



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Impact & Innovation Unit

Annual Report

2019 - 2020 (abridged)



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Context

[Impact Canada](#) was established to accelerate the adoption of novel outcomes-based policy and program approaches that deliver tangible and measurable results for Canadians. Within the context of the unfolding COVID-19 global pandemic, the [Impact Canada Centre of Expertise](#)¹ shifted its focus in March 2020 to augment Government of Canada efforts, leveraging its skillsets in behavioural science, public engagement, and innovative public policy design and implementation.

As a result of this pivot, the Impact Canada 2019-2020 Annual Report is *abridged* to focus on the most significant accomplishments up to March 2020. The pandemic will affect timelines and priorities for all Impact Canada initiatives.

¹The Impact Canada Centre of Expertise is housed in the Impact and Innovation Unit, Privy Council Office

Key Results

The goal of Impact Canada is to apply new methods, tools, and evidence test innovations and generate evidence of which efforts work best to create greater public value. This means improving policy implementation by generating sustainable solutions at scale that measurably improve people's lives compared to conventional ways of doing things.

Since it was established in the fall of 2017, Impact Canada has tested new approaches to help optimize Government of Canada policy, program, and service delivery

- ▶ Impact Canada has experienced rapid growth in its first two-and-a-half years, with **over \$600 million of funding** under its program authorities and a significant portfolio of behavioural insights projects completed.
- ▶ Several new announcements were made in 2019, with projects under active development through 2019 and 2020:
 -  **\$300 million** for the [Housing Supply Challenge](#) with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in consultation with Infrastructure Canada;
 -  **\$20 million** of a Food Waste Reduction Challenge with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; and
- ▶ A number of active **innovation challenges** made significant progress over 2019-2020, before the pandemic occurred. Including:

The [Drug Checking Technology Challenge](#) was successful in **attracting non-traditional government partners from diverse sectors to create new solutions to challenging problems**, including the private sector. In partnership with Health Canada, the challenge is addressing Canada's opioid crisis by incentivizing private sector and academic organizations to test innovative technologies that would allow people to more accurately determine the risks associated with drugs they consider taking.

The [Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative](#) was successful in **using creative partnership and co-creation approaches to help meet broader Government of Canada policy goals** – like engaging in meaningful and respectful ways with Indigenous communities. In partnership with Indigenous Services Canada, this initiative attracted over 300 applications from Indigenous communities and groups.

The [Crush It! Challenge](#) is helping to **address innovation market gaps to stimulate private sector engagement and commercialization** of innovative products, processes, and services in areas where there is great potential for applying Canadian ingenuity and improving economic and environmental outcomes. In partnership with Natural Resources Canada, the challenge is promoting sustainable innovation in the mining sector to transform how energy is used for crushing and grinding rocks – with a goal to reduce energy consumption and pollution in mining and increase Canadian competitiveness in the sector.



23 out of 24 applicants had never previously received funding from Health Canada



3 finalists have been selected to test their technologies



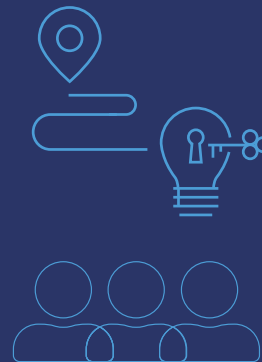
[The Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative]

is a new way of doing business... They're reaching out.

It's exciting because we've never been invited before



- Dr. Luugigyoo Patrick Stewart,
featured in [Canadian Architect magazine](#), fall 2019).



The challenge has announced **6 finalists** across a range of industrial and academic sectors working on a diversity of solutions that would not have been easily predicted or procured at the beginning of the process.



2000
Canadians

2000 Canadians from across the country have been participating in an online study to inform COVID-19 outbreak response efforts, including policy, interventions and communications.



Conducted a series of **rapid on-line experiments** to assess impacts of different COVID-19 messages on recall, sentiment, and behavioural intentions.



The **partnership** aims to identify opportunities for further innovation to improve the physical and mental health of customers and frontline staff

- ▶ The practice of incorporating **behavioural science** to government policy development and programming advanced significantly in 2019-2020 under Impact Canada leadership.

Beginning in mid-March 2020, exploration of how best to use behavioural science to enhance the Government of Canada's response to COVID-19. This has so far resulted in:

Leading the implementation of the World Health Organization (WHO) Behavioural Insights (BI) Tool on COVID-19 in the Canadian context – [COVID-19 Snapshot Monitoring](#) (COSMO Canada) - in partnership with the Public Opinion Research Team within the Privy Council Office's (PCO) Communications and Consultation Secretariat. The breadth and depth of the dataset adds nuance and granularity to our understanding of the public response to COVID-19, enabling the GC to calibrate policy and programmatic approaches to the evolving context, using a rigorous, data-driven approach.

Applying insights and methods from behavioural science to [messaging and design](#) components of COVID-19 communications materials to help maximize their accuracy and effectiveness in promoting the desired health and response behaviours (e.g., hand washing and physical distancing). In a time where the individual and collective actions of Canadians is critically important to reducing the spread of the virus, communications materials need to reflect our best understanding of human behaviour and undergo rigorous testing such before full-scale implementation.

Establishing unique partnerships (e.g., Sobeys Inc.) to design and test behaviourally-informed interventions to encourage the adoption and maintenance of key health and safety behaviours in a real-world context. These in-field testing environments grant the government unparalleled access to diverse, national samples of Canadians to evaluate novel interventions addressing priority COVID-19 challenges.

- ▶ 2019-2020 saw a growing contributing to the generation best practices by developing and publishing [knowledge products](#) and feeding into efforts of leading organizations around the world, which is resulting in international acknowledgement of the Impact Canada's contribution to the public innovation ecosystem.

Examples included publishing [Measuring Impact by Design – a Guide to Methods for Impact Measurement](#), along with the inclusion of Impact Canada behavioural insights efforts in World Bank, OECD, and academic publications; along with progress on developing a first-for-Canada Challenge overview guide.



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Next Steps

The 2019-2020 was a year of significant growth and saw steady progress towards achieving positive outcomes across the Impact Canada portfolio. 2020-2021 will see the Impact Canada Centre of Expertise continue to support the Government of Canada's COVID-19 efforts, while maintaining support for its existing portfolio of impact-focused programs and initiatives.

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