



Horizontal Evaluation of the National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking

Evaluation Report

June 2024



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada

Canada 



Read this publication online at: www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2024-ntrnl-dt-prcmnt-p1/index-en.aspx

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the National Strategy.

Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Évaluation horizontale de la Stratégie nationale de lutte contre la traite des personnes.

To obtain permission to reproduce Public Safety Canada materials for commercial purposes or to obtain additional information concerning copyright ownership and restrictions, please contact:

Public Safety Canada, Communications
269 Laurier Ave West
Ottawa ON K1A 0P8
Canada

communications@ps-sp.gc.ca

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Ministers of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, 2024.

Catalogue number: PS4-323/2024E-PDF

ISBN: 978-0-660-72489-8

Table of contents

Background _____	4	Prosecution pillar _____	31
Evaluation purpose and methodology _____	5	Partnerships pillar _____	38
Combatting human trafficking _____	7	Financial resources _____	44
Continued need _____	8	Performance measurement _____	45
Empowerment pillar _____	10	Conclusions _____	46
Prevention pillar _____	17	Recommendations _____	48
Protection pillar _____	25		

Background

The National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking (National Strategy) is a five-year (2019-2024) strategy aiming to strengthen Canada's response to human trafficking. It follows from the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking which expired in 2016.

The National Strategy is a whole of government endeavour that aligns efforts with the internationally recognized pillars of prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership. Canada has added a fifth pillar, empowerment, to enhance support and services to victims and survivors of human trafficking.



The activities under the pillars are the responsibility of many partner departments and agencies.

Several partner departments and agencies received funding for activities specific to the National Strategy. These include, Public Safety Canada (PS), the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre (FINTRAC), Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC).

Other departments and agencies supported efforts under the National Strategy with pre-established funding. These partners are the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Global Affairs Canada (GAC), Justice Canada (JUS), and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

Additionally, Statistics Canada (StatsCan) receives funding from PS for activities that support the National Strategy, including data collection and research projects.

Evaluation purpose and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the National Strategy. The evaluation covered the period from fiscal year 2019-2020 to 2022-2023 and was conducted in accordance with the Treasury Board *Policy on Results* and the *Directive on Results*.

Interviews

60 key informant interviews were conducted with 67 individuals, including staff from all partner departments and agencies, funding recipients, provincial representatives, and subject matter experts.

Literature and program document review

Program documents and literature (e.g., government reports, articles, academic research) were reviewed.

Performance and financial data

Available performance data, including interim activity reports and annual performance reports from funded projects, was reviewed and program financial data was analysed.

Limitations

- At the time of the evaluation, the National Strategy was in the fourth of five years of funding; therefore, some activities are ongoing and outcome data is not readily available. Evaluation results generally reflect work completed by March 2023, with some exceptions where work completed during fiscal year 2023-2024 was included.
- Due to the breadth of partners and activities, the evaluation was unable to assess activities in depth but instead provides an understanding of activities that have occurred and a preliminary assessment of the results.
- There was limited performance data available to measure the impact of activities under the National Strategy. To mitigate this challenge, the evaluation team supplemented available data with evidence provided during interviews.

Combatting human trafficking

Human trafficking is a crime that involves recruiting, transporting, transferring, receiving, holding, concealing, harbouring, or exercising control, direction or influence over a person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Human trafficking is a lucrative crime, with the International Labour Organization estimating profits of approximately \$236B USD per year. Human trafficking can be more profitable than other crimes as victims can be continually exploited and the crime is often underreported.

Human trafficking can happen domestically, however, it is not constrained to one country or region, instead it occurs all over the world and frequently crosses borders. Combatting human trafficking requires a whole-of-government approach, including collaboration from other levels of government, industry, civil society, and international partners. Like Canada, countries around the world have adopted the United Nations' four pillars to structure their responses and actions, modifying them to suit their context as needed.



Continued need

Human trafficking disproportionately impacts those facing vulnerabilities



Finding: There is a continued need for the National Strategy to prevent the trafficking of individuals, support victims and survivors, and improve Canadian law enforcement’s ability to apprehend and prosecute perpetrators.

Experts agree that the full scope of human trafficking is unknown due to the under-reported nature of the crime and barriers preventing some victims from reporting to law enforcement, including concerns for their safety, fear of deportation, and a distrust of law enforcement due to past experiences.

According to Statistics Canada, the period between 2018 and 2019 experienced the largest single year increase in police reported incidents of human trafficking, from 355 incidents in 2018 to 546 incidents in 2019. Since then, the detected incidents of human trafficking have remained relatively consistent, with a marginal decrease in 2022.

Traffickers target individuals based on vulnerabilities such as socioeconomic status, age, immigration status, and marginalized identities, making them more susceptible to exploitation. Particularly at risk are women and girls, Indigenous populations, immigrants and newcomers to Canada, youth in foster care, people with disabilities and 2SLGBTQI+ individuals.





Recent trends in human trafficking

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on human trafficking victims, survivors and programs alike. In particular, the increased use of the internet and social media during the pandemic amplified opportunities for traffickers to target at-risk individuals. The increased risk faced by certain populations during the pandemic, coupled with a decrease in access to services, created further opportunities for victimization.

Other trends in human trafficking were noted. The *2022 United Nations Global Report on Trafficking in Persons* indicated that displacement caused by climate change and conflict in particular countries, such as Ukraine, has increased the insecurity of individuals, leaving them vulnerable to human trafficking.

Key informants shared that in Canada, regional trends such as the housing and economic crises have increased risk of human trafficking for certain populations, particularly Indigenous women. Key informants also indicated that the issue of trafficking for the purposes of forced labour has become more prominent in their work in recent years.

Empowerment pillar

Supporting victims and survivors

Under the empowerment pillar, the Government of Canada aims to support victims and survivors to regain control and independence and to encourage action by industry partners.

National strategy activities:

- Provide increased funding for community-led empowerment programs (PS, WAGE) and engaging youth through Hackathons (PS);
- Establish an advisory committee comprised of victims and survivors of human trafficking (PS);
- Build a centralized website to consolidate information on human trafficking and promote different federal programs and funding opportunities (PS); and
- Improve ethical behaviours and preventing human trafficking in federal procurement supply chains through establishing expectations and requirements on human and labour rights for federal procurement suppliers, and developing tools to ensure compliance with these requirements (PSPC).



Funding for community-led empowerment programs



Finding: The National Strategy has contributed to community capacity to better support victims and survivors in regaining control and independence through funded projects. Some positive impacts of these projects have been reported.

The National Strategy committed to providing increased funding to community-led empowerment programs to address the root causes of human trafficking as well as harms experienced by victims and survivors. Under the empowerment pillar, the Government of Canada funded 54 projects to support victims and survivors of human trafficking¹. Populations served by these projects were at-risk and vulnerable individuals including teenage girls, women, Black, Indigenous and other people of colour (BIPOC+), 2SLGBTQI+, and victims and survivors.

Of the 54 projects funded under the empowerment pillar, 42 were funded by WAGE for a total investment of approximately \$14 million over five years. The projects were intended to support organizations in developing and implementing promising prevention and intervention practices.

Nearly half of the projects provided resources, wraparound holistic services, and trauma-informed peer support programming for survivors and at-risk populations. The other half implemented promising prevention practices for survivors and at-risk populations.

Projects served at-risk populations, with many serving more than one population. Most projects identified survivors as the key population (62%), followed by Indigenous populations (45%), youth (38%) and non-status/refugees/immigrants (31%).

¹ There were an additional seven projects funded under the prevention pillar by PS.

PS funded the remaining 12 community-based empowerment projects, for more than \$5.3 million over four years to empower victims and survivors of human trafficking to regain their independence and prevent re-victimization. These projects provided trauma-informed and culturally relevant services to support victims and survivors. For example, organizations offered housing, employment training, education, peer support groups and counselling, to victims and survivors.

While some PS funding recipients reported the number of known victims or survivors that accessed trauma-informed and culturally-relevant services, it is difficult to understand the breadth of the impact given data gaps with respect to the number of people affected by human trafficking.

Internal key informants and most funding recipients revealed that the projects funded under the empowerment pillar had positive impacts on victims and survivors, helping them to regain control of their lives. At the time of the evaluation, projects were ongoing, making it too early to assess their full impact.

I asked her a question on how she felt today...the lady said she felt not alone, that's a powerful statement coming from a survivor. She was isolated and lost, now she has friends and a group. - Funding Recipient

In addition to the empowerment projects, PS funded two youth hackathons to raise awareness of human trafficking. These hackathons had a combined one-time value of \$181,000 to engage youth and find technology-based solutions to combatting human trafficking. Students, faculty and community partners reported gaining insight into the issue and developing a community of practice to continue tackling human trafficking.

These projects brought together 113 youth participants from four provinces (Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Nova Scotia). The majority of participants were female (59%), while 41% were male. The youth hackathons developed a total of 25 emerging practices. It was not clear if these practices were implemented or shared following the events.

Survivor advisory committee



Finding: The National Strategy aimed to empower victims and survivors through a Survivor Advisory Committee, however as of April 2024 it has not been established.

As part of the National Strategy, PS committed to establishing a Survivor Advisory Committee comprised of survivors and victims of human trafficking, to provide a formal platform so they may offer advice and guidance on the Government's efforts to address human trafficking.

While PS has drafted all supporting material for the committee, it had not yet been established as of April 2024.



Adopting a victim-centered and survivor-informed strategy ensures that the rights and dignity of victims, including their well-being and safety, are at the forefront of all efforts to prevent and respond to human trafficking. Fostering survivor-informed programs and policies helps effectively meet the needs of those impacted by human trafficking and prevents instances of re-victimization. The *Report on Human Trafficking of Women, Girls and Gender Diverse Individuals* from the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, released in February 2024, specifies the importance of ensuring the National Strategy is intersectional and developed in collaboration with victims, survivors and those with lived experience.



Centralized social programming website



Finding: PS has provided a centralized website for human trafficking information and funding opportunities to support those working with victims and survivors. Results on the awareness and availability of this and other similar tools were mixed.



PS created a centralized website as a landing page for its national human trafficking public awareness campaign, *“It’s Not What it Seems”*, that was launched in 2021. The website consolidates information on human trafficking and promotes federal programs, as well as shares funding opportunities offered by different levels of government. It includes general information such as definitions, relevant legislation, statistics, publications and reports, as well as information about the Human Trafficking Hotline and other support resources for victims and survivors.

Key informants and some funding recipients shared that the National Strategy provided information, tools and resources to victims and survivors through funded projects and the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. However, a few funding recipients were unaware of these tools and resources. Between 2021 and 2023, the website was visited nearly 338,000 times with 4,477 outbound connections to the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline.

Ethical expectations and requirements for federal suppliers



Finding: PSPC's revised Procurement Code of Conduct and new contracting clauses strengthen efforts to prevent human trafficking in federal procurement supply chains.

The Government of Canada is one of the largest public buyers of goods and services in Canada. PSPC has undertaken activities to prevent human trafficking in federal procurement supply chains.

Tools and resources

In May 2021, a risk analysis of human trafficking, forced labour and child labour in PSPC's supply chains was completed. The assessment revealed that the most at-risk goods, with the highest risk of exposure to human trafficking, forced labour and child labour, were associated with the procurement of items such as rope, cable, chain, and fittings. Most suppliers in at-risk categories do not have adequate policies and procedures in place to address the risks of labour and human rights abuses in their supply chains.

In August 2021, PSPC revised its Code of Conduct for Procurement (the code), one of the crucial tools

that supports federal procurement suppliers and officers in their work. The code now includes human and labour rights expectations for PSPC suppliers and their sub-contractors. The updated code allows Canada to terminate a contract with a federal supplier if they, or their subcontractors, have been engaged in any form of human trafficking. The updates were informed by the fundamental conventions of the International Labour Organization and the *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*.

PSPC also implemented anti-forced labour contracting clauses, in November 2021, allowing Canada to terminate a contract if a supplier has been engaged in forced labour and human trafficking. The clauses protect PSPC from financial liability if imported goods are not released at the border because their importation is prohibited under the forced labour prohibition in the *Customs Tariff Act*.

Engagement activities

Supplier awareness and engagement is essential in addressing labour exploitation in supply chains.

In 2021, PSPC consulted with industry, suppliers, experts and other government departments prior to updating the code. The consultations enabled PSPC to gather information and raise awareness of forced labour and human trafficking.

In 2023, PSPC delivered two supplier engagement sessions on ethical procurement to raise awareness on supply chain risks, outline departmental human and labour rights priorities, and promote ongoing dialogue with the supplier community. Key informants revealed that the engagement sessions were well received by the supplier community. In addition, PSPC began developing educational materials for suppliers and contracting officers.

Finally, PSPC has been supporting the ongoing work on Canada's supply chain legislation, particularly the *Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act*, to increase industry awareness and transparency about forced labour and child labour by compelling certain entities and government institutions to publicly report on what they are doing to address these practices in their supply chains.



Prevention pillar

Increasing awareness and building capacity

Under the prevention pillar, the Government of Canada aims to increase awareness and build capacity to prevent human trafficking in Canada and abroad.

National strategy activities:

- Launch a national public awareness campaign (PS) and support other new or pre-existing awareness campaigns, for different audiences (RCMP, ESDC, GAC) and implement pilot projects for at-risk youth to address the core drivers and risks of human trafficking and develop best practices (PS);
- Offer training to support awareness of human trafficking for government officials (IRCC, Department of National Defence (DND), RCMP, CBSA) and provide up-to-date information on federal government anti-human trafficking efforts (PS);
- Support anti-human trafficking efforts abroad through the Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program (GAC); and
- Enhance research and data collection (PS/StatsCan).



Increasing awareness



Finding: Efforts have been made to increase awareness of human trafficking among the Canadian public and vulnerable populations, though general awareness levels remain low.

In 2018, public opinion research found that human trafficking is largely misunderstood by the general public. Canadians were found to be confusing human trafficking with similar crimes, such as human smuggling. Additionally, Canadians were most likely to think traffickers were a stranger or a criminal instead of individuals the victim may know from within their family, socially or through work.

To increase general awareness about human trafficking, PS released a national awareness campaign in February 2021 on multiple social media platforms.



Primary target audience: Canadian youth and young adults ranging from 16 to 25 years of age.



Secondary target audience: Parents and guardians of Canadian youth, ages 13 to 19.

To measure the impact of the national awareness campaign, PS undertook public opinion research in fiscal year 2021-2022. The data from the research found that over half of Canadians (55%) felt they *somewhat* understood human trafficking. This was a 2% increase from the pre-awareness campaign research suggesting there is a continued need for general awareness.

In addition to the PS campaign, there have been other awareness campaigns including: RCMP's "I'm Not for Sale" campaign; ESDC's campaigns to provide information to temporary foreign workers on human trafficking; and, GAC's awareness measures provided through the Domestic Worker Accreditation program.

Other forms of prevention have occurred through sessions and projects for youth. For example, FINTRAC has held the "Day in the Life of an Analyst" workshop for high school aged youth to raise awareness of human trafficking and the resources available to young people. PS funded pilot projects for at-risk youth to increase awareness of human trafficking and associated risks and red flags, through the development of products such as games, workshops, websites, and presentations.

Research highlights the importance of awareness and preventative measures to combat human trafficking. Some suggested ways to increase awareness include:

- Further awareness campaigns for all populations including the general public and at-risk groups, with a focus on labour trafficking and the profile of perpetrators; and,
- Improving awareness campaigns for Indigenous populations and migrants in Canada.



Building capacity



Finding: Training is available for federal government officials who may encounter human trafficking in their work; however, there is a need for performance data on the effectiveness of training programs, as well as improved coordination among federal departments and agencies to minimize overlap of training initiatives.

Anti-human trafficking training programs are available for federal government officials².

- **IRCC** offers training for officers in Canada processing applications for victims of trafficking in persons and training sessions to overseas immigration officers at various missions internationally to help officers to identify potential cases of trafficking in persons when processing visa applications for entry to Canada.
- The **RCMP** provides training for internal and external law enforcement, including the Survivor-led Human Trafficking Detection training course available on the Canadian Police Knowledge Network.
- **DND** delivers training for new Canadian Defence Attaché personnel on what human trafficking is, how to identify signs and how to report concerns.

While training programs are available and there is some evidence of uptake, there is limited data on the effectiveness of these programs. Key informants shared a need for a more coordinated approach to training to better understand what is currently available and to prevent duplication as new programs are developed. Additionally, there is a need to ensure that available training takes a victim-centered approach.

² CBSA also delivers training for federal government officials. It falls under the prosecution pillar and is discussed on page 34.



To build capacity across sectors, PS hosted three webinar series, which aimed to engage the academic, technology, and financial sectors and include lived experiences from victims and survivors of human trafficking. Themes for the webinar series were “Strengthening Relationships”, “Education and Awareness of Human Trafficking” and “Building Effective Training Tools Across Sectors”.

In fiscal years 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 each webinar series included three sessions throughout the year. Attendance was highest at the first session in each series, with 443 attending in 2021-2022 and 347 attending in 2022-2023. In the second session there were 200 attendees in 2021-2022 and 150 attendees in 2022-2023. While the number of attendees was not recorded for the third session in 2021-2022, there were 135 attendees in 2022-2023. In 2023-2024, there were two webinars in the series with a total of 433 participants.

With the number of participants decreasing over the series, it may be worthwhile reviewing how information about these webinars is shared to determine the impact on attendance.

Post webinar surveys were administered to understand the impact of the sessions; however, response rates were very low (7-8%), hence data may not be representative of participants’ experiences. Nonetheless, most respondents agreed that the webinar increased their knowledge of human trafficking, helping them to gain a deeper appreciation of emerging trends, issues, gaps and best practices in the fight against human trafficking. Survey respondents also believed that the information received through the webinar would help inform current and/or future work.

Supporting anti-Human trafficking efforts abroad



Finding: Partnering with international organizations and governments, particularly on programs to raise awareness, has helped build the capacity of other countries to prevent vulnerable individuals from being trafficked. Opportunities exist to support further collaboration.

Established in 2009, the Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program (ACCBP), administered by GAC, supports capacity building in a variety of areas through partnerships with international organizations, close allies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). To date, this has primarily included capacity building projects focused on preventing and countering human trafficking in Latin America and the Caribbean. This has included efforts to:

- Strengthen institutional capacity in the Americas to combat human trafficking, with a focus on corruption, money laundering and transnational organized crime;
- Enhance criminal investigations and access to justice for Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities in Mexico who have been disproportionately impacted by human trafficking ventures;
- Support the efforts of seven members of the Organization of American States (OAS) to prevent, investigate and counter criminal activity linked to the exploitation of Venezuelan refugees and migrants;
- Strengthen Trinidad and Tobago's capacities to effectively prevent and counter online child sexual abuse, exploitation and related crimes; and,
- Strengthen the capacities of state and civil society actors in the fight against all forms of human trafficking (including those for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labour) and other related crimes, in northern Central America and in Colombia.

In addition to the ongoing initiatives funded by the ACCBP, there has been other cross-border collaboration through: programs such as the Canadians Victimized Abroad Program; awareness raising efforts focused on prevention, protection and the rehabilitation of trafficking victims through a gender and human rights approach; as well as, participation in international working groups, such as the Ad hoc Working Group on the Principles to Guide Government Action to Combat Human Trafficking in Global Supply Chains.

Collaboration has taken place with a variety of partners, including international organizations, such as the United Nations Organization on Drugs and Crime, Lawyers without Borders, and the Justice Education Society, and governments, such as Mexico, Colombia, and other Latin American countries.

While international collaboration has occurred, there have been some challenges in boosting engagement as these activities are not funded under the National Strategy. Key informants shared that there is a need for increased resources to support further collaboration. Increased funding could:

- Allow for the development of awareness campaigns for law enforcement and local populations in foreign states.
- Maximize the potential of the ACCBP to fund trusted partners to enhance awareness, assess international laws and how to apply them, build law enforcement capacity internationally and build anti-money laundering and anti-corruption measures abroad to address issues related to illicit financial flows stemming from trafficking in persons and exploitation from forced labour.



Enhancing research and data collection



Finding: Efforts to improve data collection on human trafficking have progressed, however there is a significant need to increase reporting efforts to address data gaps.

Facilitated by a letter of agreement with PS, initially signed in 2020 and renewed again in 2023, Statistics Canada has been working to support data development, collection, analysis and dissemination, on the topic of human trafficking.

Statistics Canada draws from a number of data sources to report on the extent of human trafficking in Canada in their publication Juristat Bulletin – Quick Fact. The report relies on two main sources of data for their analyses: the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey, which collects information on criminal incidents that have come to the attention of law enforcement; and the Integrated Criminal Court Survey (ICCS), which collects data on adult and youth cases that reach criminal courts in Canada.

The reliance on police and court data means that the reports are crime-focused, and do not include much information about the victims and survivors of human

trafficking. Additionally, it is known that incidences of human trafficking are under-reported to police, as victims and survivors may fear reprisal from their traffickers, have a distrust of authorities or may be concerned about deportation.

The lack of victim-focused data and known underreporting has been mitigated by including additional sources of data, such as those from the Human Trafficking Hotline, in Statistics Canada reports. Supporting victim service providers to collect information on the victims served and the form of violence experienced, including human trafficking, could be beneficial in better understanding the extent of human trafficking in Canada.

Without a better understanding of the extent of human trafficking in Canada it is challenging to measure the ultimate impact of the National Strategy.

Protection pillar

Addressing gaps in support and providing culturally-informed services

Under the protection pillar, the Government of Canada aims to address gaps in existing supports and provide culturally-informed services.

National strategy activities:

- Support victims and survivors through Justice Canada's Victims Fund (JUS);
- Develop multi-sectoral training tools (PS) and establish guidelines for front-line community workers and NGOs (formerly the national case-management standard);
- Protect foreign nationals by:
 - Establishing unannounced onsite inspections for employers of temporary foreign workers (ESDC);
 - Enhancing capacity to better detect suspected human trafficking cases through the immigration system (IRCC); and
 - Reviewing existing immigration provisions and processes to determine if legislative, regulatory or policy changes are required (CBSA).



Support through the Justice Canada Victims Fund



Finding: Justice Canada, through the Victims Fund, is supporting NGOs and victim serving organizations to implement measures to protect victims and survivors. While there is a positive perception of the impact of these funded projects, there are challenges with respect to the duration of funding.

In addition to the National Strategy's investments through WAGE and PS for community-led projects, Justice Canada provides \$1M per year in support of human trafficking-related projects and activities through the Victims Fund. While the activities supported through Justice Canada's funding contribute to the National Strategy, the funding is leveraged through other mechanisms.

These projects and activities provide trauma-informed services and training to enhance and promote the physical, psychological, and social well-being of victims and survivors of human trafficking. They also support the development and delivery of trauma-informed training for prosecutors and first responders, including police officers, immigration officers, and medical professionals to enhance the detection, investigation, and prosecution of human trafficking incidents.

Populations served vary by project, with some targeting at-risk populations, such as members of Indigenous and BIPOC+ communities, immigrants, foreign nationals and newcomers to Canada, and 2SLGBTQI+ victims and survivors, as well as vulnerable, marginalized and underserved populations across Canada.

Key informants had a positive perception of the impact of these projects, particularly that projects included offerings to address the needs of victims such as trauma-informed services and Indigenous-led counselling. Currently the Victims Fund provides funding to projects on a 3-year cycle. Key informants, including partner departments, funding recipients and external subject matter experts, indicated that there is a need for a longer funding duration to allow organizations to accomplish their goals.

Multi-sectoral training tools and guidelines for front-line community workers



Finding: The guidelines and multi-sectoral training tools for front-line community workers, committed to in the National Strategy, have not yet been developed. Efforts are underway within PS to include information about available training resources on the centralized website.



PS committed to developing multi-sectoral training tools as well as Guidelines for Front-line Community Workers. These tools and Guidelines were meant to be culturally relevant, trauma-informed and gender-responsive for front-line community workers in targeted sectors such as hospitality, transportation, health care and foreign workers. The guidelines will be available on PS's website by the end of 2024.



Similar to the challenges of coordination and duplication with training for federal employees, stakeholders reported that the capacity of front-line workers to detect and identify suspected cases of human trafficking could be improved with enhanced coordination of available training resources and tools. For example, an accessible central repository of all available and planned training tools could help to better share what currently exists among partners, informing them of what is available and reducing duplication as new training is developed.

PS intends to address this need through a webinar series on multi-sectoral training tools for front-line workers and the subsequent posting of available tools on the PS website, beginning in March 2024.

Trafficking for the purposes of forced labour



Finding: There are measures in place to protect foreign nationals in Canada from trafficking. While challenges were identified, program areas have reviewed and implemented some improvement measures.

Labour trafficking, or trafficking for the purposes of forced labour, involves the control or exploitation of persons for their work or services. It can occur in many industries; however, it is more common in sectors that employ low-wage workers (e.g., agriculture, caregiving, hospitality, construction, etc.).

Migrant workers are vulnerable to being trafficked for the purposes of forced labour, as they are often not aware, or have limited understanding, of their rights in Canada and may think that forced labour does not happen here. As well, they may be reluctant to speak out due to fear of being penalized by their employer.

While there are a number of Government of Canada programs that support migrant workers and foreign nationals, the National Strategy aimed to enhance the employer compliance regime under ESDC's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) as well as enhance capacity to better detect suspected human trafficking cases through the immigration system.



Temporary foreign workers program

The TFWP is a program designed to respond to changing labour market conditions by: helping fill labour and skill shortages for Canadian employers; prioritizing jobs for Canadians and permanent residents; and, providing protections for migrant workers while they are in Canada.

Service Canada operates a tipline that allows workers to flag situations of abuse or misuse of the Program in a confidential manner. ESDC conducts employer inspections based on these tips, to help protect temporary foreign workers from abuse and exploitation. If ESDC and/or Service Canada find evidence of criminal activity, they refer the case to the appropriate law enforcement authority, be that the RCMP or CBSA.

Initiatives have been undertaken to: enhance the quality of inspection; improve inspection tools and mandatory training; enhance the tipline including adding in live agents; raise employers' awareness of their obligations; and, expand collaboration with consulates, provinces and local authorities.

Despite these improvements, certain challenges remain with inspections. This includes the continued reluctance of employees to speak critically of their employer for fear of reprisal, even with new regulations being introduced in Fall 2022 to help mitigate this concern.

Similar to the TFWP, IRCC manages the International Mobility Program (IMP), which enables employers to hire temporary workers to advance Canada's economic, cultural and other competitive advantages. Like the TFWP, the IMP operates a tipline and conducts employer compliance inspections to protect the safety of migrant workers.

If a migrant worker is experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse in their job while in Canada, they can apply for an Open Work Permit for Vulnerable Workers (OWP-V), issued by IRCC. While not specific to human trafficking, OWP-Vs are designed as a temporary, non-renewable permit to allow vulnerable workers to leave an abusive situation and maintain existing work authorization.

Foreign national victims of trafficking in persons in Canada

In order to protect vulnerable foreign nationals in Canada from all forms of human trafficking, IRCC issues Temporary Resident Permits for Victims of Trafficking in Persons (VTIP-TRPs). VTIP-TRPs provide out-of-status foreign nationals who are victims of human trafficking, and their dependents in Canada, with valid temporary

resident status for up to 180 days or longer for a subsequent TRP, which makes them eligible to apply for a work and/or study permit and gives them access to healthcare through coverage under the Interim Federal Health Program.

Additionally, IRCC contributes to detecting suspected human trafficking cases through the immigration system by conducting large-scale administrative investigations into human trafficking. These investigations can help to identify potential foreign national victims and/or perpetrators of human trafficking. By doing so, IRCC is in the position to collect the necessary evidence in support of administrative decisions and referrals to its enforcement partners (e.g., CBSA, RCMP) for possible criminal investigation and prosecution.

In 2019-2020, 19 large scale investigations were conducted and 10 were conducted in each fiscal year from 2020-2021 to 2022-2023.

Assessing existing immigration processes

To ensure that the current legislation and mechanisms in place minimize inadvertent re-victimization and re-traumatization of victims and survivors of human trafficking, including foreign national victims of forced labour and human trafficking, CBSA reviewed the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR), as well as other relevant legislation and policies. The IRPA and IRPR review led to one amendment of the regulatory framework governing immigration enforcement.

Additionally, CBSA is reviewing the differential impacts of gender-based violence, including human trafficking, throughout the immigration enforcement and inadmissibility policy frameworks. Updates to several immigration enforcement policy manuals have been made to ensure that immigration enforcement and inadmissibility policies account for specific considerations relating to victims and survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence.

Other legislative changes have been made. In particular, ESDC implemented regulatory amendments to the IRPR to protect workers. Specifically, the definition of abuse was amended to include a direct reference to “reprisal”, employers are now required to give workers a pamphlet on their rights, and employers are prohibited from charging or recovering recruitment fees.



Prosecution pillar

Increasing criminal justice system capacity

Under the prosecution pillar, the Government of Canada aims to increase criminal justice system capacity to identify and prosecute human trafficking cases.

National strategy activities:

- Support investigation and prosecution related work by:
 - Delivering bilingual training for law enforcement, prosecutors and criminal justice practitioners (CBSA, JUS, PS, RCMP);
 - Dedicating an expert group of border officials to develop strengthened strategies to combat human trafficking (CBSA);
 - Hosting an international conference to take stock of the progress made since the 2005 enactment of the Criminal Code's human trafficking offences (PS); and
- Enhance financial intelligence related to the laundering of proceeds of crime derived from human trafficking to support investigations (FINTRAC).



Law enforcement and criminal justice tools



Finding: Federal government, law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners have access to tools that may increase their awareness and understanding of the scope, scale, and sensitivities around human trafficking. It is not currently possible to conclude on the impact of these tools on human trafficking investigations and prosecutions.

Online training for law enforcement, prosecutors and criminal justice practitioners

There are training tools available to help improve awareness and understanding of human trafficking for the justice system. Examples are as follows:

- The Canadian Police College offers the *Human Trafficking Investigator* course, which is available to law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners from different jurisdictions across Canada, including the RCMP. The course includes training from Justice Canada which stresses the importance of building relationships of trust between law enforcement and victims in the course of a human trafficking investigation.
- The RCMP provides the *Introduction to Human Trafficking – National* course internally. The Survivor-led *Human Trafficking Detection Training* course, is also available and offered through the Canadian Police Knowledge Network.
- The RCMP and Justice Canada have also collaborated on handbooks, other written guidance material, and presentations addressing human trafficking.



- The CBSA provides training about human trafficking to new Border Service Officers in its *Officer Induction Training Program*, as well as a *Trafficking in Persons* course for all CBSA employees who may encounter a victim or perpetrator of human trafficking in their work.

As a result of insufficient performance data, it is not possible to draw conclusion on the impact these training courses have on human trafficking investigations and prosecutions. While available training supports were being used by the targeted groups, data on the number of trainees was not consistently available and did not include baselines, benchmarks or targets. Additionally, feedback from trainees on the quality and impact of the courses were not available.

Dedicated expert group

To facilitate information sharing and foster an awareness of the scope, scale, and sensitivities of human trafficking, the CBSA established a Dedicated Expert Group (DEG) in December 2019.

The DEG consists of policy and program experts from various programs at CBSA, who coordinate, consult and develop strategies to combat human trafficking. Since inception, the DEG has met monthly, to share information, develop products, and enhance knowledge exchange through occasional presentations from outside the CBSA. The DEG demonstrated an ability to facilitate discussions on trends, investigations, inland enforcement or any other mandate appropriate topic more quickly than going through the lengthier formal processes.

International conference

As a tool to enhance awareness and understanding of prosecution related human trafficking issues, PS committed to hosting an international conference in collaboration with Justice Canada. While there is evidence that some effort was made towards planning the conference for June 2021, it did not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial intelligence



Finding: Project PROTECT is an international financial intelligence best practice that has effectively supported investigations and prosecutions into suspected human trafficking.



Launched in 2016, Project PROTECT targets human trafficking by focusing on the money laundering aspect of the crime. This helps identify potential traffickers and support investigations which in turn, eases the burden of proof on victims in court. Project PROTECT is led by the Bank of Montreal and includes partners from the public, private, and non-profit sectors, such as FINTRAC, municipal, provincial and federal law enforcement, as well as an Indigenous police service, other Canadian banks, and technology companies.

FINTRAC plays a key role in helping to identify possible occurrences of human trafficking through the identification and analysis of financial transactions. As part of Project PROTECT, FINTRAC published public-facing operational alerts to raise awareness about indicators and red flags around transactions that could be related to human trafficking. For example, contextual indicators which may be related to human trafficking for sexual exploitation could be:

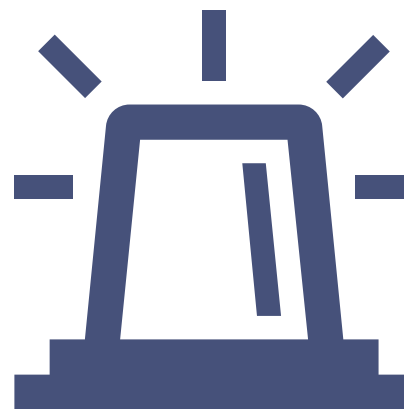
- Frequent payments of premium fees for online escort advertisements;
- Payments to online third-party accommodations or travel-booking websites;
- Payments, usually monthly, to multiple individuals or entities involved in residential rentals (e.g., landlords, property management, real estate agencies) or that reference rent or specific addresses.

Under Project PROTECT FINTRAC has collaborated with, or provided training to, many international stakeholders. FINTRAC's American counterpart, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), recently joined the project as a formal partner to enhance information sharing around human trafficking. FINTRAC is regularly asked to provide insight and expertise on the key role that financial intelligence plays in combatting human trafficking for sexual exploitation at conferences and through training sessions and workshops. FINTRAC further produced strategic intelligence to inform law enforcement and public sector partners on trends and developments in suspicious transaction reporting related to human trafficking.

While FINTRAC discloses financial intelligence to relevant law enforcement services, reporting on feedback or results from the investigation of cases is encouraged but not mandatory. Feedback and reported results are useful in identifying areas of improvement and increasing law enforcement participation in these activities will enhance FINTRAC's ability to identify those who benefit financially from human trafficking.

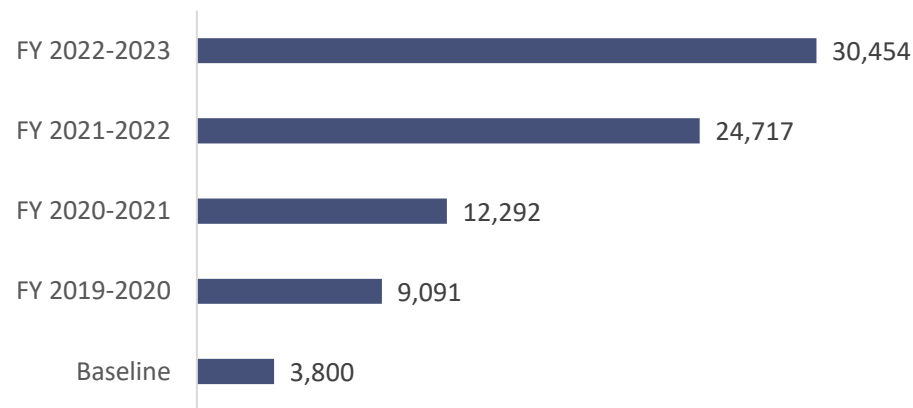
In fiscal year 2023-2024, FINTRAC's financial intelligence has been recognized by enforcement agencies in the media 10 times. Below are two examples:

- An OPP-led case which included local police in Ottawa, Kingston, and Akwesasne resulted in the arrest of four young adults on human trafficking and related charges.
- A York Police-led case which included Toronto and Peel police services, OPP, and CBSA, resulted in six people being charged on human trafficking-related charges and the conviction of three of these people.

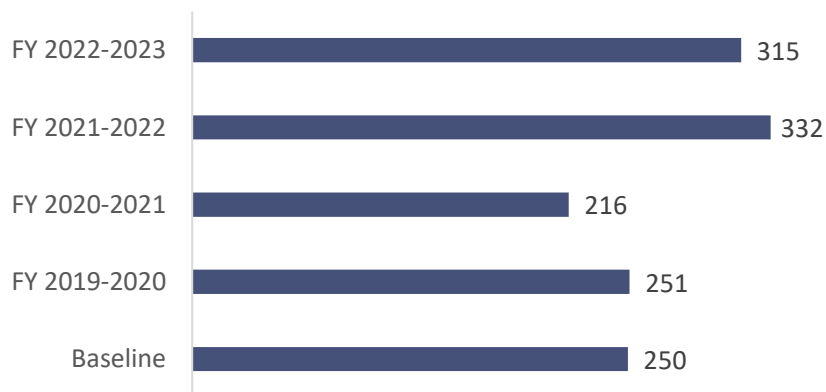


As a result of FINTRAC’s ongoing outreach and training efforts, as well as guidance provided to Canadian businesses on financial indicators, the number of suspicious transaction reports related to human trafficking have increased every year since the baseline was established in fiscal year 2018-2019. While this contributed to an increasing number of cases where financial intelligence has resulted in enforcement actions and prosecutions, investigative and enforcement resources are required to keep pace with the increasing volume of reports.

Suspicious transaction reports by fiscal year (FY)



Financial intelligence disclosures by fiscal year (FY)



Financial intelligence disclosures are important to help human trafficking investigations by providing information on individuals or businesses that investigators might not have known about otherwise. With exception of fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 which were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, FINTRAC met or exceeded their target of a 20% increase over the baseline, for financial intelligence disclosures regarding money laundering with respect to human trafficking.

Partnerships pillar

Building and improving national and international cooperation

Under the partnerships pillar, the Government of Canada aims to build national and international coordination and cooperation to address human trafficking.

National strategy activities:

- Work collaboratively with federal partners through the Human Trafficking Taskforce governance structure (led by PS);
- Host annual stakeholder gatherings and outreach meetings, including the private sector and the non-profit sector to best address emerging trends (PS);
- Strengthen the international engagement approach (GAC); and
- Appoint a high-profile advisor on human trafficking (PS).



Governance: working collaboratively with federal partners



Finding: Federal government partners are collaborating effectively, both through formal governance and informal mechanisms. Efficiencies could be found to allow for more strategic discussion.

The National Strategy is supported by a governance structure, which includes the working level Human Trafficking Taskforce, the Director General (DG) Steering Committee and the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) Roundtable.

Each level of governance includes a representative from all partner departments as well as Transport Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, Public Prosecution Service of Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

- The Human Trafficking Taskforce aims to meet quarterly to share information and oversee the implementation of the National Strategy.
- The DG Steering Committee meets semi-annually, as necessary, and provides strategic oversight and direction on the implementation of the National Strategy. The Committee also monitors departmental progress.
- The ADM Roundtable meets annually, as necessary, and provides strategic guidance on the National Strategy and Canada's efforts to combat human trafficking.

Additionally, the Taskforce terms of reference outline five task teams for specific issues. These include:

1) Research, Information Sharing and Data Collection; 2) Victim and Survivor Supports/Program Funding Coordination; 3) Communications, Public Awareness and Outreach; 4) Labour Trafficking and Emerging Issues;

and, 5) International. Task teams meet as required, with some task teams having sunset upon completion of their tasks and others having evolved.

Overall, key informants were satisfied with the governance structure, indicating that it was generally working well and that meeting frequency was appropriate. It was also found that the governance meetings, particularly the Human Trafficking Taskforce, have been assisting in creating networks and fostering collaboration and engagement, as well as information sharing.

A few challenges were identified with the Taskforce. In particular, some key informants thought that there were too many attendees, with approximately 30 to 50 in each meeting, making strategic discussions difficult; and that there could be increased connection between the Taskforce and the Federal Provincial Territorial (FPT) Working Group on Trafficking in Persons and others outside the Government of Canada.

Efficiencies in the Taskforce could be explored to address these challenges, allowing for more strategic discussion.



Engagement with other sectors



Finding: Intended partners are involved in the activities of the National Strategy, including relevant federal departments, provinces and territories (PTs), industry and Indigenous organizations and international partners.

The protection of victims of human trafficking is a shared responsibility, impacting all levels of government and all aspects of civil society. The federal departments and agencies responsible for the National Strategy engage with others to combat human trafficking.

- ✓ **PTs:** PTs are responsible for providing health and social services, emergency housing, and legal aid to victims and survivors and in some cases have established their own strategies and action plans to address human trafficking in their jurisdictions. Representatives from PT governments collaborate with federal partners through the FPT Working Group on Trafficking in Persons.
- ✓ **Indigenous organizations:** Indigenous women and girls are at increased risk of being targeted by sex traffickers, therefore the participation of Indigenous organizations in the National Strategy is important in ensuring the National Strategy is inclusive, representative and relevant to all Canadians. There was engagement with Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services Canada through the governance structure, as well as some ad hoc work with other Indigenous organizations and engagement through funded projects.
- ✓ **Industry and civil society:** Several key industries play a role in combatting human trafficking. Industries, such as the hospitality sector, airlines, and commercial truck drivers, are working towards providing training to help workers better understand and identify suspicious activity that may be related to human trafficking.

Federal partners reported engaging with a variety of industry partners including NGOs, academia, and stakeholders in the area of forced labour.

International engagement



International cooperation and engagement is essential to combatting human trafficking, as human trafficking affects virtually all countries globally. In addition to supporting capacity

building through the Anti-Crime Capacity Building Program, GAC leads efforts to leverage multilateral and bilateral partnerships in countering human trafficking.

In collaboration with federal partners, GAC is active in international efforts to counter human trafficking through partnerships including participation in international forums, advocating for Canada's interests in regional and multilateral processes, and through demonstrating Canada's leadership and innovation by sharing its best practices and lessons

learned, notably on gender and diversity mainstreaming, the use of financial intelligence to counter this crime, and ethical procurement practices, among others.

Considerable international engagement and collaboration has been occurring, however enhanced performance data to demonstrate the impact of this collaboration would be beneficial in determining the efficacy of the collaboration, and in turn, whether enhancements are warranted.

Two areas where further collaboration may be beneficial are the collection and sharing of disaggregated data between Canada, the United States and Mexico and more coordination with international partners to share data, information and best practices, particularly related to supply chain legislation and informing migrant workers and international students of their rights.

Appointment of a high-profile advisor on human trafficking



Finding: The National Strategy committed to appointing a high-profile advisor on human trafficking. While the position was initially filled, it has been vacant since September 2021.

As part of the partnerships pillar, the National Strategy committed to appointing a high-profile advisor on human trafficking to provide advice and recommendations to the GoC on anti-human trafficking efforts, to raise awareness on the issue domestically and internationally, and to share best practices.

In September 2019, the Minister of Public Safety appointed retired RCMP Assistant Commissioner and member of the Mohawks of Kanasatake, Shirley Cuillierrier, as Special Advisor to Combat Human Trafficking. Over the course of two mandates (fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021), the Special Advisor:

- presented to the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Trafficking in Persons and other organizations;
- advised the Commissioner of the RCMP on First Nations policing and relations with Indigenous communities; and,
- attended the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe meeting for Human Trafficking Rapporteurs/Advisors, as well as led the Canadian delegation at other international meetings and events.

Since the departure of Shirley Cuillierrier in September 2021, the special advisor position has been vacant.

Financial resources



Finding: According to key informants, the greatest areas in need of increased financial resources were the empowerment and prevention pillars to support victims and survivors. Further, stakeholders indicated a need for ongoing, stable funding to support community projects and the work of partner departments.

Financial data from the Departmental Results Report shows that between 2019-2020 and 2022-2023, the empowerment pillar received the most funding with \$15.5M allocated and \$13.1M spent over the four fiscal years. The prevention pillar was allocated \$8.2M and spent \$6.3M between 2019-2020 and 2022-2023.

There was a discrepancy in the planned and actual spending, with underspending of approximately \$7.2M (17.6%) across the five pillars between 2019-2020 and 2022-2023. The largest discrepancy occurred during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. It is likely that this is attributable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most recently, in 2022-2023, spending appears to be back on track.

Key informants indicated that additional funding is required for the empowerment and prevention pillars to support victims and survivors, raise awareness, address root causes of human trafficking, including structural systemic barriers, and focus on policy and legislation solutions.

Many key informants, including partner departments, funding recipients and external subject matter experts, indicated that there is a need for funding to be stable and ongoing to better support community organizations. This applies particularly to programs offering funding over three or four years. This call for stable funding was echoed by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women in its report on *Human Trafficking of Women, Girls and Gender Diverse Individuals*.

Performance measurement



Finding: The performance measurement narrative for the National Strategy would benefit from simplification.

Measuring the effectiveness of the National Strategy is challenging, in large part due to a lack of outcome related performance data. While most activities under the Strategy collected output related data, such as the number of individuals attending training, the number of products developed or descriptions of funded projects, outcome data to understand the impact of these activities was largely missing.

The performance measurement strategy included over 80 performance indicators for the National Strategy. In fiscal year 2022-2023, only 52% of indicators included data in the Departmental Results Report.

Given the depth and breadth of the activities included in the National Strategy, it may be beneficial to establish five-year action plans with particular areas of focus, including concrete, measurable activities and deliverables. This would allow for a simplified performance measurement narrative and the ability to focus on collecting outcome data to better understand the impact of these focus activities and further support decision making.



Conclusions

There is a tremendous amount of work occurring across partner departments to combat human trafficking through the National Strategy.



The National Strategy contributed to community capacity to better support victims and survivors through funded projects and a centralized website. It encouraged action by industry partners, including through revisions to PSPC's Code of Conduct for Procurement. The establishment of a survivor advisory committee led by a high-profile advisor would enhance efforts to ensure that work is survivor-informed.



Through awareness campaigns, training programs and anti-human trafficking efforts domestically and abroad, the National Strategy made progress toward preventing human trafficking. Despite this general awareness of human trafficking could be improved. While efforts to improve data collection on incidents of human trafficking have progressed, there is still a significant need to address gaps within the data.



Under the protection pillar, Justice Canada's Victims Fund provides culturally informed services to survivors and potential victims of trafficking on a three-year cycle, which could be increased to allow organizations more time to accomplish their goals. This pillar also includes the protection of foreign nationals through unannounced onsite inspections in the TFWP, the issuance of VTIP-TRPs and the conduct of large-scale administrative investigations to identify instances of human trafficking related to foreign national victims and/or perpetrators.



Federal government, law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners have access to tools that could help increase criminal justice system capacity to identify and prosecute human trafficking cases though the extent of their impact on human trafficking investigations and prosecutions is unknown. Project PROTECT has facilitated the enhancement of intelligence coordination around suspected human trafficking.






The National Strategy has helped to combat human trafficking by working with federal partners, PTs, Indigenous organizations, industry, civil society and international partners.

Overall, it would be beneficial to simplify the performance measurement narrative of the National Strategy, to ensure robust outcome data is available to support decision making and strategic discussions.

Recommendations

In collaboration with partner departments and agencies, the Senior Assistant Deputy Minister of the Crime Prevention Branch at PS, should:

-  Review and revise the performance measurement approach for the National Strategy, with a focus on reducing the number of indicators, collecting outcome data and simplifying the performance measurement narrative. (PS, with all partners)
-  Document and assess the feasibility of filling data gaps to better understand the extent of human trafficking in Canada. (PS, with support from StatsCan)
-  Continue to work toward appointing a high-profile advisor for human trafficking to ensure efforts under the National Strategy are victim-centered and survivor-informed, including working with survivor advisory committees. (PS)

Management action plan

Recommendation	Action planned	Planned completion date
<p>1. Review and revise the performance measurement approach for the National Strategy, with a focus on reducing the number of indicators, collecting outcome data and simplifying the performance measurement narrative. (PS, with all partners)</p>	<p>Convene a working group of National Strategy funded federal partners to review and revise the performance measurement approach in collaboration with departmental strategic planning/performance teams.</p>	<p>April 1, 2025</p>
<p>2. Document and assess the feasibility of filling data gaps to better understand the extent of human trafficking in Canada. (PS, with support from Statistics Canada)</p>	<p>Document and assess findings and lessons learned about how best to address the data gaps and better understand the extent of human trafficking in Canada; acknowledging the complexity of this task given the interdependencies with the collection of data related to organized crime, online child sexual exploitation and abuse, gender-based violence, and the safety and security of Indigenous peoples.</p>	<p>April 1, 2025</p>

Recommendation	Action planned	Planned completion date
<p>3. Continue to work toward appointing a high-profile advisor for human trafficking to ensure efforts under the National Strategy are victim-centered and survivor-informed, including working with survivor advisory committees. (PS)</p>	<p>Continue working with the Government of Canada to appoint a Chief of Advisor on Human Trafficking.</p> <p>Should a Chief Advisor be appointed by the Government of Canada, PS will support them in their role by assisting in the development of a workplan to provide advice to the Minister of Public Safety and the Government of Canada on anti-human trafficking efforts; including how to ensure policy is victim-centered and survivor informed.</p> <p>It is expected that the Chief Advisor would provide advice on the most appropriate, harm-free approach to engage with survivors.</p>	<p>April 1, 2025</p>