

SAI Canada's Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation Examples  
for the 21st Assembly Meeting of INTOSAI WGEA (July 2022)

### Funding Climate-Ready Infrastructure

In 2022, SAI Canada published a performance audit assessing whether selected federal funding programs contributed to more resilient, less carbon-intensive, and inclusive infrastructure investments. This audit was chosen recognizing that more resilient, less carbon-intensive infrastructure will lower economic and human costs by Canadians in the future as a result of climate change effects. Information on expected greenhouse gas emission reduction and climate resilience outcomes from projects and public, transparent reporting on spending is key for demonstrating how these projects aim to meet their objectives and keeping Canadians informed.

The audit looked at how Infrastructure Canada (the federal department responsible for infrastructure) designed and administered the Climate Lens requirement since its launch in 2018. The audit scope also included the integration of Canada's Gender-based Analysis Plus tool and United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals considerations in infrastructure investment decisions. This audit methodology included interviews with department officials, document reviews, walkthroughs of key processes, and data analyses.

SAI Canada found that the department poorly managed climate-related information submitted by project proponents. The audit also reported that the weakened requirements under the second version of the tool hindered Infrastructure Canada's ability to assess and combine at the program level the expected climate change mitigation and resilience outcomes of funded projects.

See infographic on [page 4](#).

See full report here: [https://www.oag-bvq.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_cesd\\_202204\\_04\\_e\\_44024.html](https://www.oag-bvq.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_cesd_202204_04_e_44024.html)

### Lessons Learned from Canada's Record on Climate Change

In 2021, SAI Canada published a report that looked at 3 decades of Canadian action and inaction on climate change. This is not an audit report. Instead, this report provides a historical perspective on Canada's action to address climate change mitigation and adaptation in order to inform parliamentarians. In conducting this work, the audit office reviewed previous audit recommendations and interviewed senior climate experts, former government officials, and former commissioners.

This report identifies trends in Canada's efforts to fight climate change, along with 8 lessons learned from Canadian accomplishments and mistakes:

1. Stronger leadership and coordination are needed to drive progress toward climate commitments
2. Canada's economy is still dependent on emission-intensive sectors
3. Adaptation must be prioritized to protect against the worst effects of climate change
4. Canada risks falling behind other countries on investing in a climate-resilient future
5. Increasing public awareness of the climate challenge is a key lever for progress
6. Climate targets have not been backed by strong plans or actions

7. Enhanced collaboration among all actors is needed to find climate solutions
8. Climate change is an intergenerational crisis with a rapidly closing window for action

For each lesson, the report identified challenges, opportunities, and questions for parliamentarians to consider, some of which draw on international examples.

The report concludes that Canada has consistently failed to meet the strong emissions targets that it has set in the past three decades. Despite this past, SAI Canada notes that with strong, concerted action from parliamentarians and Canadians, Canada can move past its poor track record on climate change and meet its international climate obligations.

See infographic on [page 5](#).

See full report here: [https://www.oag-bvq.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_cesd\\_202111\\_05\\_e\\_43898.html](https://www.oag-bvq.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_cesd_202111_05_e_43898.html)

### **Perspectives on Climate Change Action in Canada—A Collaborative Report from Auditors General**

In 2018, SAI Canada published a report summarizing audit findings on climate change action from the reports presented by provincial audit offices and the Office of the Auditor General of Canada to the provincial, territorial, and federal legislatures. The overall objective of this project was to determine the extent to which federal, provincial, and territorial governments in Canada were meeting commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change. Considering the shared responsibilities for climate change in Canada, auditors general agreed that, by working together, they could examine these issues more comprehensively. This project is the first time that so many audit offices in Canada coordinated their work in this way.

The collaborative approach draws on methodology developed for international collaborative audits as well as previous work completed in Canada in 2010, where six provincial audit offices and the federal audit office conducted audit work on electronic health records. The approach was a flexible model whereby each participating audit office chose its own objectives and incorporated a set of common questions to report on its government's climate change actions, including adaptation strategies, and targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The participating audit offices worked together to develop a set of common questions related to mitigation and adaptation actions that could be included in their individual reports. In some cases, audit work covered more than the minimum questions.

The collaborative report found:

- A number of common shortcomings across governments which are hindering Canada's overall efforts to address and adapt to climate change.
- More than half of governments did not have overall targets for reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. Of those that did, only two were on track to meet them.
- Most governments either had an adaptation plan that lacked basic details, such as timelines, or that they had no plan at all.
- Limited coordination on climate change among government departments and agencies, and that monitoring progress and regular public reporting were also limited.

See full report here: [https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_otp\\_201803\\_e\\_42883.html](https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_otp_201803_e_42883.html)

### **Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change**

In 2017, Canada published a performance audit that focused on the extent to which federal organizations had made progress in adapting to climate change by examining federal leadership efforts and whether departments and agencies implemented the Federal Adaptation Policy Framework. This audit is important because federal leadership supports public and private sector institutions as they prepare Canadians to adapt to climate change impacts and the cost of inaction is estimated to greatly exceed the cost of taking action.

During the audit, SAI Canada administered a questionnaire to the 19 selected organizations to assess their efforts and plans on climate change adaptation, and understand their perceptions of the resources and support provided by the Government of Canada. Organizations were required to provide documentary support for all responses related to departmental or agency efforts and plans. Interviews were also conducted with department and agency officials and reviewed documents. In addition, the audit team conducted an overview of other countries' frameworks on climate change adaptation.

Overall, the audit found that Environment and Climate Change Canada did not provide adequate leadership and guidance to other federal organizations to achieve adaptation objectives. Additionally, the audit reported that few federal departments and agencies assessed or acted on the climate change risks related to their areas of responsibility.

See full report here: [https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl\\_cesd\\_201710\\_02\\_e\\_42490.html](https://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_cesd_201710_02_e_42490.html)

## Funding Climate-Ready Infrastructure

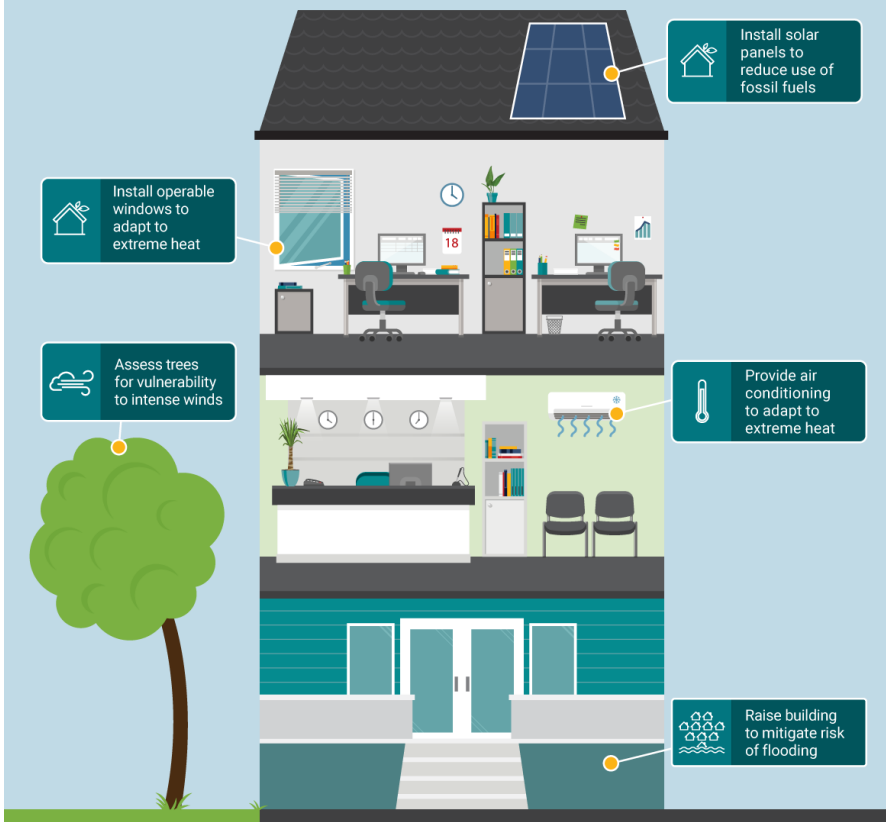
Reports 2022



Infrastructure Canada was able to determine whether some investments under the 4 funding programs we examined will result in more resilient and less carbon-intensive infrastructure, but it could not do so for all investments.

### WHAT IS CLIMATE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE?

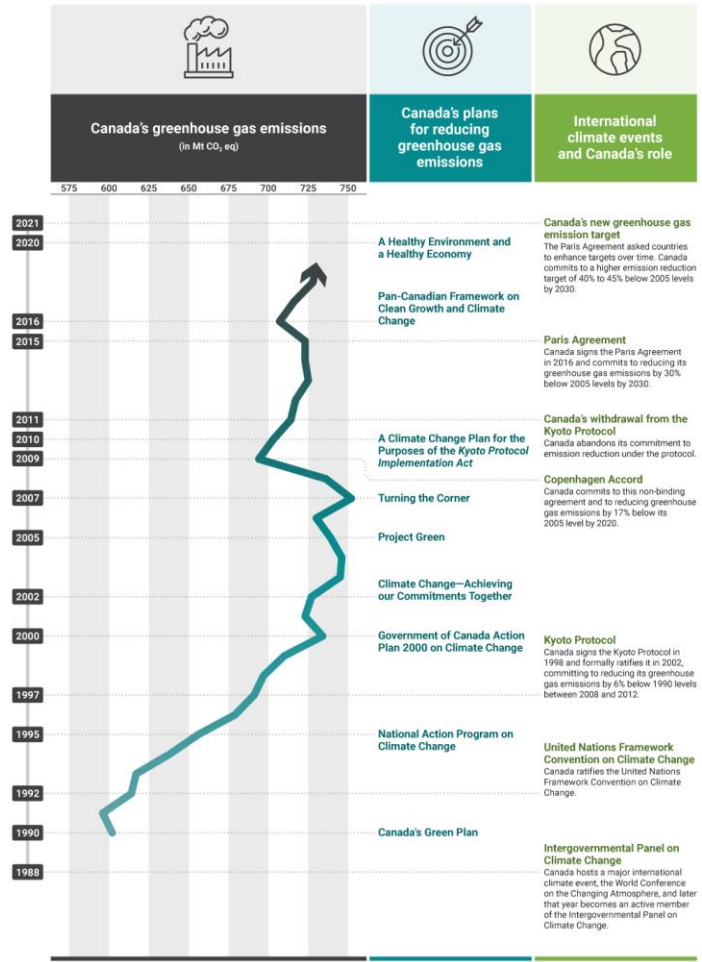
Climate change effects, such as droughts and floods, are becoming more severe and more frequent. Buildings and other infrastructure can be adapted to mitigate these risks. Adaptations that make buildings carbon neutral also help mitigate climate change by working to reduce its effects.



Office of the Auditor General of Canada  
Bureau du vérificateur général du Canada

Source: [Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2022.](#)

# Lessons Learned from Canada's Record on Climate Change Commitments



Source: [Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2021.](#)