect Bureau agrees with the recommendation. The Respect Bureau will review and refine its performance indicators to strengthen how we measure operational efficiency, including resource allocation. In reviewing our current approach, we will ensure that our performance management strategy demonstrates how our resources and activities are aligned to our mandate. We will also review our reporting approach on activities and trends to support the provision of more regular and timely feedback to our partners. This will help ensure that resources and efforts are effectively aligned and help us determine whether we have the required resources to meet our mandate.

About the review

The objective was to assess the extent to which Respect Bureau activities were effective in achieving the goal of promoting a respectful workplace, free from harassment, discrimination or violence. The review covered the four-year period from the Respect Bureau's creation in February 2018 up until the end of FY 2021 to 2022. The focus was on governance and strategic planning, communication and outreach, and management and performance.