

# **Performance Audit of Biodiversity Conservation**

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Office of the  
Auditor General  
of Canada

Bureau du  
vérificateur général  
du Canada

# Overview

- Role of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada
  - Who we are
  - What we do
- Performance Audit of the 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada
  - How we conduct performance audits
  - Audit on biodiversity conservation in Canada
- References



# Role of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada



# Who We Are

- Office of the Auditor General of Canada
  - Financial Audit
  - Special Examinations
  - Performance Audit
- Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development
  - Creation of the position in 1995
  - Performance audits on E & SD
  - Environmental Petitions
- Auditees
  - Government of Canada Departments and Agencies
  - Crown Corporations



# What We Do

- Performance Audit
  - Independent, objective and systematic assessment
    - How well government is managing its activities, responsibilities and resources
    - Examination of the government's management practices, controls, and reporting systems
      - Based on public administration policies and best practices.
  - We do not question the merits of government policies



## What We Do (continued)

- Questions related to performance audit
  - Are programs being run with due regard for economy, efficiency, and environmental impact?
  - Does the government have the means in place to measure the effectiveness of its programs?
- Expected Results
  - Performance audits contribute to:
    - A public service that is effective
    - A government that is accountable to Parliament and Canadians



# Performance Audit of the 2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada





# How We Conduct Performance Audits

- Audits conducted in accordance with
  - Professional auditing standards; and
  - OAG policies
- Approach for assessment of performance
  - Establish audit objectives and criteria;
  - Gather the evidence necessary to assess performance against the criteria;
  - Report both positive and negative findings;
  - Conclude against the established audit objectives; and
  - Make recommendations for improvement.





# Relations with Auditees

- OAG Commitment
  - Makes an ongoing and consistent effort to understand the context in which entities do their work
  - Promotes open two-way communication
  - Acts in a professional and objective manner
- Start of the audit
  - The OAG formally notifies the entity(ies) of its intention to conduct an audit
  - We also request access to documents and information relevant for the subject under audit



# Planning the Audit

- Preliminary research
  - Public documents and documents provided by the entities
  - Interviews with subject matter experts
- Audit Plan Summary
  - Presents the objectives, scope, approach, criteria, and timelines of the audit
    - The audit objective is important
    - The final audit report will conclude positively or negatively against the objective
  - Meetings with entity officials to discuss the audit plan
  - The head of the entity acknowledges responsibility for the subject being audited and the terms of the engagement, including the suitability of criteria



# Scope of the Audit on Biodiversity

- Audit Objective
  - Role of the Environment and Climate Change Canada as National Focal Point
    - Leadership and Coordination
    - Reporting
  - Whether federal departments and agencies are working to meet Canada's 2020 goals and targets
- Selection of targets
  - Risk-based approach
  - Targets with federal roles and responsibilities
  - Considered upcoming and past audits



# Audit Criteria

- Providing Leadership
  - Action plan
  - Coordination of actions
  - Reporting on progress
- Working to meet the selected targets
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Actions identified and implemented
  - Valid and reliable indicators
  - Assess and report on progress



# Examination Phase

- Review and analysis of sources
  - Document review
  - Quantitative data related to the targets
  - Qualitative data – interviews conducted with entity representatives
- Periodic briefing of entity officials
  - Audit progress, emerging findings, proposed recommendations, and changes to the audit plan, if any
  - Comments and questions from the entities



# Reporting Phase

- Draft audit reports
  - Preliminary draft report with findings, conclusions and recommendations
  - Entity reviews the draft audit report and provides the OAG with any substantive comments about
    - Accuracy of facts
    - Findings
    - Recommendations
  - Prepare the final draft
    - Address relevant comments and suggestions from entities
    - Finalize the report and the recommendations
    - Entity sign off on final report



## Tabling of the Report

- The Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development submits the report to the House of Commons and Senate for tabling
  - Confidential preview for Members of Parliament
- After they are tabled, the CESD's reports are automatically sent to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development for review
  - Committee of the House of Commons
- Reports posted on AOG website
- Parliamentary committee hearings sometimes have auditors and entity officials as witnesses





# References



# Office of the Auditor General of Canada

- Audit Resources
  - <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/>
  - What to Expect—An Auditee's Guide to the Performance Audit Process
- Reports to Parliament
  - 2013 Suite of Performance Audit Reports on Biological Diversity



# Government of Canada – Assessment Approaches

- Audit and Evaluation (Information)
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/topics/audit-evaluation.html>
- Policy on Results (Program Evaluation)
  - Relevance – Continued need for the program
  - Performance – Effectiveness
  - Performance – Efficiency and economy
  - <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=31300>



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