

# Evaluation of the Department's efforts towards Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

The Department<sup>1</sup> has implemented various measures to advance commitments to Reconciliation. These efforts are not limited to a specific program or strategy but represent a myriad of ways in which the Department has demonstrated a commitment to Reconciliation through various tangible actions.

## About the Evaluation

The evaluation assessed efforts towards Reconciliation, including the departmental vision, common understanding, cultural awareness, governance structures and processes, investments and resources, and opportunities. The evaluation was conducted in phases to disseminate information throughout, generate conversations and provide senior management with evidence-based information for decision-making.

## Key findings

- Overall, the Department has clear objectives regarding Reconciliation. However, clear guidance, expectations, language, and tools are needed to cohesively and consistently operationalize efforts at every level.
- While Reconciliation-related learning activities positively impacted many employees, gaps in the awareness and use of learning tools were identified. Additional training and varied learning approaches were suggested to enhance cultural awareness and increase participation in training.
- The Department has made efforts to create or modify governance structures, resulting in a decentralized and complex system. Clarity in roles and responsibilities could improve decision-making and approval processes.
- Leadership responsibilities are dispersed across all employees. While progress is being made to codify responsibilities through internal accountability mechanisms, more support is required.
- Coordination, collaborations, co-operation and communication exist in certain regions and sectors of the Department. Nevertheless, silos contribute to misunderstandings, confusion, and duplicated duties.
- Funding to support the Department's efforts towards Reconciliation is diverse and spread across sectors and regions. Although the exact spending figures are not available, there are challenges regarding the sufficiency and sustainability of resources and the flexibility in applying policies. The awareness of the available transfer payment funding mechanisms for Indigenous Recipients is limited.

## Recommendations

The evaluation demonstrated that the Department has taken meaningful steps in advancing Reconciliation. Building on this foundation the evaluation offers four recommendations to further strengthen the Department's Reconciliation efforts:

- 1 enable a stronger understanding and implementation of the vision for Reconciliation
- 2 expand employees' cultural awareness and competency
- 3 strengthen the Department's governance structures for decision-making, accountability, and communication
- 4 explore opportunities to support Reconciliation through increased financial guidance, flexibilities, tracking and performance measurement

<sup>1</sup> In September 2025, pursuant to Order in Council 2025-0639, the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) was transferred from a special operating agency within DFO to the Department of National Defence (DND). Recommendations for the CCG Commissioner have been transferred to DND.