

Reports of the Auditor General of Canada
to the Parliament of Canada

International Assistance in Support of Gender Equality—Global Affairs Canada

Report 4



Independent Auditor's Report | 2023



Office of the
Auditor General
of Canada

Bureau du
vérificateur général
du Canada

Performance audit reports

This report presents the results of a performance audit conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) under the authority of the *Auditor General Act*.

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- gather the evidence necessary to assess performance against the criteria
- report both positive and negative findings
- conclude against the established audit objectives
- make recommendations for improvement when there are significant differences between criteria and assessed performance

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At a Glance



Overall message

Overall, Global Affairs Canada was unable to show how the approximately \$3.5 billion in bilateral development assistance it provides each year to low- and middle-income countries improved outcomes for women and girls. When women and girls have equal opportunities to succeed, they can be powerful agents of change—driving economic growth and improving the quality of life for their families and their communities.

Significant weaknesses in the department's information management practices resulted in incomplete or missing project files that do not support tracking overall outcomes against policy goals. In addition, 24 of the 26 indicators the department had created to monitor progress against policy goals did not measure outcomes. This makes it impossible for the department to accurately account for the outcomes of funded projects. In addition, annual reports to Parliament on international assistance captured outputs for only around half of the funded projects and do not reflect long-term outcomes.

The department's poor information management practices, which were flagged in a departmental audit in 2021, also had an impact on our audit work, as there were delays in receiving documents from Global Affairs Canada.

It is imperative that Global Affairs Canada act immediately to improve its information management and reporting on outcomes to demonstrate that women and girls are benefitting from the programs that Canada is funding and that there is value in Canada's investments.

Key findings



- There were significant weaknesses in the way the department managed project information. Global Affairs Canada was not effectively monitoring its funded projects or reporting on them.
- The annual reports to Parliament on international assistance captured outputs for only around half of Global Affairs Canada's funded projects. This was insufficient to accurately reflect outcomes.
- Global Affairs Canada did not meet 2 out of 3 of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy spending commitments.

Key facts and figures



- Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, launched in 2017, included 3 commitments for how this international assistance should be spent.
- There were no commitments related to outcomes in the policy.
- Global Affairs Canada administered an average of \$3.5 billion per year for bilateral development assistance programming from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022.

See **Recommendations and Responses** at the end of this report.

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Introduction

Background

Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy

4.1 The goal of Canada's international assistance, overall, is to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous world. Canada provides financial resources to support economic, environmental, social, and political development in other countries.

4.2 From 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021, Global Affairs Canada's international assistance averaged \$5.2 billion per fiscal year and was spent on the following types of assistance:

- humanitarian assistance in response to emergencies
- multilateral assistance to organizations that pool development money from multiple donors, such as the United Nations
- bilateral assistance to individual organizations in support of specific projects

4.3 The department provided an average of \$3.5 billion per year from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022 as bilateral development assistance in low- and middle-income countries (Exhibit 4.1). For this type of assistance, the donor controls funding and other aspects of the projects directly, and recipient organizations deliver them. This audit looked only at bilateral development assistance.

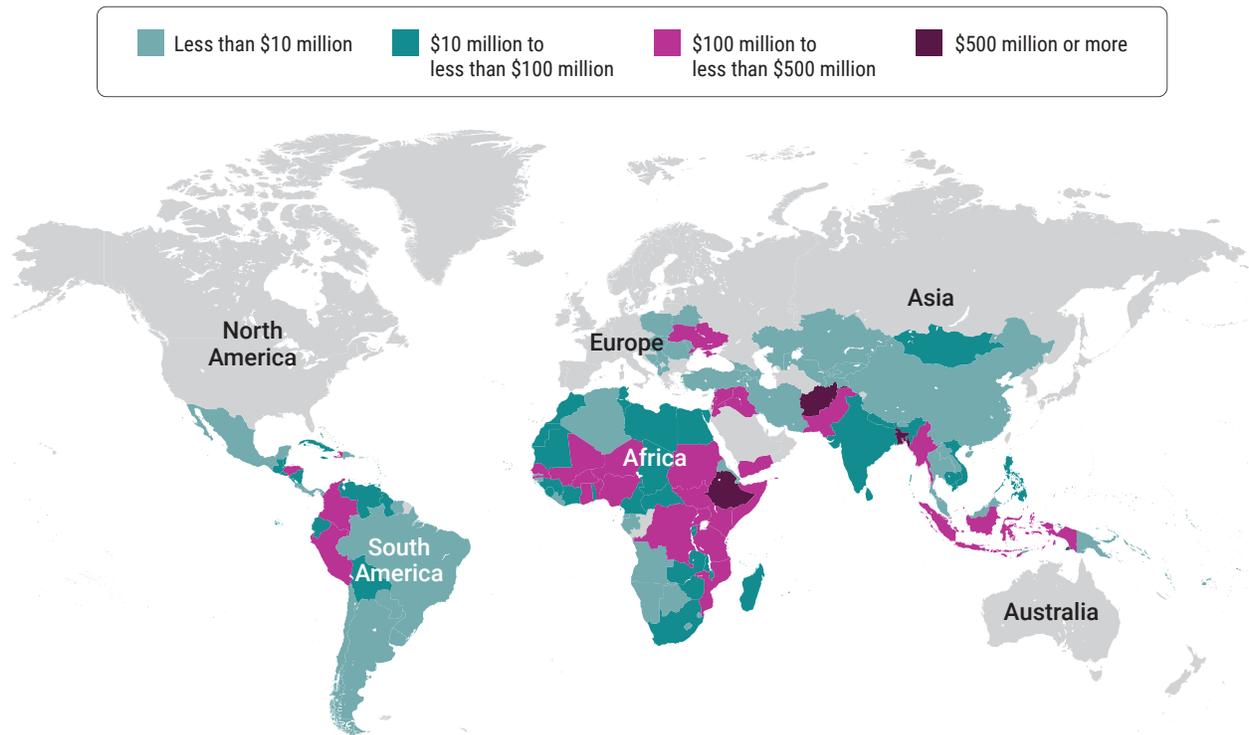
4.4 Global aid organizations, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, have integrated **gender equality**¹ into their programs in response to evidence that women and girls can be powerful agents of change in their communities when they have equal opportunities to succeed.

4.5 In 2017, Canada, led by Global Affairs Canada, launched Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, which applies to all of the department's international assistance spending. Under the policy, the department committed to funding projects that improve gender equality and the conditions of the world's poorest and most marginalized populations. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by factors such as poverty, population growth, and climate change.

¹ **Gender equality**—The ability of diverse groups of women, men, and non-binary people to participate fully in all spheres of life, contributing to an inclusive and democratic society.

Source: Adapted from Feminist International Assistance Gender Equality Toolkit for Projects, Global Affairs Canada

Exhibit 4.1—Total bilateral development assistance to low- and middle-income countries from the 2017–18 to the 2021–22 fiscal years



Source: Based on data from Global Affairs Canada

4.6 In 2022, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ranked Canada and Iceland first for the percentage of international assistance that contributes to gender equality. Other donors that spend a high percentage of integrated funding for gender equality include Sweden, Ireland, Belgium, and the Netherlands. While Germany, Mexico, Spain, and France have feminist foreign policies, currently only Canada has a feminist international assistance policy.

Roles and responsibilities

4.7 Global Affairs Canada administers international assistance, including bilateral funding, to ensure that it meets the commitments set out in Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy, such as addressing inequality and eradicating poverty around the world.

Focus of the audit

4.8 This audit focused on whether Global Affairs Canada implemented Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy by funding projects that supported gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in low- and middle-income countries and by demonstrating that the projects were generating expected outcomes.

4.9 We examined the department’s project files to determine whether it selected projects that integrated gender in accordance with policy goals, including the core priority of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. We also examined whether the department ensured that recipient organizations reported on outcomes for gender equality and how the department managed and reported its overall outcomes. We did not audit recipient organizations to determine how they spent the project funding they received.

4.10 This audit is important because supporting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is consistent with values promoted by the Government of Canada, such as global citizenship, equity, environmental sustainability, human rights, and ethnic and cultural diversity.

4.11 More details about the audit objective, scope, approach, and criteria, including additional details about the file sampling approach, are in **About the Audit** at the end of this report.

Findings and Recommendations

Global Affairs Canada did not comprehensively monitor or report outcomes against policy goals

Why this finding matters

4.12 This finding matters because Canadians and Parliament expect Global Affairs Canada to demonstrate that the implementation of Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy has improved the circumstances of people who would benefit most from the international assistance that Canada provides.

Context

4.13 Under the *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act*, Global Affairs Canada reports to Parliament annually on Canada’s international assistance activities. Under the Treasury Board’s Policy on Results and the department’s own results-based management policy, the department must report on progress toward policy goals.

Significant weaknesses in information management

Findings

4.14 We found significant weaknesses in the way Global Affairs Canada managed project information. We selected a sample from the 619 projects launched after 1 April 2017 for which the department had at least 1 year of reporting. We required documentation to determine whether, and to what extent, projects generated gender equality outcomes.

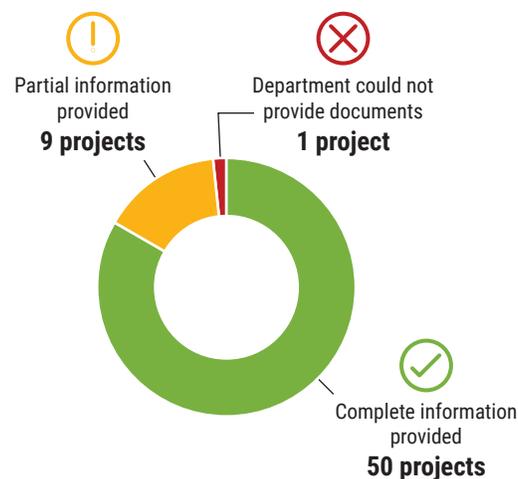
4.15 To conduct our work, we required Global Affairs Canada to provide key documents for the sample of projects. The department did not initially provide all the required documents. Following an internal audit from 2021 that found similar issues, department officials stated that some project documents were too difficult to locate and not available to audit for the following reasons:

- Staff did not consistently use the department’s data repositories to manage project-level information.
- There were no standardized procedures for storing and maintaining project information.
- Some of the required information had been stored on computers of staff who had since left the department, so officials were unable to find the required information.

4.16 We followed up repeatedly with the department. We received documents over a period of 4 months, but the department did not provide all of the required information (Exhibit 4.2).

Exhibit 4.2—Global Affairs Canada did not provide all required documents

Documents received as of 13 February 2023



4.17 We examined documents for 50 projects for which we had complete information. We considered a project file complete if we received documents that included project objectives, a departmental gender assessment, and evidence of departmental monitoring. We found that project officers followed processes to monitor projects to determine whether milestones and activities were completed as outlined in project documentation. However, while individual project files included useful information, because of the weaknesses in information management practices noted in paragraph 4.15, this information was not being rolled up and used at the departmental level.

4.18 During our audit, it was highly problematic that critical information, such as project progress reports, could not be readily found. The department could not use that information to monitor overall progress toward gender equality outcomes. It also could not demonstrate that it was assessing the impact of its spending or using the information that would otherwise be recorded in key documents to make decisions about many of the projects it was responsible for managing.

Recommendation

4.19 Global Affairs Canada should take immediate action to invest in its information management systems and practices, including relevant training, so that the department has a comprehensive and reliable approach for storing, retrieving, and using its project information.

The department's response. *Agreed.*

See **Recommendations and Responses** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

Departmental outcomes not tracked

Findings

4.20 Indicators are used to measure project activities and outcomes. Project activities generate outputs in the short term, while in the long term, outcome information is used to measure whether a situation has changed. Outcomes can be challenging to measure for a variety of reasons, including the time needed for change to happen.

4.21 For example, in many countries, girls often miss school during menstruation because of a lack of hygiene facilities. One project we examined had the goal of making gender-sensitive infrastructure improvements to make schools more welcoming to girls and young women. Global Affairs Canada tracked improvements in communities where funds were used to build separate bathrooms and hand washing

stations. However, the department did not capture outcomes such as improvements in school attendance for girls, which is one of the policy measures for tracking success.

4.22 Global Affairs Canada established indicators to monitor progress toward achieving policy goals. However, we found that 24 of 26 of the department’s policy indicators did not measure outcomes. An example of this was the number of people reached with nutritional support, which is not an outcome but an output. An outcome would be improved health status or increased life expectancy. The department’s reports contained information that accurately represented some of the department’s work but did not capture the full range of outcomes.

4.23 We assessed 60 projects to determine whether the department demonstrated that it tracked policy indicators. We found that the department only used 35 of these projects to report on policy goals. In our opinion, reporting that omits almost half of the projects is incomplete.

4.24 In 2015, Canada adopted the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and committed to advancing the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals in Canada and abroad. Progress against many of these goals is advanced by international assistance activities. The department mapped the policy indicators to the related Sustainable Development Goals so that it could measure project contributions toward each goal. Specifically, Goal 1 relates to poverty reduction and Goal 5 relates to gender equality.

4.25 Because the department was not using its policy indicators to capture outcomes for many of the projects, it was also not tracking contributions to Sustainable Development Goals. As a result, the department missed an opportunity to demonstrate the value of international assistance.

4.26 The Treasury Board’s Policy on Results requires that management measure and evaluate departmental progress toward its policy goals so that it can improve programs, policies, and services. We reviewed documents from relevant senior management committees from June 2017 to September 2022, and we did not find evidence that senior managers regularly reviewed gender equality outcomes or progress on policy goals.

4.27 This meant that senior management did not, and were unable to, review the complete impact of programming. Without a full account of project outcomes, senior management could not respond to evolving conditions and make changes to improve policy implementation. Sound information management and improved monitoring and evaluation of projects against policy goals would enable senior management to make evidence-based decisions to improve outcomes for women and girls.



End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Source: United Nations



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Source: United Nations

Recommendation

4.28 Global Affairs Canada should adjust its performance indicators to measure both outputs and outcomes so that it fully reports on the impact of funding against policy goals and priorities to improve gender equality and outcomes for women and girls.

The department's response. *Agreed.*

See **Recommendations and Responses** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

Gender-based analysis principles applied

Findings

4.29 Gender-based analysis plus (GBA Plus) is an analytical process used to assess systemic inequalities and determine how gender and other diverse identity factors could have an impact on a person's ability to access programs and services. Gender-based analysis was originally conceived to reveal and address the inequalities experienced by women and girls in the implementation of policies, programs, and initiatives. Gender-based analysis "plus" emerged with the recognition that other factors such as age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and geography also require analysis, because they can intersect with sex and gender identity and reinforce gender inequalities. The Government of Canada expects that GBA Plus be used to inform decision making by highlighting how different identity factors can have an impact on the design and delivery of policy, programs, and initiatives where a single lens does not adequately meet the needs of the intended recipients.

4.30 As a means to align project design with the gender equality goals in the policy, and as part of its approach to implementing GBA Plus, Global Affairs Canada completed gender assessments for projects under consideration. The main purpose of these assessments was to determine the extent to which gender was integrated into the projects and ensure that spending was being tracked appropriately.

4.31 Given the delays in receiving project documentation, we selected only 10 projects for in-depth analysis of gender integration. In performing our analysis, we referred to the department's guidance, which set expectations for rating consistency and accuracy. The guidance also required an assessment of GBA Plus related to project impacts, expected outcomes, and the skills and training of project staff and volunteers.

4.32 We found that the department integrated gender equality, following its internal guidance for consistency and accuracy. We also found that the gender equality assessments contained sufficient detail to establish that the projects we reviewed met the department's standards for gender integration.

4.33 However, we found that the department’s gender equality assessment process for projects did not consistently include analysis of intersecting identify factors, apart from age. Without integrating factors such as location or family status into the gender equality assessments, it was not clear how the department assessed the degree to which projects were designed to deliver inclusive programming.

Recommendation

4.34 Global Affairs Canada should consider identity factors beyond age in its project-level gender equality assessments to support inclusive programming.

The department’s response. *Agreed.*

See **Recommendations and Responses** at the end of this report for detailed responses.

The department did not meet 2 out of 3 spending commitments

Why this finding matters

4.35 This finding matters because the commitments were designed to increase the benefits of international assistance by reducing gender inequality and empowering women and girls.

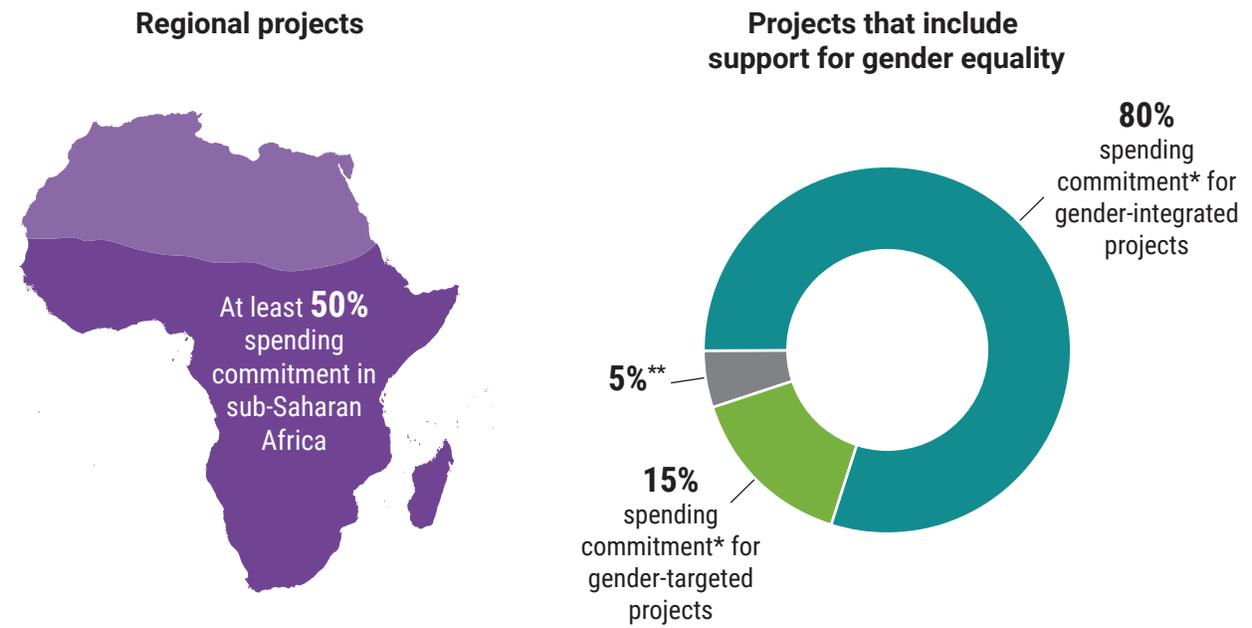
Context

4.36 In Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy, Global Affairs Canada set 3 commitments to allocate bilateral development spending for projects in low- and middle-income countries (Exhibit 4.3):

- 80% for projects that integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
- 15% for projects that target gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
- 50% to sub-Saharan African countries

When the department spends more than 85% on gender-integrated projects, less than 15% of total bilateral assistance is available for the other gender commitment. Although the 50% commitment is not specifically related to gender, project spending in sub-Saharan Africa can yield the greatest benefit in terms of reducing poverty and advancing gender equality.

Exhibit 4.3—Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy established 3 annual commitments for bilateral spending in 2 project categories



Types of projects	Examples of projects
<p>Gender-integrated projects include gender equality in one or more ways</p>	<p>Providing funding for renewable energy projects that include some training for women and girls to increase their employment.</p> <p>Improving access to schools for students with barriers to education, which also increases access for girls.</p>
<p>Gender-targeted projects have gender equality as the main objective</p>	<p>Addressing root causes of gender-based violence by increasing the effectiveness of the local justice sector.</p>
<p>Projects in sub-Saharan Africa</p>	<p>Helping to reduce poverty and malnutrition by investing in projects that improve people’s health and the local economy.</p>

* The 80% and 15% spending commitments together equal 95% of total bilateral spending.
 ** The remaining 5% of spending does not need to be spent on gender-specific projects. This spending can be on projects such as infrastructure.
 Source: Adapted from Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy, Global Affairs Canada

4.37 When projects are funded bilaterally, the department selects individual projects on the basis of policy goals, such as the integration of gender equality. In addition, recipient organizations are required to report on progress, and the department uses that information to assess outcomes.

4.38 The department's annual international assistance from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022 averaged \$5.2 billion. Over the same period, the department's annual bilateral development spending averaged \$3.5 billion.

4.39 Departmental spending in the 2020–21 and 2021–22 fiscal years was affected by world events. During this time, the department reallocated money to respond to needs emerging from the **coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**² pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine; these reallocations had an impact on the department's ability to meet spending targets.

Only 1 commitment met

Findings

4.40 We found that Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy included commitments on how funding should be spent but had no goals related to specific improvements in the circumstances of those who benefit from the funding.

4.41 Global Affairs Canada met only 1 of the 3 spending commitments in the policy. We reviewed data from the department's financial management system. We calculated the proportion of funding that the department provided to bilaterally funded projects from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2022. We found that the department did not meet its commitments to spend

- 15% of its assistance on gender-targeted projects
- 50% of bilateral funding for sub-Saharan Africa (Exhibit 4.4)

Projects that target gender, the 15% commitment, are critical to meeting policy goals. Academic research shows that projects that directly support the empowerment of women and girls have a stronger impact on gender equality outcomes than projects that integrate gender, the 80% commitment.

4.42 The department did meet the 80% commitment and increased the proportion of spending year over year during the period of the audit:

- It consistently exceeded its 80% gender-integrated spending commitment, reaching a high of 90% in the 2018–19 fiscal year.
- It increased the percentage of spending on gender-targeted projects, from 2% in the 2016–17 fiscal year to a high of 14% in the 2019–20 fiscal year.
- It increased the proportion of funding to sub-Saharan Africa from 35% in the 2016–17 fiscal year to a high of 49% in the 2017–18 fiscal year.

² **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**—The disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

Exhibit 4.4—Global Affairs Canada missed 2 spending commitments but increased the proportion of spending for gender-targeted projects



^a The amounts spent in the 2016-17 fiscal year were before Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy was implemented.

^b This amount includes \$2.5 billion in COVID-19 funding in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 fiscal years.

Source: Based on financial data from Global Affairs Canada

4.43 Exceeding the 80% commitment for projects integrating gender into project design and delivery means that the amount of funding available for projects that directly target the empowerment of women and girls is reduced. We found that gender-integrated projects had a wide variety of approaches, from large proportions of the activities focused on women and girls, to simple gender-based data collection.

Conclusion

4.44 We concluded that Global Affairs Canada was unable to demonstrate how Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy contributed to improving gender equality in low- and middle-income countries. Significant weaknesses in Global Affairs Canada’s information management practices prevented it from assessing outcomes and reporting completely to Parliament and Canadians.

About the Audit

This independent assurance report was prepared by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada on the implementation of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy. Our responsibility was to provide objective information, advice, and assurance to assist Parliament in its scrutiny of the government's management of resources and programs and to conclude on whether Global Affairs Canada complied in all significant respects with the applicable criteria.

All work in this audit was performed to a reasonable level of assurance in accordance with the Canadian Standard on Assurance Engagements (CSAE) 3001—Direct Engagements, set out by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA Canada) in the CPA Canada Handbook—Assurance.

The Office of the Auditor General of Canada applies the Canadian Standard on Quality Management 1—Quality Management for Firms That Perform Audits or Reviews of Financial Statements, or Other Assurance or Related Services Engagements. This standard requires our office to design, implement, and operate a system of quality management, including policies or procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards, and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

In conducting the audit work, we complied with the independence and other ethical requirements of the relevant rules of professional conduct applicable to the practice of public accounting in Canada, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, and professional behaviour.

In accordance with our regular audit process, we obtained the following from entity management:

- confirmation of management's responsibility for the subject under audit
- acknowledgement of the suitability of the criteria used in the audit
- confirmation that all known information that has been requested, or that could affect the findings or audit conclusion, has been provided
- confirmation that the audit report is factually accurate

Audit objective

The objective of this audit was to determine whether Global Affairs Canada implemented Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy to deliver gender equality outcomes in low- and middle-income countries.

Scope and approach

The audit examined how Global Affairs Canada assessed whether commitments made under Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy informed programming decisions to advance gender equality and reduce overall poverty.

We reviewed bilateral funding (including bilateral funding to multilateral institutions) of projects that the department selected because they aligned with departmental priorities in their scope, design, and indicators. We reviewed project-level data outcomes, financial expenditures, and executive

oversight activities. By focusing on selected commitments, we examined how the department achieved the core objective of the policy, which was to support the empowerment of women and girls and thereby to deliver on Canada’s commitments to the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly the commitment to leave no one behind. We reviewed funding allocations under the policy against the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

For our audit tests, we required a set of key documents for 60 projects including the project implementation plan or the grant agreement, the department’s gender equality assessment, annual reports provided by the project partners, and the department’s annual project management summary report. We required a minimum sample size of project files to conclude on the performance of the total population of bilaterally funded projects with a confidence level of 90% and a margin of error of +10%. Because documents were still missing for 9 of the 60 projects, the sample was not considered to be statistically representative.

We did not examine humanitarian assistance or funding to multilateral agencies not linked to a specific project. We did not review any projects funded under the peace and security action area of the policy because these projects were out of scope.

Criteria

We used the following criteria to conclude against our audit objective:

Criteria	Sources
<p>Global Affairs Canada funds projects that support the empowerment of women and girls and measures the projects’ results.</p> <p>The department’s senior management oversees the progress and outcomes of gender equality results.</p> <p>The department meets specific funding targets under Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of bilateral international development assistance investments integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. • 15% of all bilateral international development assistance investments specifically target gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. • 50% of bilateral international development assistance is directed to sub-Saharan countries. <p>The department measures and reports on progress and results toward gender equality.</p> <p>The department supports projects that contribute to global Sustainable Development Goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy, Global Affairs Canada • Policy on Results, Treasury Board • Results-Based Management Policy Statement, Global Affairs Canada, 2008 • Minister of International Development Mandate Letter, 2021 • Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, United Nations • Managing for Sustainable Development Results: Guiding Principles, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019

Period covered by the audit

The audit covered the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 October 2022. This is the period to which the audit conclusion applies.

Date of the report

We obtained sufficient and appropriate audit evidence on which to base our conclusion on 13 February 2023, in Ottawa, Canada.

Audit team

This audit was completed by a multidisciplinary team from across the Office of the Auditor General of Canada led by Carey Agnew, Principal. The principal has overall responsibility for audit quality, including conducting the audit in accordance with professional standards, applicable legal and regulatory requirements, and the office's policies and system of quality management.

Recommendations and Responses

In the following table, the paragraph number preceding the recommendation indicates the location of the recommendation in the report.

Recommendation	Response
<p>4.19 Global Affairs Canada should take immediate action to invest in its information management systems and practices, including relevant training, so that the department has a comprehensive and reliable approach for storing, retrieving, and using its project information.</p>	<p>The department’s response. Agreed. Global Affairs Canada recognizes the importance of strong information management practices. As part of its Grants and Contributions Transformation initiative, the department has developed a work plan that identifies solutions to address departmental information management challenges. The Grants and Contributions Transformation initiative is a generational, enterprise-wide reform effort to rethink and enhance how the department manages its grants and contributions. This will support and enhance oversight and due diligence in managing grants and contributions and will include a detailed review of the current training curriculum and introduce the new information technology solution and associated information management practices for all staff working on international assistance. Recognizing the importance of this recommendation, the department will implement a single information and data management system to be a key platform for collaboration across missions and headquarters as an interim measure as the Grants and Contributions Transformation initiative is advanced.</p>
<p>4.28 Global Affairs Canada should adjust its performance indicators to measure both outputs and outcomes on all projects so that it fully reports on the impact of funding against policy goals and priorities to improve gender equality and outcomes for women and girls.</p>	<p>The department’s response. Agreed. Global Affairs Canada is committed to excellence in the outcomes-based management of its international assistance and continuously strives to enhance its grants and contributions management through robust performance and reporting measures. The gaps with department-level performance indicators indicated by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada will be reviewed to determine how best the department may increase effective measurement of and reporting on the achievement of policy-level outcomes of its international assistance.</p>

Recommendation	Response
<p>4.34 Global Affairs Canada should consider identity factors beyond gender and age in its project-level gender equality assessments to support more inclusive programming.</p>	<p>The department will work to increase the proportion of international assistance projects that can be reported against using a set of department-level key performance indicators. While complete coverage is not possible as some projects will unavoidably fall outside the scope of aggregate indicators, other means will be identified to publish outcomes from such projects to ensure the greatest coverage possible.</p> <p>The Grants and Contributions Transformation initiative will include a renewed and modernized framework and system for outcomes-specific data collection, aggregation, analysis, and reporting. This system will help ensure that better outcomes information on international assistance is used internally for decision making and learning and externally for public reporting and accountability.</p> <p>The department's response. Agreed. Global Affairs Canada is committed to intersectionality as a main principle of Canada's feminist approach to international assistance, which seeks to support the voice, agency, and empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity and others who face discrimination or marginalization.</p> <p>The department has added more explicit references to intersecting identity factors into its gender equality assessment form for projects as of 2020. The department will review and augment its gender equality, human rights, and overall project management guidance, tools, training, capacity, and processes to further improve the consideration of intersecting identity factors in its project-level gender equality assessments. Together with the mandated project-level human rights analysis and description of beneficiaries by relevant identity factors, this will lead to more inclusive programming and better development outcomes, in compliance with Government of Canada gender-based analysis plus guidelines.</p>

