Environmental, Social and Governance Report
2022-2023
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About IDRC

As part of Canada’s foreign affairs and development efforts, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) champions and funds research and innovation within and alongside developing regions to drive global change. We invest in high-quality research in developing countries, share knowledge with researchers and policymakers for greater uptake and use and mobilize our global alliances to build a more sustainable and inclusive world.

Our head office is in Ottawa, Canada, while five regional offices keep us close to the researchers and projects we fund. The regional offices are in Montevideo, Uruguay; Nairobi, Kenya; Dakar, Senegal; Amman, Jordan; and New Delhi, India.

At IDRC we are committed to identifying and responding to critical global development challenges. Our long-time commitment to this mission was renewed with Strategy 2030, which sets out an ambitious agenda for creating a more sustainable and inclusive world.

IDRC’s Environmental Social Governance (ESG) framework aligns with Strategy 2030 while bringing a new perspective to the impact of our activities on the world. The framework is a comprehensive approach that looks at everything we do while prioritizing action in areas where we can continue to learn, implement and integrate ESG best practices into the Centre’s research programs, partnerships and internal operations and practices.

“The current economic model is inadequate to save our world and get us to equality because it is based on a win/lose paradigm.”

~ Erin Tansey, Director of Sustainable and Inclusive Economies
Quick facts

In the first year of our ESG journey we already have progress to share.

- **2050**: Adopted targets setting us on a path to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- **40%**: Reduced our head office footprint which has reduced our environmental footprint.
- **650**: We fund about 650 research projects producing evidence to influence change. 125 of these projects are gender transformative.
- **63.2%**: Women hold 63.2% of senior management positions at IDRC.
- **$225,000**: The dollar value of furniture donated to two Ottawa-based community organizations.
- **25**: The number of different languages spoken at IDRC.
As Chief Financial Officer, I am pleased to introduce IDRC’s first-ever Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Report. This report highlights IDRC’s commitments to ESG considerations and recognizes this as an essential contribution to our vision of building a sustainable and inclusive world, and what actions we are taking to integrate ESG into our organization.

For over 50 years IDRC has championed and funded research and innovation within and alongside developing regions to drive global change, as an integral part of Canada’s foreign affairs and development efforts. Even though our work was already linked with the fundamental aspects of ESG, we knew there was more we could do and needed to do to realize our vision. We recognized the need for formal integration of ESG goals into all aspects of our organization, and the call for accountability for our actions.

**Strategy 2030** reaffirms our commitment to investing in high-quality research and innovation, expanding our focus on sharing knowledge and growing international funding partnerships to mobilize global alliances and expand available resources for research for development. Through strategic alignment of our Strategy goals to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), IDRC began its journey to wholly embed ESG initiatives at the heart of the Centre’s operations.

Throughout 2022-2023 we conducted extensive research and consultations with key stakeholders to determine ESG priorities; this included a current state analysis and peer benchmarking to identify current ESG practices and reporting initiatives enacted by peers. These measures provided the foundation for the development of a framework and roadmap that will enable the effective implementation of these priorities into everything we do.

Our ESG journey is ongoing, there is always more to be done. We are committed to continuously improving our ESG performance and integrating sustainability into all aspects of our operations. Reducing our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, promoting workplace diversity and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our employees are examples of initiatives that have begun in support of our ESG commitments.

With the support of our partners, we will continue to be leaders in our field and will ensure we persevere to create a positive impact when it comes to environmental, social and governance priorities. I am proud of our progress thus far and look forward to all that our ESG journey will bring.

I want to thank our employees, leadership team and Board of Governors for their support and guidance as we work to create a sustainable future for all.

Geneviève Leguerrier, CPA  
Vice-President, Resources, and Chief Financial Officer
About this report

With this inaugural report, we highlight the progress IDRC is making, and explore the foundation we have established to keep ESG at the core of every decision we make. This report tells the story of how our ESG journey began, where we are going and how our ESG framework is aligned with Strategy 2030.

We aim to be transparent with our ESG reporting by sharing goals, establishing accountability and actively tracking and monitoring our results as we move forward.

This report contains information regarding our strategic priorities and the highlights that have led to the development of the ESG framework for IDRC.

Reporting frameworks

To support the development of our inaugural ESG report, we used international ESG reporting frameworks to guide our disclosures, as well as to support the advancement of our ESG journey and our future ESG reporting ambitions.

Following the Federal Government’s commitment in Budget 2019 to encourage federal crown corporations to adopt the recommendations of Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures (TCFD), it was announced within Budget 2021 that the Government will require federal crown corporations with less than $1 billion in assets to adopt the recommendations of the TCFD by 2024. To align with the Federal Government’s mandate, we will report in alignment with the recommendations of the TCFD in our fiscal 2023-2024 reporting year.

IDRC has supported the achievement of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through our research and programming to drive global change. We have used the SDGs to guide the development of our ESG framework and our disclosures, and will continue to use them as a guidepost to ensure our ESG framework helps to further promote a sustainable and inclusive world.
Establishing an ESG framework at IDRC and integrating ESG practices into everything we do further demonstrates our leadership and commitment to developing a sustainable and inclusive world. Here is how it started and where it is headed.

**2019**
- The Government of Canada’s budget encouraged crown corporations to adopt the recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) where appropriate.

**2022**
- Completed a peer benchmarking assessment to gain understanding of peers’ ESG practices and reporting initiatives.
- Evaluated IDRC initiatives and practices that fall within each ESG element.
- Established a GHG emissions composite baseline.
- Finalized the ESG framework to create an ongoing and sustainable roadmap.
- Board of Governors endorsed the ESG framework and priorities to meet the expectations of its employees, grantees, partners and the federal government and align with Strategy 2030.

**2021**
- The Government of Canada’s budget requires crown corporations with less than $1 billion in assets to adopt the recommendations of the TCFD by 2024.
- Development of an ESG framework identified as a Centre priority.
- Beginning of IDRC’s ESG journey through performing a current state analysis and peer benchmarking.

**2023**
- Developed GHG emissions reduction target.
- Begin to tell our ESG story with our first report.

**2023 - 2024**
- Develop a decarbonization roadmap
- Establish a talent strategy
- Integrate the updated Culture and values statements
ESG at the heart of IDRC

ESG is not simply a trend for us, it is central to the work we do. From the very beginning, it has been our mandate to support science and innovation in developing countries, and to help researchers in these regions find solutions to the most pressing problems facing their communities and countries. Whether it’s tackling climate change, improving access to healthcare, developing sustainable agriculture, influencing policy change or strengthening governance, we have always been committed to creating a more sustainable and inclusive world.

The five priority programs of Strategy 2030 leverage our decades of experience and expertise to drive action and overcome the major challenges – climate change and gender inequality – and contribute to the development outcomes anchored within the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This work makes us deeply aware of the depth of some of the issues facing our world today. It also positions us to become ESG leaders in the way we approach this work and in our ability to apply ESG thinking and practices in our own operations.

For further information on the programming that supports the development outcomes listed below, please refer to our comprehensive Strategy 2030 report.

Climate-resilient food systems

Climate change affects us all, but it’s the most vulnerable populations who bear the brunt of its impact. Women, youth and marginalized communities in developing countries are hit the hardest, despite contributing the least to the causes of climate change. And what’s worse, they are not equipped to handle the consequences.

Through our programming on climate-resilient food systems, we are supporting communities living in climate change hot spots to be more resilient and have healthy diets as a result of improved access to more sustainable and inclusive food systems.
Economic growth continues to happen at the expense of the environment, with rising greenhouse gas emissions, air and water pollution and declining biodiversity resulting from this rapid expansion. The financial benefits of this growth have been impressive but have not been shared equally, with many sectors of the global population being left behind.

As we accelerate our action on climate change there is great need for development models that enable inclusive and sustainable economic growth for all. Through our sustainable and inclusive economies programming people in developing countries benefit from more sustainable, equitable and inclusive economies with expanded, lasting and high-quality economic opportunities for women and youth.

Good governance is essential to ensure institutions work for the common good, everyone has equal access to justice and people have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. When governance is more inclusive, accountable and transparent, everyone benefits.

While democracy, civic action and institution building are inherently national and local processes, they can still benefit from global support. We provide direct support to developing-country researchers so that vulnerable people and communities will benefit from more inclusive, accountable and transparent governance. They are better able to shape the policies and practices that affect their lives by exercising their democratic rights and freedoms, including in contexts of democratic transition and displacement.
Global health

Long-standing inequalities, and a shortage of resources, talent and helpful policies weakens the capacity of public health systems in developing regions to prepare for and manage epidemics like COVID-19. It is a daunting challenge, especially when communities are struggling to maintain basic health services. What’s more, poverty, inequalities, lack of education and inadequate access to health services make it even harder for the people in these regions to get the health related services they need.

Through our global health work that supports better-prepared health systems, vulnerable populations in countries at greatest risk are better prepared for local epidemics and pandemic threats. Women and adolescent girls, including refugees and displaced populations, have improved sexual, reproductive, and maternal health.

Education and science

Enhancing the quality of education and increasing access in developing countries can have transformative effects for societies and economies, and fostering gender equality in education allows every child to benefit.

When we create environments where girls can learn at all education levels, women are better able to emerge as leaders in strong science systems, producing knowledge and innovation to improve people’s lives. It’s a scenario where everyone wins.

Through our education and science programming children and youth from vulnerable populations are in school and benefit from high-quality education.
ESG integration at IDRC

At IDRC, we face a unique challenge when it comes to our ESG framework. The nature of the work we do provides a solid foundation and already encompasses the hallmarks of a robust ESG strategy. Given our vision to help build a more sustainable and inclusive world, the very essence of our research and programming embodies important environmental, social and governance elements. But only talking about the work that IDRC does (and has been doing for 50 years) is not enough. ESG considerations need to be included not only in our programming but also in our operations.

Demonstrating that we are integrating ESG considerations into every aspect of our work strengthens our credibility and inspires greater confidence in the partners we work with, as well as with all our stakeholder communities. Without strong business ethics we would not have the relationships we have, so it is crucial that we continue to apply an ESG lens to our organization and build a meaningful framework that magnifies our focus on many ESG elements.

The relevant disclosure of our ESG performance further substantiates the accountability that is integral to how the organization operates.

There are always opportunities to learn, improve and do more, and this is precisely what makes our ESG framework meaningful. Rather than patting ourselves on the back and saying we are doing enough, we recognize that there is always more to do.

Now, as reflected in the new commitments being made in this inaugural ESG report, we are advancing beyond our important research and programming contributions to broadly integrate ESG considerations into every aspect of our organization.

The following section of this report highlights some of the initiatives we are currently focused on. We’ve also included future steps, plans and goals. Using an ESG lens we are scrutinizing every aspect of our organization to infuse ESG considerations into all areas of our work to ensure we are walking the walk.
The ESG framework considers all three of the Centre’s functions, providing a holistic approach to identifying ESG topics, practices and initiatives. The framework considered the following functions:

**Operations**: all operations managed by IDRC (e.g., employees, policies and procedures, financials and facilities).
**Research and programming**: research priority areas (e.g., global health, education and science, etc.)
**Funding and partnerships**: processes and considerations related to the selection and relationship management of partners and grantees.
ESG materiality and prioritization

Materiality is the principle of defining the ESG topics that matter most to an organization and its stakeholders. Prioritizing ESG topics based on their relative materiality helps to focus on the activities that will have a greater impact and generate more value for both IDRC and its stakeholders.

The methodology for identifying and prioritizing IDRC’s material ESG topics involved three distinct steps:

**Engaging stakeholders: data collection and consolidation**

A list of relevant ESG topics was generated from engaging with stakeholders, which included interviews with IDRC’s Board of Governors, members of the Centre Management Committee and discussions with other key internal stakeholders. Additionally, a desktop review of peer practices and the Government of Canada’s relevant ESG commitments were also considered. As a result, an initial list of material ESG topic areas was generated.

The initial list of ESG topics was then consolidated into distinct, overarching topics (e.g. energy consumption). This created a succinct list of topics, which allowed for effective prioritization. IDRC’s three main organizational functions (operations, research and programming and grants and funding partnerships) were used to map the individual ESG topics to the area(s) of the organization that they impact.

**Develop and apply materiality**

A double materiality approach was chosen to prioritize ESG topics. This means evaluating the importance of ESG topics by their impact on both the organization’s mission, as well as society and the environment.

The “Impact on IDRC’s mission” was chosen to evaluate each topic’s ability to drive IDRC’s mission forward.

The “Impact on society and the environment” was selected to determine each topic’s outward impact on society and the environment.

The synthesized topics were applied to the double materiality axes. This was done by weighing each E, S, or G topic against its ability to impact each component individually.
Validation

Internal stakeholders were then reengaged to review and validate the placement of topics on the materiality matrix to ensure priority was accurately reflected. The results reflect IDRC’s most material ESG topics and priorities.
Topics covered in this report
Not all the priority ESG topics identified in the above matrix are included in this inaugural report. We have chosen instead to report on selected topics of focus that illustrate the work we are doing within our organization. In subsequent reports, we will be including additional priority topics as we make progress and broaden the work of our ESG framework.
A positive move

In 2020, the expiry of our Ottawa building lease provided an opportunity to reimagine our current office space. At the same time, Strategy 2030 had us thinking about what we could do better in terms of using our resources and the impact of our operations on the planet. As a result, many ESG considerations played a role in the design of our new office space.

This story, however, is much broader than the sustainability gains we achieved by reducing our office footprint – in fact, it shows how by applying an ESG mindset to any project, we can achieve so much more.

Sustainable choices

The move made it possible to reduce our carbon footprint and make our operations more sustainable in several ways:

The World Exchange Plaza is one of Ottawa’s greenest office buildings. It has achieved the highest LEED® certification level available – EOBM Platinum.

1. By reducing our office footprint by 40%, we have reduced our environmental footprint.
2. Environmental impact was a key consideration in the office design, and in the selection of building materials and furniture.
3. IDRC is in the process of certifying the new office design with Fitwell.
4. The new office design allows for flexibility and change, so modifications can be made with minimal expense and waste.

Reducing waste

The waste involved in a move to a new space is considerable and reducing the amount of material going to landfill was a key concern.

The office clean-up emphasized responsible waste disposal practices with a communication campaign that emphasized the three Rs – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

A Garage sale with a purpose

There is a saying that one person’s garbage is another person’s treasure. This is the REUSE of the three Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) at its finest. The move team held a weekly garage sale to auction off décor and organizational items with the proceeds going to the Government of Canada United Way Campaign. Over $34,000 was raised, propelling IDRC’s fundraising efforts to exceed its goal by 48%.

Landfill diversion through donations

The disposal of office furniture provided us with an opportunity to make a meaningful difference for local organizations that play an important role in the health and wellbeing of the Ottawa community.
We provided furniture to equip about 65 office suites, storage fixtures, boardroom furniture and about 800 chairs to the Bruyère Hospital. As with many health care organizations, the hospital faced major budget challenges for one of their capital projects and our donation meant that about $125,000 of financial resources could be used for other aspects of the project.

Another significant donation of furniture was made to the Ottawa Food Bank, supporting them with their transition to new office space. IDRC provided workstations, meeting and boardroom furniture, storage and seating, saving the organization over $100,000 (the estimated dollar value of the donation). Kitchen equipment was donated to food programs for vulnerable populations in Ottawa.

Other smaller donations were also made including computer monitors donated to a school program. These efforts not only diverted furniture from landfill but also provided a significant financial boost to these organizations.

Wellbeing

Creating a space that supported the wellbeing of our staff was essential and every aspect of the new space addresses elements of physical and mental wellbeing:

- The floorplan maximizes natural light.
- Physical movement and fitness are supported with a dedicated bike locker, showers, and discounted memberships to a nearby gym.
- The building was designed in accordance with Fitwell standards, the world’s leading certification system committed to buildings that promote health and wellbeing. We are awaiting our Fitwell certification.

An inclusive and welcoming space

Our office space is a welcoming and safe space for all. It is a barrier-free space that includes automatic doors, universal washrooms, a breastfeeding room and a multi-faith room.

Buildings are for people

While buildings have an environmental impact, they fundamentally serve to provide a place for people to connect. The move to the new building was an opportunity to think about creating a space that supports the health and wellbeing of our employees. It was also essential to ensure the space was welcoming and accommodating.
Involving employees in the change

We were mindful that the redesign of the workplace environment, move to a new building and a reduced office footprint would be a significant change for employees. A change management and communication plan was developed to support employees throughout the process.

A significant part of our strategy was to involve employees in the process, and a working group of employee volunteer representatives was established. The group met regularly to provide input and direction into various aspects of the space design. The group’s ideas were incorporated into the plans and their concerns were addressed. For instance, employees thought that it would be a good idea to have a prayer room or meditation space for employees, so this room was included in the design. Employees also voiced concerns about the original plans to have kitchenettes on each floor in place of a larger eating and gathering space. The Rafiki Lounge was a place that was important in the former space and employee input was critical to ensuring it was recreated in the Centre’s new home.

A new and better way to work

The IDRC workforce has always been innovative, and places value in both informal and formal collaboration. Our move to the new space in November of 2022 coincided with a significant shift to hybrid work and called for a more dynamic and flexible way of working. We designed a space that fosters connection, collaboration and helps our employees do their best work. Our new office supports this era of hybrid work by offering a variety of collaboration spaces in addition to rooms that allow for quiet work or privacy for phone calls. Work is no longer simply a place but rather something we do, and the office is part of an ecosystem of locations where work happens.

The story of our move to the new Ottawa office is an example of how applying ESG thinking can make a meaningful difference in outcomes for all.
ESG priorities and action plan
Environment

The environmental pillar of ESG illustrates our understanding of our impact on the environment. As a critical part of our ESG journey, this helps us identify opportunities where we can apply environmentally responsible practices across our organization.

“IDRC has established credibility in the space of climate resilience, which allows us to join forces with donors to further the reach and impact of our programs.”

~ Santiago Alba-Coral, Director, Climate-resilient food systems

GHG emissions
Understanding where we are

As an organization with a commitment to building a more sustainable and inclusive world, we have a vested interest in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. The first step towards doing our part is to measure our emissions to pinpoint the sources that need our immediate attention. In 2022, we conducted a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory baseline with the support of experts in this field. The report took into consideration the global operations of IDRC and emissions from heating, electricity, vehicles and business travel. Completing the greenhouse gas emission baseline allows us to understand our sources of emission and take action to reduce our footprint.

Scope 1, 2 and select scope 3 emissions from our offices across the globe were calculated to provide an overview of our total emissions (see Table 1). This enabled us to identify our greatest sources of emissions, allowing us to focus our attention on those areas first.

Scope 1 refers to “direct” emissions, those generated by our direct operations including emissions from fuel combustion and company-owned vehicles.

Scope 2 refers to “indirect” emissions, those resulting from the production and consumption of energy (purchased electricity).

Scope 3 also refers to “indirect” emissions, which are emissions indirectly created because of business activities, such as emissions generated from business travel.

Scope 3 emissions generally account for the highest proportion of total emissions for many organizations, as is the case for IDRC. Our scope 3 emissions include those generated from business travel, and account for 80% of our overall GHG emissions.
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the material impact of travel on the emissions inventory, a composite base year approach was used to reflect a normal year of IDRC operations.

- The year 2019 was selected for baseline emissions for travel, which includes hotel stays, air travel, bus and rail travel.
- Data from the 2021 calendar year was selected for baseline emissions for electricity, natural gas, stationary and mobile consumption.
- The outcome was a composite GHG emissions baseline for the year 2021.

**Initial steps**

In 2022, we took a first step towards addressing our GHG emissions through travel by entering into an agreement with Air Canada as part of the Leave Less Program. This program provides a sustainable travel offering to its corporate customers with opportunities to reduce their carbon footprint related to business travel. We have selected the sustainable aviation fuel option which contributes directly to reducing GHG emissions at the source with sustainably sourced fuel.

**What’s next**

**Scope 1 and 2 targets**

We are committed to reducing scope 1 and 2 emissions by 40%, against our 2021 baseline, by the year 2024-2025.

We are further committed to reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions by an additional 10% every five years, starting in 2025.

We aim to achieve this target by finding efficiencies in our operations (ex: converting to energy efficient lighting and motion sensors controls), working with building property managers to reduce our energy consumption and purchasing carbon offsets.

**Scope 3 targets**

The largest source of our emissions comes from scope 3, specifically business travel. International travel is integral to the way we conduct our business. We have spent decades developing extensive networks and a strong presence in the global community as a convenor and leader in the field of research for development. Travel enables us to be close with research partners and close to the projects we fund, allowing us to do our work effectively to fulfill our purpose.

Our challenge will be to reduce our GHG emissions without reducing our ability to make a difference in the world. We are in the process of developing a sustainable travel policy to reduce the emission intensity of the travel that is required to fulfill our organizational mission and will working closely with our employees and partners to get their input. A component of this policy will be a travel decision matrix for all employees to use when planning work-related travel.
Where flights are necessary, we are committing to reducing net air travel emissions by 20% beginning in 2023, against our 2018-2019 baseline. This will be achieved by participating in Air Canada’s Leave Less program, which tracks and calculates all emissions associated with our flights, and then purchases the equivalent amount of certified, reputable carbon offsets.

We are also planning to tackle regional initiatives that support more sustainable travel; for example, while travelling abroad, by favouring taxi companies that use electric cars.

In 2023-2024, we will also develop a decarbonization roadmap to meet our ambitious targets to reduce emissions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope of emissions</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Site/Activity</th>
<th>Emissions</th>
<th>Total emissions (tCO2e)</th>
<th>Target emissions (2023)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope 1:</strong> direct emissions</td>
<td>Natural gas consumption</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>212.21</td>
<td></td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fuel consumption (vehicles)</td>
<td>Regional offices</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope 2:</strong> indirect emissions</td>
<td>Electricity consumption</td>
<td>Head office</td>
<td>129.80</td>
<td></td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional offices</td>
<td>95.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scope 3:</strong> indirect emissions</td>
<td>Category 6: Business travel</td>
<td>Train travel</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Air travel</td>
<td>1704.10</td>
<td></td>
<td>1830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel stays</td>
<td>123.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EMISSIONS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2270</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 – Total IDRC emissions by scope
Social

The social pillar of ESG characterizes how well we manage our relationships with our employees, suppliers, grantees, partners and the communities in which we work. In this report, we are highlighting the work we are doing to improve diversity, equity and inclusion within our organization. This report also outlines our work to create a strategically aligned culture with values rooted in respect, and our efforts to support the health and wellbeing of our employees.

“This is what we endeavour to achieve with DEI... to continue to make sure people are respectful and inclusive, and we continue to bring diversity to the Centre.”

~ Nicole Leclerc, Director, People and Corporate Culture
Highlights

1 new culture and values statement

25 – the number of different languages IDRC speaks

50% of roles filled by internal candidates

54% of management who identify as racialized persons (2022 workforce diversity census)
Diversity, equity and inclusion

At IDRC, we have fostered a strong commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) as these three values lay the foundation for achieving our research and operational goals and is an essential component of our strategy. The strength and credibility of this work rests on a two-pronged approach:

1. Diversity and inclusion must be integrated into our internal systems, policies and practices.
2. Our research programming must consider diversity and inclusion as fundamental dimensions of research quality and aim to advance equality and inclusion in the world.

Defining DEI

Diversity, equity and inclusion, also referred to as “DEI”, are three closely linked concepts and values that organizations embed within their strategies to ensure all races, ethnicities, religions, abilities, genders, sexual orientations, backgrounds and lived experiences are appropriately supported and represented within the work that they do. Although diversity, equity and inclusion are interrelated, each have their own meaning and objective:

Diversity: ensures a diverse group of identities and experiences are represented.

Equity: ensures the fair treatment of all individuals, regardless of identity and experiences.

Inclusion: ensures all individuals feel a sense of belonging and are able to make meaningful contributions.
Understanding where we are

IDRC’s success relies on the diversity of our employees. Yet we know that creating a diverse and inclusive work environment where everyone is comfortable being their authentic selves is a journey.

We have a multi-year plan with clear milestones structured around three key strategic pillars.

1. Inclusive organizational culture
2. Leadership commitment and accountability
3. Awareness and education

The pillars of our DEI strategy have allowed us to clearly articulate our priorities and milestones, identify areas for improvement and develop and advance initiatives that ensure we can achieve our commitments.

Employment Equity Report: As a Crown corporation, we are governed by the Employment Equity Act. This legislation requires that we report data on four underrepresented groups every year with the goal of achieving representation from these groups at labour market availability or above. This report provides the data and insights that form the basis for our DEI initiatives by helping us recognize where to focus and prioritize our efforts. It will continue to be an important part of disclosure.

Our representation of visible minorities and persons with disabilities has shown steady progress during the years 2019-2021. IDRC will continue its DEI efforts to increase representation in all underrepresented groups with a particular focus on Indigenous people and persons with disabilities, as we are falling short in this group.

### Overall representation for designated groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designated group</th>
<th>31-December 2019</th>
<th>31-December 2020</th>
<th>31-December 2021</th>
<th>31-December 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible minorities</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous people</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons with disabilities</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**DEI committee:** The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee leads the strategy and action plan essential to achieving our goals. The committee makeup reflects diverse groups across the centre and meets regularly to review and track progress.

**Diversity census:** In addition to collecting confidential data through the Employment Equity Report, we conducted an anonymous diversity census to capture DEI metrics anonymously. This data contributes to our understanding of DEI at IDRC and informs goal setting and priorities.

The results of the 2021 census include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible minorities</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous peoples</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons with disabilities</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Equality statement:** Published in 2019, the Equality Statement recognizes and acknowledges that inequalities exist across multiple and intersecting categories of identity. The statement supports the generation of knowledge that tackles the systems that perpetuate inequalities based on identity and sets out key principles that guide IDRC's commitment to striving for equality in all aspects of its work.
Initial steps

In the past year, we have developed and implemented various initiatives and practices to advance DEI with significant investments in resources, time and energy. These initiatives have centred around improving processes related to hiring, training and advancing understanding of DEI. Highlights of these initiatives include:

- Ongoing communication and awareness activities and events such as Orange Shirt Day, Black History Month and Pride celebrations increases understanding and connection with diverse communities.
- Introduced an Equity Talks program which amplifies the voices of diverse speakers and panelists while encouraging discussion and reflection.
- Shared job postings with select LinkedIn groups such as the Aboriginal Professional Association of Canada to expand the pool of candidates from underrepresented groups.
- Introduced unconscious bias training for members of hiring panels, leaders and employees. The requirement that hiring panels complete this training helps to prevent unconscious bias in the hiring process.
- Leaders completed a 2-day workshop on fostering collaboration within and across diverse teams. The training also focused on understanding, articulating and modelling DEI in their work while inspiring others to do the same.

To build an inclusive organizational climate and culture, our values must support DEI principles. The values and culture initiatives outlined in this report are an important part of how we embed diversity and inclusion within our culture.
What’s next

Understanding that the advancement of our DEI strategy is a journey, we have identified the following priorities for 2023 and beyond:

- Establishing talent acquisition strategies to address gaps.
- Integrating key diversity and inclusion objectives in performance management plans of leaders.
- Incorporating DEI training in new employee onboarding tools.
- Encouraging participation in the annual Employment Equity and Diversity Census.
- Fostering a common understanding of DEI values and communicating principles to all employees.
- Improving internal systems, policies, processes and practices.
- Supporting leaders to create the space and opportunities for employees to participate and contribute fully to the workplace by building on the conscious inclusion training and leading inclusion workshops.

“Within the DEI Committee, we fundamentally believe that promoting an inclusive work environment where employees can truly be themselves is not just a matter of ticking boxes. It is an ongoing commitment, both individually and collectively, which must be fully reflected in internal operations and in the culture and values of IDRC. Since I joined the DEI Committee, I have learned a lot about myself, my own unconscious biases and how I can be an agent of change and an ally to anyone who may feel discriminated against. Most importantly, I have learned that no matter what our culture, gender, nationality, race or simply our position within IDRC is, we can all make a difference, no matter how small.”

Lancelot Ehode, Member of the DEI Committee
Creating a more accessible workplace

Understanding where we are

Through the metrics we track and other elements of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion program, creating a more accessible workplace was identified as a key priority. Being an accessible employer means removing barriers within IDRC employment practices, workplace culture and our physical locations. We have developed a comprehensive accessibility three-year action plan – to help us become more accessible to people with disabilities.

Initial steps

The 2023-2025 accessibility action plan includes 46 concrete initiatives over three years. The plan was developed in consultation with people with disabilities and all IDRC employees. Some of the plans for 2023 are highlighted below:

- Complete an accessibility audit of our website and list a teletypewriter number.
- Update our style guide to reflect inclusive language and introduce plain language standards.
- Develop standards for providing sign language interpretation and document requests in alternate formats.
- Implement a request for accommodation process for grant applicants.
- Develop an outreach strategy to engage the disability community.

- Complete an inventory of the built environment such as door handles, signage and wayfinding as the first step to identifying modifications that can be made to reduce barriers in our physical space.
- Continue to add more inclusive language to job postings to encourage people with disabilities to apply to open IDRC positions.
- Look for options to create an employee resource group or find an external one.

Next steps

In 2024, we will continue to build on the initial work set out in our Accessibility Action plan, continuing our journey to being an accessible employer.
Health and wellbeing

Understanding where we are

This work started by understanding employee needs and we achieved this through the IDRC Pulse Survey, Mental Health and Wellness Report. This survey was conducted in 2019 and provided us with an updated picture of employee wellbeing, helping us understand opportunities to make meaningful change.

The survey report identified an opportunity to raise awareness of Mental Health in the workplace. It also identified opportunities for managers and leaders to take an active and visible role in fostering wellbeing.

Initial steps

During the pandemic we provided additional wellbeing support by offering training sessions with a psychologist to address the stress, uncertainty and demands of remote work, which was particularly acute for parents with children at home. In the wake of the pandemic, we continued to accommodate employees with remote work agreements to allow people to reconnect with their families.

We provided training to supervisors and leaders to help them recognize the signs of mental health issues, equip them with the language to talk to employees about mental health and contribute to the important work of destigmatizing mental health issues.

The new head office space was designed to support the mental and physical wellbeing of employees with features such as showers, a meditation or prayer room and dedicated bike lockers. Employees also have access to a nearby fitness centre at a reduced rate.

Health and wellbeing considerations were at the forefront of the decision-making process involved in our move to the new head office space. Further information on this can be found in the feature story, “A positive move”, in this report.

What’s next

We are finalizing an accommodation policy to clarify and formalize the health and wellbeing support available to employees through flexible work arrangements and other assistance.
Culture and values

Culture is an important aspect of our identity and shapes the way we interact with each other and the world around us. Being intentional about our culture and aligning it with our strategy provides us with a clear path that guides behaviours, attitudes and decision-making. Living our core values and keeping them front and centre in everything we do is essential for our success as an organization.

Understanding where we are

**Strategy 2030** necessitated a review of our culture and values statement to align behaviours and mindsets with the goals and outcomes articulated in the strategy. Although a code of conduct, equality statement and leadership charter existed, our values had not been articulated. Formulating our culture and values statements became essential to achieving the goals we have established for ourselves for the next decade.

Initial steps

The culture and values statements were developed with the involvement and participation of employees in consultation with senior leaders. The first step involved workshops with employees to define and articulate the organization’s culture and values. Then subsequent iterations were a collaborative effort between employees and centre management to develop meaningful statements that clearly and authentically articulated IDRC’s culture and values.

**Our culture statement**

IDRC’s diverse talent is the key to our success. We strive to achieve a more sustainable and inclusive world respecting all individuals and being intentional in our actions and accountable in our work and in relationships with those we work with.

**Our values statement**

At IDRC we are respectful, intentional and accountable.
1. We treat all individuals with respect.
2. We are intentional in our work to make a difference around the world.
3. We undertake to be accountable in our work and in the relationships with those we work with.

What’s next

In 2023-2024, we will work with employees to develop a guide that helps us all live the IDRC values. This guide will include clear information for employees on expected actions and behaviours that will bring our values to life. We will also undertake initiatives and activities to ensure leaders understand their role in modeling and supporting the behaviours that are aligned to our culture.
Training and education

We are committed to helping our people learn, grow and reach their full potential. We do this by investing in learning and career building opportunities to help them broaden their knowledge and skills while advancing their careers.

Understanding where we are

Investing in our people through learning and development is a priority. IDRC invests, on average, 1 to 1.5% of salary and benefits in learning and development. This budget is dedicated to a variety of learning and professional development opportunities.

In addition to formal learning opportunities, many of our employees take on temporary roles and assignments where they get experience in another aspect of our business, or with increased responsibility and seniority. Currently, 50% of open roles are filled by internal candidates – an important indicator of our success supporting the professional goals of employees.

Initial steps

Our performance review process was updated, and now every employee has a learning plan as part of their goals and objectives. Building a learning plan into the performance process that is supported by their supervisor ensures all employees benefit from learning and development.

What’s next

We will continue to invest in our people by offering relevant learning and professional and development opportunities to help them acquire new skills and knowledge.
Governance
Change to address environmental and social issues cannot happen without robust structures, systems and processes in place to guide effective decisions, oversee implementation of policies and programs and ensure accountability for outcomes and results. In this inaugural ESG report, we have focused on two elements of governance: our code of conduct and the harassment and violence prevention policy.

Governance practices are continually reviewed and updated to ensure they are relevant. IDRC has completed the review and update of the terms of reference for the Finance and Audit Committee and Human Resources Committee of the Board of Governors in 2022-2023. In 2023-2024, we will review the terms of reference of the Executive Committee and Strategy, Program Performance and Learning Committee. Also in 2023-2024, the Board Charter for the Board of Governors of IDRC will be reviewed and updated.

Code of conduct
Understanding where we are
IDRC is committed to upholding and promoting high ethical standards not only in our policies, programs and practices but in the daily work and actions of our employees. We strive to demonstrate our commitment to ethics in the workplace and foster a work environment that encourages creativity and innovation, and values competence and teamwork. The code of conduct supports and guides our employees to uphold these standards and adhering to the code is essential to enhancing the reputation, integrity and governance of the Centre.

Initial steps
Our ESG journey in 2022-2023 started by assessing our code of conduct program and establishing benchmarks, which include:

- Every year, IDRC employees reaffirm their commitment to uphold the code of conduct.
- 100% of employees comply with this policy – clear evidence of how IDRC employees recognize the importance of upholding these standards.
- Since 2019, the Board of Governors also confirms their commitment to the code of conduct.

What’s next
Looking forward, we are planning the following activities:

- Reviewing the current code of conduct to align with components from our diversity, equity and inclusion program.
- Refreshing the current communication approach to build greater understanding of the code of conduct.
Harassment and violence prevention policy

Understanding where we are

The harassment and violence prevention policy supports the process for reporting possible inappropriate conduct, the investigation and subsequent resolution of possible misconduct and the protection from reprisal.

Initial steps

IDRC supports the creation of a work environment where dialogue on values and ethics is encouraged, where employees are comfortable raising their concerns without fear of reprisal and where people are encouraged to do the right thing.

There is ongoing communication to ensure our employees are aware of the importance of the harassment and violence prevention policy, and this information was added to the onboarding content delivered to new employees.

What’s next

In 2023-2024, the following activities are planned:

- Conduct a policy review and update the current policy.
- Refresh our communications approach incorporating lessons learned.
- Renew awareness of this important mechanism available to all employees.
As we look ahead to 2023-2024 and beyond, we anticipate building on the work we started with our ESG framework just a short 18 months ago. In the next year, we will be sharing our ambitions and plans more fully with our employees and with broader communities as the energy and ideas that will fuel our ESG framework will come from these groups. We are proud to have put together a framework that is focused on building on our strengths while recognizing that there is much more we can do to work towards a better world for all.