



# Alberta Environment and Parks Design of Systems to Manage the Climate Leadership Plan and Adaptation



Executive Summary

February 2018

## Who

Alberta Environment and Parks  
Climate Change Office

## What

Performance audit

## When

We conducted our field work between April 2017 and December 2017, and substantially completed the audit in December 2017.

## Learn More

[alberta.ca/climate-leadership-plan.aspx](http://alberta.ca/climate-leadership-plan.aspx)

## Why we did this audit

Climate change is a global challenge, caused by both human activities and natural factors. A changing climate due to greenhouse gas emissions is likely to have consequences for Albertans, the economy and the environment. The world has already witnessed some of the impacts of climate change, such as increased frequency of heat waves, wildfires, droughts and flooding.

With the November 2015 release of the Climate Leadership Plan (CLP), the government committed to taking action on emissions in the context of an economy that both uses and produces significant amounts of fossil fuels. The CLP is an ambitious and complex strategy: it aims to reduce emissions while diversifying the economy and improving the well-being of Albertans. Since the government announced the CLP in late 2015, significant policy changes have been made and programs rolled out, led by many government departments and coordinated by the Alberta Climate Change Office (CCO) in the Department of Environment and Parks.

Canada's provincial auditors and the Office of the Auditor General of Canada partnered to examine and report on progress on climate change action within their governments. This audit report contributes to that project.

## What we concluded

We conclude that, as of December 2017, the Department of Environment and Parks had implemented adequate systems to lead and coordinate the implementation of the Climate Leadership Plan, including planning, monitoring progress and reporting on results.

The department implemented multiple tools to plan and deliver on the commitments under the CLP. However, the department lacks an overall implementation plan for the CLP and for individual initiatives and programs. The lack of such a plan could negatively impact the cost-effective implementation of the CLP going forward. The systems used to monitor and report on progress should be more rigorous and efficient in order to ensure that management has reliable and complete information to track progress and identify required corrections. The first progress report on the CLP contains detailed and important information, but future reports should more clearly and completely describe the actual and expected costs of the CLP and its initiatives and programs.

# Alberta Environment and Parks

## Design of Systems to Manage the Climate Leadership Plan and Adaptation (continued)



Alberta's adaptation strategy is still in development and has not been approved by the government. As a consequence, the department does not have adequately designed systems for adaptation. We will examine the department's systems once, and if, the government adopts an adaptation strategy.

We acknowledge that the government tasked the department with implementing a number of significant policies and programs, while at the same time the department had to develop the necessary processes to carry out its responsibilities. To ensure that the desired results of the CLP and the underlying initiatives and programs are achieved, well-designed and effective processes will be key

### Why this is important to Albertans

Failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and take measures to adapt to climate change may endanger lives and increase costs to Albertans. The department leads and coordinates the government's actions to mitigate those risks. Without well-designed systems to plan, monitor progress and report on the results of the efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change, the desired results may not be achieved cost effectively or at all.

### What we examined

Our audit focused on the responsibilities of the Climate Change Office (CCO) within the Department of Environment and Parks. We interviewed the responsible officials at the CCO and other ministries implementing the CLP programs, reviewed and analyzed documents, and examined the CCO's systems and processes.

### What we found

The Climate Leadership Plan

- The CCO is not maintaining an overall implementation plan for the CLP, and only some lead ministries have implementation plans for programs.
- Oversight by senior management and Cabinet supported implementation of the CLP.
- The CCO implemented processes to monitor the progress of programs, but those processes are not sufficiently rigorous or efficient.
- The CLP progress report contains important and detailed information; however, clear and complete information on the cost of the CLP is missing.

Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change

- The department does not have a final or approved adaptation strategy.
- The department was unable to provide evidence that its draft strategy focuses on the risks identified through previous risk assessments.

### What needs to be done

We recommend that the Department of Environment and Parks:

- develop and use comprehensive implementation plans for the Climate Leadership Plan and for each of its programs
- implement efficient processes to sufficiently reduce the risk that the data used to monitor and report on progress is not accurate or complete
- provide clear and complete reporting on the expected and actual costs of programs and the CLP overall

### Consequences of not taking action

An implementation plan is a fundamental and critical planning document. It provides a clear path for any task, especially one involving a large number of actions, multiple parties and complex interrelationships. Further, it helps ensure that those responsible can demonstrate accountability for their commitments.

The absence of active overall and individual implementation plans creates a risk that the planned actions do not align with the overall objectives, programs are not effectively implemented, and their progress is not properly monitored against the plan. As a result, the risk that individual programs and the CLP overall will not achieve their objectives, or achieve them but not cost effectively, is increased.

Without complete and accurate information on the progress of programs, and the CLP broadly, the CCO cannot efficiently and effectively monitor progress and identify the necessary corrective actions.

And without clear and complete reporting on the actual and expected costs and benefits of the CLP, Albertans cannot hold the government accountable for its commitments.

### Read the full report at:

[oag.ab.ca](http://oag.ab.ca)

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