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The Interdepartmental Inclusive Science Initiative

Implementation Strategy for Science Based Departments and Agencies Inclusive Science Guidelines

December 2025

Canada

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : [L'Initiative interministérielle sur la science inclusive : stratégie de mise en œuvre des lignes directrices en matière de science inclusive pour les ministères et organismes à vocation scientifique]

Cat. No. M4-285/2-2025E-PDF (Online) / ISBN 978-0-660-97854-3

Table of Contents

Abbreviations

ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
ADMSTC	Assistant Deputy Minister Science and Technology Community
CFIA	Canadian Food Inspection Agency
CSPS	Canada School of Public Service
DM	Deputy Minister
DMA	Associate Deputy Minister
DMSTC	Deputy Minister Science and Technology Community
HC	Health Canada
IISWG	Interdepartmental Inclusive Science Working Group
IS	Inclusive Science
I-STEM	Interdepartmental Indigenous Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (I-STEM) Cluster
IISI	Interdepartmental Inclusive Science Initiative
NCB	National Coordinating Body
NRCan	Natural Resources Canada
PC	Parks Canada
SBDA	Science-Based Departments and Agencies
VP	Vice President
OCHRO	Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer
TBS	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Disclaimer

This document is intended to support the coordinated planning and comprehensive implementation of the Interdepartmental Inclusive Science Guidelines (hereafter referred to as Guidelines) while promoting transparency, accountability, and consistency among various stakeholders across Science Based Departments and Agencies (SBDAs).

How to read this document

The SBDA Inclusive Science Guidelines Implementation Strategy (hereafter referred to as Implementation Strategy) should be used in tandem with the SBDA Inclusive Science Guidelines. The Implementation Strategy is structured to support specific stakeholder groups, who should refer to the key activities outlined therein. Implementation of the key activities in the Guidelines should be adapted to each department and agency's operational context.

1. Context and Background

The Implementation Strategy has been created to support coordinated planning and implementation of the Inclusive Science Guidelines across Science-Based Departments and Agencies (SBDAs). This document is intended to serve as a roadmap for the practice of inclusive science across departments and agencies. It is expected that all federal SBDAs will adapt the Guidelines to meet the specific needs of their respective departments and agencies and ensure accountability in their response to the Clerk's Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service.

This Implementation Strategy outlines the strategic steps, resources, tools, responsibilities, and timelines needed to embed inclusive science practices across SBDAs. The overall objective of this implementation strategy is to translate the high-level recommendations in the Guidelines into actionable measures to build a resilient and inclusive science environment that benefits people living in Canada. To promote the successful integration of the Guidelines across SBDAs, a phased approach, as stated in Section 3.1 of the Guidelines, is recommended. Key activities include:

- Knowledge sharing and capacity building.
- Dissemination and engagement.
- Development of department and agency level action plans to integrate the Guidelines into policies and programs.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

The implementation of the Guidelines is directed by principles of transparency, accountability, reciprocal and ethical engagement, diverse representation, cultural competence, ethical use of technology and data, continuous learning and improvement, and reconciliation as detailed in Section 3.2 of the Guidelines. Successful adoption and implementation of Inclusive Science practices ultimately relies on clear metrics, accountability, and the weaving of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA), Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus), and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in all stages of scientific work. Additional tools and frameworks to guide implementation of the Guidelines are found in Section 4.3 of the Guidelines.

2. Governance and Oversight: Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Implementation Partners

The Interdepartmental Inclusive Science Working Group (IISWG) is represented by Vice Presidents (VPs) or Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs) of science, designated representatives (including managers, directors, directors general, scientists, and policy advisors). The IISWG is supported by the Deputy Minister (DM) Science and Technology Community (DMSTC), and the DM Champion for Racialized Employees.

2.1.1 National Coordinating Body

The DM Champion for the Science and Technology Community, the Interdepartmental Inclusive Science Initiative (IISI) ADM Champions, and the Chairs of the IISWG will form the National Coordinating Body (NCB) of the IISI.

- The NCB will provide strategic guidance and oversight to the IISWG activities and lead, support, and monitor the implementation of the Guidelines across the SBDAs.
- The IISI ADM Champions will provide strategic guidance and oversight to support the DMSTC and Chairs of the IISWG in decision-making related to the working group activities. The Champions will meet the Chairs of the IISWG regularly and inform their deputy heads, DMSTC, Assistant Deputy Minister Science and Technology Committee (ADMSTC), and Science ADMs/VPs about the group's activities.
- The DMSTC will consolidate department and agency reports into an annual report to the Clerk.
- Science ADMs/VPs representing SBDAs will oversee the strategic direction and advise senior management to support the IISI. Their group will meet biannually, with meetings chaired by the IISI ADM Champions.
- The Chairs of the IISWG will oversee the day-to-day operations for the IISWG, which comprises science practitioners and policy experts representing the SBDAs. The Chairs of the IISWG will meet regularly with departments or agencies representatives of the working group and report to the IISI ADM Champions about the group's activities.
- Designated department or agency representative in the IISWG will participate in the working group activities, contributing to, and providing feedback on, draft documents, and organizing events. Representatives will collaborate with inclusive science subject matter leads in their departments and agencies to provide expertise and guidance to inform the activities of the IISWG.

It is recommended that each department and agency work with their Science ADMs/VPs and a designated representative to oversee the implementation of the Guidelines. Departments and agencies may have different organizational structures, capacities, and priorities across SBDAs and may require various levels of flexibility and adaptability.

Coordination will be in the form of virtual meetings and working sessions to share insights on challenges and opportunities, ongoing Inclusive Science initiatives, and best practices and discuss how to set Inclusive Science targets and measure success. The IISWG can establish subcommittees or working teams to focus on specific aspects of the implementation of the Guidelines where necessary.

2.2 Central Reporting

It is recommended that departments and agencies be responsible for developing their own implementation plans and reports. The IISI plans to seek the support of central agencies in the future to support the effective implementation of the Guidelines.

In addition, other key stakeholders and their implementation roles are detailed in the Inclusive Science Guidelines Section 1.3. Stakeholder roles are centred around four science

activity priority areas for advancing scientific outcomes through inclusive science practices. The priority areas are:

- The design of Inclusive Science activities.
- The creation of Inclusive Science work environments.
- The reporting and dissemination of scientific outcomes.
- Specific guidelines for weaving Indigenous Knowledge Systems with Western Science.

Additional details regarding the priority areas can be found in the Guidelines under Section 2.1. For targeted stakeholder recommendations, see priority areas Sections 2.2 - 2.6.

3. Implementation Plan

3.1 Tools for Capacity Building, Dissemination and Engagement

For the effective implementation of the Guidelines, awareness and capacity building are essential. This includes developing departmental and interdepartmental stakeholder-specific capacity-building programs that provide staff with the knowledge and skills needed to advance inclusive science, as described below. In addition, specific recommendations on training and capacity building can be found in the Guidelines, Sections 2.3.4, 2.4.3, and 2.5.6.

3.1.1 Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building Sessions

To be effective in the implementation of the Guidelines, it is important to increase awareness of the inclusive science principles through information sessions, and conduct periodic capacity-building sessions for key stakeholders in the departments and agencies in charge of science activities and outcomes. The following outreach activities are recommended:

- The IISWG will host interdepartmental stakeholder-specific knowledge sharing sessions to discuss the guidelines, implementation strategy, and reporting metrics.
    - the IISWG secretariat will work with its members to develop a generic training guide that can be contextualized by various departments and agencies.
    - sessions can be organized biannually with additional sessions organized at the department and agency levels, if necessary.
    - the IISWG is working with the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) to develop an Inclusive Science Curriculum. Upon completion of the inclusive science curriculum, future training sessions can be done in collaboration with the CSPS using the inclusive science curriculum.
- Departments and agencies are also encouraged to host capacity building/awareness sessions, as needed, to introduce the Guidelines to staff and to map out the department and agency-level implementation approach.
    - appropriate units, such as the HR units of the departments and agencies, can lead the sessions.

- the sessions can be organized in collaboration with science ADMs or VPs in the different departments and agencies.
- the generic training guide created by the IISWG can be contextualized to suit the department and agency training needs.
- the IISWG members will act as facilitators or resource persons to provide any support needed during the training sessions.
- the sessions can be organized at least once a year, during which action plans, opportunities, and challenges are identified, reviewed, and analyzed.

The Science ADMs/VPs and the designated representative of the IISWG are encouraged to work within their departments and agencies to organize the training sessions to increase awareness of the Guidelines. SBDAs may leverage existing training programs or outreach mechanisms to promote the use of the Guidelines. Departments and agencies are encouraged to use interactive tools to facilitate training sessions.

3.1.2 Tools for Dissemination and Engagement

This section outlines the strategies and existing tools that can support effective engagement and dissemination of the Guidelines.

- Leveraging Existing Infrastructure and Mechanisms
  - SBDAs can utilize existing engagement strategies and activities to implement the Guidelines. This can include common departmental mechanisms, such as communications teams, to disseminate broad, consistent messaging and post updates and resources on intranet carousels to increase visibility.
- Promoting Consistent, Cross-Departmental Messaging
  - SBDAs can develop and share common messaging across departments and agencies, especially within similar portfolios (e.g., Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada).
  - SBDAs can use common communication mechanisms (e.g., communications teams, intranet, speaking points) to promote alignment across departments and agencies.
  - SBDAs can target stakeholders with amalgamated information to streamline engagement and reduce duplication.
- Facilitating Engagement and Dialogue
  - SBDAs can host townhall-style meetings or open discussion sessions to foster dialogue and transparency, and encourage opt-in outreach to allow staff to engage voluntarily and meaningfully.
  - engagement and dialogue can be done by empowering networks and working groups to host their own sessions and discussions tailored to their communities.
- Supporting Cross-Sector Collaboration (Branch, Directorate, etc.) and Knowledge Sharing

- SBDAs can establish working groups that represent all sectors (branch, directorate, etc.) to break down silos and gather granular insights.
- SBDAs can promote cross-sector (branch or directorate) knowledge sharing and regular updates on Inclusive Science best practices.
- SBDAs can encourage sector (branch or directorate) collaboration to maintain momentum and build collective capacity.

- Engaging Leadership and Governance Structures

Internalize messaging and strategy through deputy heads and senior executives. Recognize that Science ADM/VP-level engagement may be optimal for stakeholder-specific meetings, balancing reach, and relevance.

- Championing Engagement

SBDAs can leverage DM-level champions and the I-STEM cluster to maintain momentum and visibility, especially as senior leadership changes.

3.2 Developing Department and Agency Level Action Plans

Departments and agencies are encouraged to develop action and engagement plans, and policies tailored to their specific contexts, ensuring alignment with broader federal priorities on inclusion, diversity, and reconciliation outlined in the Guidelines. Additionally, departments and agencies are encouraged to embed IDEA, GBA Plus, and weave IKS into their respective department or agency science strategies and make linkages to the Guidelines (where applicable) rather than developing new standalone action plans. For a detailed description of the Inclusive Science policies and principles, as well as other Government of Canada policies and principles that align with this activity, refer to Section 1.2 of the Guidelines. The following practical steps can inform the development of department and agency-level action plans. SBDAs are encouraged to:

- Develop department and agency-specific action plans that align with the existing priorities.
- Develop department or agency-specific structured strategic and operational road maps to outline specific tasks and/or initiatives to guide tailored and measurable integration of the Inclusive Science Guidelines into ongoing programs, organizational policy, and practices.
- Develop specific and clear objectives and assign responsibilities and resources to promote accountability and adaptability of the Inclusive Science Guidelines within respective departments and agencies.
- Evaluate the integration and adoption process of the Inclusive Science Guidelines, document lessons learned and adjust the plan accordingly.

Lessons can be learned from the experiences of Parks Canada and Health Canada on how they are integrating the Inclusive Science principles in the revised PC Science Integrity Directive and Antiracism in Science Action Plan, respectively. Each department and agency's action plan and integration process should reflect their specific needs and operational requirements.

3.3 Communication and Outreach Strategy

3.3.1 Communication Structure

SBDAs are encouraged to collaborate with their communications sectors (branch or directorate) to report progress and activities at the departmental or agency level. The ADM of NRCan Communications and Portfolio Sector and CFIA VP, Communications and Public Affairs will provide support and oversight for this process. A key component of effective communication amongst SBDAs is continuous and consistent dissemination. For effective support and uptake, and efficient communication of the Guidelines among a diverse group of SBDAs, reporting should begin at the highest level possible (e.g., ADM or VP). This approach can be refined annually.

3.3.2 Opportunities for Effective Communication

It is important that SBDAs acknowledge the current realities of federal science environments and capitalize on feasible actions. This document serves as a starting point for evolving practices and priorities. SBDAs are encouraged to:

- Embrace uncertainty and evolution as part of the process; clarity will develop over time. The priority with any communication or outreach strategy is to promote a shift in federal science to recognize the value of inclusiveness in enhancing current practices and outcomes.
- Prioritize efforts based on strategic value and feasibility, rather than attempting to do everything at once.
- Integrate input from various levels of government to build a comprehensive and efficient interdepartmental strategy.
- Facilitate cross-departmental coordination to ensure Inclusive Science implementation reflects shared goals while respecting departmental priorities.

3.4 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting

This section discusses expectations regarding compliance, monitoring, reporting, and evaluation. For a detailed description of the reporting metrics, refer to Section 3.3 of the Guidelines.

3.4.1 Compliance, Monitoring, and Evaluation

SBDAs are encouraged to integrate monitoring and reporting activities into existing federal reporting mechanisms, such as:

- Annual DMSTC report to the Clerk, which now includes Inclusive Science content.
- GBA Plus reporting.
- Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) and Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) reporting streams.
- Inclusive Science Initiative using the Inclusive Science Reporting Metrics Form.

Based on the areas of priority outlined in Section 2.1 of the Guidelines, a phased approach can be used to promote implementation where SBDAs report progress incrementally.

3.4.2 Reporting Approach and Frequency

Reporting should be done in a principle-based, delegated approach. Federal documents like Many Voices, One Mind emphasize high-level action plans and delegate reporting responsibilities to departments and agencies. This approach avoids vague commitments by encouraging meaningful implementation mechanisms.

For details on reporting frequency, consult the Inclusive Science guideline reporting metrics in Section 3.3.1 of the Guidelines. It is expected that departmental and interdepartmental stakeholders identified in the Guidelines will complete the reporting metrics in Section 3.3.1 at the reporting frequency specified.

The reporting document will be made available internally on the Interdepartmental Inclusive Science web page, currently being developed.

3.4.3 Reporting Requirements

Regarding reporting metrics as outlined in Section 3.1 of the Guidelines, the following are recommended for the SBDAs:

- The Guidelines provide tailored recommendations and best practices for stakeholders driving scientific work within the federal government. To ensure effective reporting and accountability, stakeholders are encouraged to focus on the content assigned to them and report through their IISWG representatives to IISI at the frequency assigned to them in the Guidelines.
- Draft a generic annual report to show the status of implementation.
- Provide department or agency level update on the Guidelines implementation through the SBDAs Communications sector (branch or directorate).
- Report back through existing department and agency channels.

3.4.4 Annual Review of Implementation Strategy

To promote having a robust implementation plan in place, it is recommended that the strategy be reviewed annually (suggested in April of each year). An iterative approach incorporating interdepartmental solicitation of feedback and lessons learned will build a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the continuous improvement of the Inclusive Science Guidelines Implementation strategy.

4. Recognition and Incentive

Inclusive Science Excellence Awards and Recognition have been established to recognize and celebrate innovation and achievement. The Inclusive Science Excellence Awards and Recognition will be hosted annually as part of the National Inclusive Science Dialogue to recognize government employees who have demonstrated excellence in achieving inclusivity in science through a nomination process. Selection will be based on a set of criteria developed by an Excellence Awards and Recognition Team. During this ceremony, SBDAs will:

- Share case studies and best practices of Inclusive Science.
- Highlight success stories.

The nomination forms will be available on the Interdepartmental Inclusive Science web page being developed. Departments and agencies will receive a nomination callout from the ADM Champions and the Excellence Awards and Recognition Team.

5. Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies

Risk management is a critical component of the Implementation Strategy because it observes the practical, sustainable, and responsive risks and mitigation strategies that can be applied to the complex and diverse realities of federal science environments. The risks, challenges, associated likelihood, impact, and mitigation strategies related to the implementation strategy are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Risk Management and Mitigation Strategies

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation strategy
Structural and organizational differences across departments and agencies may impede standardized implementation.	Medium	Medium	Conduct organizational assessments; adapt implementation plans to align with departmental governance models.
SBDAs Priorities vary, limiting opportunities for unified approaches.	Medium	Medium	IISWG facilitate cross-SBDA dialogue to identify shared objectives; promote flexible implementation models.
Policy fatigue among teams due to the volume of existing directives may hinder uptake of new initiatives.	High	High	Align new guidance with existing frameworks; streamline messaging to reduce administrative burden.
Variability in mandates and internal capacity across SBDAs complicates	High	High	Establish interdepartmental working groups; tailor approaches to reflect

interdepartmental coordination.			departmental contexts and capacities.
Concurrent initiatives and departmental reorganizations may deprioritize Inclusive Science-related efforts.	High	High	Integrate Inclusive Science planning into broader change management processes; engage senior leadership to promote alignment.
Limited resources and operational capacity may constrain effective implementation.	High	High	Advocate for dedicated central funding and staffing; prioritize actions based on capacity; explore partnerships to augment resources.
Cultural change required by Inclusive Science Guidelines is substantial and may take time to embed sustainably.	High	High	Implement phased change strategies; provide ongoing support and capacity building; monitor and celebrate progress milestones.

6. Legal Framework

Departments and agencies are encouraged to identify any legislation that fortifies the implementation of the Guidelines. Specify how the Guidelines align with or support existing laws or regulations. The following legislations additionally guide the Inclusive Science Implementation Strategy:

1. Canadian Multiculturalism Act
2. Employment Equity Act
3. Constitution Act, 1982 – Section 35 (Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada)
4. A detailed list and description of the policy drivers and principles can be found in Section 1.2 of the SBDA Inclusive Science Guidelines. Collectively, these policies, principles and legislative frameworks establish obligations to promote diversity, equity, and the recognition of Indigenous rights.

7. Implementation Timeline

Table 2: Important Milestones and Deadlines

Milestone	Description	Responsible party	Deadline
Approval	Formal approval of the Inclusive Science Guidelines and Implementation Strategy.	ADMSTC DMSTC	October 2025

Release	Public release of the SBDA Inclusive Science Guidelines and Implementation Strategy.	NRCan and CFIA	November 2025
Commencement of Implementation	Initial implementation of the SBDA Inclusive Science Guidelines' effective date.	All ISWG SBDAs	December 2025
Training	Training for key stakeholders.	NCB and IISWG	January 2026
First Formal Review	Review of Implementation Strategy.	All IISWG SBDAs	March 2027