

Action Plan and Progress Assessment (APPA) for the implementation of audit recommendations from the OAG- Prepared for the Select Standing Committee of Public Accounts
Attention: Shirley Bond, Chair and Mitzi Dean, Deputy Chair of the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Ministries of Health and Education

Promoting Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in K-12: An Independent Audit, Released [05/18]

<http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs>

PAC Meeting Plan¹ 19/07/18

**Prepared by: Stephen Smith, Ministry of Health
 Scott Beddall, Ministry of Education**

**Reviewed by: Stephen Brown, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
 Sally Barton, Acting Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education**

1st APPA Update 18/02/20

**Prepared by: Stephen Smith, Ministry of Health
 Scott Beddall, Ministry of Education**

**Reviewed by: David Byres, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
 Cloe Nicholls, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education**

Rec. # Accepted? Yes / No ²	OAG Recommendations	Actions Planned & Target Date(s) ³	Assessment of Progress to date ⁴ and Actions Taken ⁵ (APPA update)
1. Yes	That the Ministries of Health and Education work together with their delivery partners to integrate the promotion of healthy eating and physical	Create a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministries of Health and Education to articulate shared commitments, roles and responsibilities relevant to recommendations of the audit. Target Date: July 2018	Progress Assessment: Fully Implemented. Actions Taken & Discussion: A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed and approved by senior Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education leadership. The MOU now guides collaborative efforts between both ministries to plan, deliver and evaluate all health promotion interventions delivered directly by either ministry.

¹ The audited organization will be required to present their initial action plan at this meeting (i.e. First three columns completed for each OAG recommendation included in the audit report)

² For each recommendation, the audited organization should state whether or not they have accepted the recommendation and plan to implement it fully by typing either “Yes” or “No” under the number of the recommendation.

³ Target date is the date that audited organization expects to have “fully or substantially implemented” the recommendation. If several actions are planned to implement one recommendation, indicate target dates for each if they are different.

⁴ The Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts (PAC) will request that the audited organization provide a yearly update (i.e. completed “Assessment of Progress and Actions Taken” column) until all recommendations are fully implemented or otherwise addressed to the satisfaction of the PAC. This is for the APPA update.

⁵ This action plan and the subsequent updates have not been audited by the OAG. However, at a future date that Office may undertake work to determine whether the entity has implemented the recommendations. The results of that work will be reported in a separate report prepared by the OAG.

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	<p>activity with other student health initiatives by establishing shared goals, objectives, targets and performance measures; and communicate this direction to health authorities and school districts.</p>	<p>Establish process for annual direction setting exercise for student health involving senior decision-making tables of both sectors.</p> <p>Target Date: March 2019</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: Fully Implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: The Ministries of Education and Health have developed an approach to establishing annual direction and priorities in collaboration with senior decision-making tables: the Learning Advisory Board and All Superintendents Meetings in the education sector, and the Provincial Health Promotion and Prevention Advisory Group and Public Health Executive Committee in the health sector. These tables include leaders from delivery partners – school districts and health authorities – and members hold accountabilities for implementing system-wide strategic direction in their respective organizations.</p> <p>Additional Action Taken: Under the leadership of the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions, the Ministries of Education and Health are collaborating alongside the Ministry of Children and Family Development to develop and implement the provincial mental health and addictions strategy A Pathway to Hope: A roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people in British Columbia. The <i>Pathway</i> lays out government’s 10-year vision for mental wellness, improved mental health care and the establishment of an effective substance use prevention, addictions treatment and recovery system — and outlines the priority actions that will be taken over the next three years. This strategy has a major focus on child and youth mental health including: the expansion of Foundry Centres from 11 to 19 throughout the province, addressing mental health in schools, establishing Integrated Child and Youth teams in five school districts over three years, and step up/down services to support children and youth who require intensive services to receive transition supports. The structures that support collaboration through this government priority include a Child, Youth and Young Adult Working Group who offer an additional platform to enhance inter-ministry coordination and collaboration as it relates to the health and well-being of students in a more general way.</p>

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		<p>Co-develop shared direction (including goals, objectives, targets and performance measures) on student health priorities, and disseminate via communication channels to key delivery partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in annual expectation letter for health authorities to support school districts in addressing shared health and wellbeing priorities. Revised: Ministry of Health will work directly with senior health authority leadership with oversight of school health initiatives to communicate shared direction and expectations. • Ministry of Education will use existing communication channels to provide direction related to student health to school districts. <p>Target Date: December 2020</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: Substantially Implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: The format and use of annual expectation letters have changed and they no longer afford the most direct route to communicate priorities related to school health promotion to health authorities. Instead, the Ministry of Health is working directly with senior health authority leadership with oversight of these programs and services to communicate expectations related to partnering with school districts in order to advance priority efforts to improve student health and wellbeing. The Ministry of Education also meets directly with school district superintendents to communicate student health priorities, and issues supplementary communications to superintendents via a weekly Deputy Minister’s Bulletin.</p> <p>Initial direction to both sectors identified priorities tied to the cross-government mental health and addictions strategy (A Pathway to Hope), with links to the connection between good mental and physical health.</p>

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		<p>As existing contracts/funding agreements for delivery of student health-related services come to term, review to ensure they address shared priorities of both sectors, and revise as required.</p> <p>Target Date: April 2020</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: Substantially Implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: The Ministry of Health recently initiated a Shared Cost Arrangement with the Sport for Life Society for the development and implementation of a school-based initiative focused on physical literacy and physical activity, with strong connections to mental wellbeing. The scope and focus of the initiative were collaboratively determined by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture. The initiative will focus on professional development opportunities and resources for elementary educators that reflect low-barriers to access and meet the unique needs of educators supporting vulnerable students. The unique needs of Indigenous students in particular represent a discrete and explicit focus within the activities described within the SCA. Additionally, the initial phase will emphasize reach to rural and remote schools/school districts. The initiative will move into an active delivery phase in early spring 2020.</p> <p>The objectives for the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program were updated in July 2019 to more strongly align with the shared priorities of the health and education sectors related to healthy eating and supporting the implementation of the Physical and Health Education curriculum.</p> <p>Ministry of Health staff have been working with Farm to School BC to determine opportunities for deepening the program’s impact on student health outcomes (particularly student mental wellbeing and fruit and vegetable intake) and to more strongly align the program with shared priorities of the health and education sector. This work has been undertaken with the understanding that it will inform future funding agreements.</p> <p>The Healthy Schools BC Working Group – which includes representatives from the Ministries of Health and Education and all of the regional health authorities - is concluding a strategic planning exercise to determine how the initiative can better support the shared priorities of both sectors. This will influence any associated grant deliverables for the Healthy Schools BC initiative, and will further advance collaboration between education and health through the future inclusion of working group members from representative school districts in the province.</p> <p>Student health-related contracts and funding agreements led by the Ministry of Education are largely connected to the cross-government mental health and addictions strategy, and are informed by the Ministry of Health and other provincial ministries under the leadership of the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions.</p>
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			The Ministries of Education and Health continue to represent BC on the Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health (JCSH). Both ministries share membership costs, and work together to inform and participate in JCSH activities. The ministries are currently working together to help shape the 5-year mandate renewal for the JCSH, with the goal of shifting JCSH focus areas and activities to better align with BC's priorities for student health and well-being. Proposed priority focus areas include mental well-being, problematic substance use, and healthy school food environments.
2. Yes	That the Ministries of Health and Education work together with their delivery partners to revise the <i>School Meal and School Nutrition Program Handbook</i> according to current nutritional standards.	Work with delivery partners to update the <i>Guidelines for Food & Beverage Sales in BC Schools</i> (policy) and the related <i>School Meal and School Nutrition Program Handbook</i> (resource) according to current nutritional standards. Target Date: September 2021	Progress Assessment: Partially Implemented. Actions Taken & Discussion: With the release of Canada's new food guide in 2019, the Ministries of Health and Education have worked to identify school nutrition policies and resources that may require updating to ensure alignment with current nutrition standards including the <i>Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools</i> and the related <i>School Meal and School Nutrition Program Handbook</i> . The Ministry of Health is chairing a Provincial/Territorial working group to develop nutrition standards based on the new food guide to inform healthy eating guidelines and resources, including those specific to school settings. In tandem, the Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture have issued a School Food Environment Survey through BC Stats to understand how the Guidelines and Handbook are used in practice which will inform their respective revisions (see recommendation #5). Survey results are anticipated by March 31, 2020. The 2019 Federal Budget also announced the Federal Government's intention to work with provinces and territories towards the creation of a National School Food Program. The Ministries of Health and Education have been working with federal counterparts to learn more about their intended actions, including if this would include an explicit focus on nutritional standards. Recent communication from the Federal government (December 2, 2019) indicated that this work is currently on hold as a new Minister has been appointed and no direction has been given on this file at this point.

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3. Yes	That the Ministries of Health and Education work together with their delivery partners to develop healthy eating and physical activity initiatives that maximize access for vulnerable students.	Require delivery partners to ensure existing school-based initiatives prioritize access for vulnerable students. Target Date: April 2020	<p>Progress Assessment: Substantially Implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: The Healthy Schools BC granting process has been updated to address application barriers and to prioritize access for First Nations schools. Program staff have reached out directly to First Nations schools across the province to encourage them to apply for a grant, and to reduce barriers to successful submission of an application.</p> <p>In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health has commenced work to adjust the grant deliverables associated with the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program. Objectives have been updated to better reflect the shared priorities of the partner ministries. The program coordinator guide continues to provide ideas on how to support vulnerable students to access extra fruits and vegetables in a way that reduces stigma, including that leftover product should be placed in a basket at the office so students can help themselves. Ministry of Health staff have also worked with program staff to explore ways to extend the reach of the program to remote communities with non-conventional school settings.</p> <p>Farm to School BC continues to focus its services on school communities that serve a higher proportion of students experiencing vulnerability as defined by socio-economic status and geography.</p>

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		<p>For future program development, ensure potential barriers to access for vulnerable students are identified and addressed prior to implementation.</p> <p>Target Date: September 2020</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: Substantially Implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: The Ministry of Health recently initiated a Shared Cost Arrangement (SCA) with the Sport for Life Society for the development and implementation of a school-based initiative focused on physical literacy and physical activity, with strong connections to mental wellbeing. As the lead on the initiative, Sport for Life will be required to identify and address barriers to access faced by educators in rural and remote regions, and those that teach within schools with a higher proportion of vulnerable students. To ensure rural and remote school communities are receiving quality physical activity and physical literacy supports as part of the initiative, key community-based organizations (e.g. Engage Sport North) are partnering with the Sport for Life Society in order to leverage the existing local partnerships, relationships, and trust in these communities and schools. A core requirement for this initiative is that it supports equitable participation and inclusion of schools with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Equitable</u> defined as “ensuring that individual and systemic barriers are addressed in order that every individual, regardless of culture, ethnicity, income, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or age can fully participate;” and, • <u>Inclusion</u> defined as “all persons, regardless of culture, ethnicity, income, gender, sexual orientation, ability or age are able to enjoy full participation because a climate is fostered that encourages such persons to feel welcome, accepted, supported, valued, respected and safe.” <p>In March 2019, the Ministry of Education completed a research project, with input from the Ministry of Health, to understand the issue of hunger in schools. This information has been used to inform the School Food Environment Survey (see recommendation #5) and will be used to inform future programs developed and implemented to support vulnerable students.</p> <p>Results from the Ministry of Education Funding Model Review (see recommendation #6) will further address the identification and mitigation of barriers for vulnerable students.</p>

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4. Yes	That the Ministry of Health work with its delivery partners to measure the effectiveness of healthy eating and physical activity initiatives, in terms of achieving increased healthy eating and physical activity and better health outcomes.	Introduce new requirement in funding agreements to ensure that program/intervention evaluation occurs at minimum every three years following implementation, and includes measurement of impact on health outcomes. Target Date: April 2020	Progress Assessment: Substantially Implemented. Actions Taken & Discussion: Farm to School BC was evaluated between September 2018 to June 2019 on its ability to influence student’s health and learning outcomes. Baseline results indicate students participating in Farm to School have greater access to fruits and vegetables, most notably for students in vulnerable schools. The evaluation also showed that students in all grades reported significant improvements in food literacy and schools are successfully integrating food literacy into their curriculum. The BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program was evaluated during the 2017/18 school year on its ability to meet program objectives, which include evidence-based determinants of fruit and vegetable intake (with increased fruit and vegetable intake supporting better health outcomes). Based on the evaluation results and the OAG recommendations, program objectives were updated to more strongly emphasise health outcomes. The Shared Cost Arrangement for the school-based initiative focused on physical literacy and physical activity requires the Sport for Life Society to complete a process and outcome evaluation that details the initiative’s impact on evidence-based determinants of health outcomes.
5. Yes	That the Ministries of Health and Education work together with their delivery partners to support school districts and schools in meeting nutritional guidelines when providing meals (breakfast, lunch and/or snacks) in schools.	Work with delivery partners to evaluate the school food environment to identify supports needed by school districts and schools. Target Date: June 2021	Progress Assessment: Partially Implemented. Actions Taken & Discussion: The Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture have co-developed a survey to gain a better understanding of school food environments and local food procurement in BC public schools. The survey was administered by BC Stats and sent to school principals in February 2020. This is to be followed by additional engagement with parent advisory committees, teachers and service delivery partners during the 2020/21 school year to fully identify the supports needed by school districts and schools to meet nutritional guidelines when providing food.

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		Identify and update tools and resources to support schools in meeting nutritional guidelines, including updating the <i>School Meal and School Nutrition Program Handbook</i> (identified in recommendation #2). Target Date: September 2021	<p>Progress Assessment: No action taken.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: Planned action is sequenced to follow the School Food Environment Survey and additional engagement with parent advisory committees, teachers and service delivery partners during the 2020/21 school year. Work is also dependent on updating the Guidelines for Food & Beverages Sales in BC schools which will inform updates to the related School Meal and School Nutrition Program Handbook (see response to recommendation #2).</p>

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		<p>Work with delivery partners to review and update available supports at HealthLink BC (including tele-health and brand name food list) to ensure alignment with revised nutritional guidelines when providing meals in schools.</p> <p>Target Date: September 2021</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: No action taken.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: Planned action is sequenced to follow updates to the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools (see response to recommendation #2).</p>
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6. Yes	That the Ministry of Education works with school districts to implement a consistent method for estimating the number of vulnerable students needing access to programs currently funded through CommunityLINK.	<p><i>The Ministry of Education conducted a review in 2018 to find alternate ways of providing equitable and predictable funding to boards of education. CommunityLINK funding was within the scope of the funding model review.</i></p> <p>Report to Minister of Education with recommendations for new funding allocation model.</p> <p>Target Date: July 21, 2018</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: Fully Implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: In early 2018, an Independent Panel conducted a review of the BC Kindergarten to Grade 12 Public Education Funding Model to ensure the education system receives stable and predictable funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Independent Review Panel’s, Improving Equity and Accountability: Report of the Funding Model Review Panel, was released by the Minister of Education to the public in December 2018. • The Panel’s report included 22 recommendations on three themes. One of the three key themes was on Equity and included 11 recommendations. CommunityLINK is addressed in the following report recommendation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The Ministry of Education should create a single Inclusive Education Supplement that incorporates all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supplemental Special Needs Funding; ▪ English/French Language Learning; ▪ Supplement for Vulnerable Students; ▪ CommunityLINK; ▪ Ready Set Learn; ▪ Supplemental Student Location Factor; and ▪ Funding currently in the Basic Allotment that was previously allocated to high incidence categories of special needs. <p>This single Inclusive Education Supplement should allocate funding through two components: COMPONENT 1- students requiring high-cost supports should be funded, and school districts should continue to report and claim these students to the Ministry for funding...”</p> <p>“COMPONENT 2- the remaining inclusive education funds should be allocated to school districts through a prevalence-based model using a comprehensive range of third-party medical and socio-economic population data...”</p>

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		<p>Develop the new funding model; and implementation and transition materials.</p> <p>Target Date: February 1, 2023 (Phase One announced on February 7, 2020)</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: Partially implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion:</p> <p>Winter 2019: The Minister of Education announced an engagement process in February 2019 including a Partner Forum and the formation of working groups.</p> <p>Spring and Summer 2019: Working group meetings, policy and model development and site visits.</p> <p>Fall and Winter 2019/20: Continued engagement, government approvals and announcement of two-phase plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working groups submitted their reports to the Minister in October 2019. • The Ministry continued to work on modelling the recommendations of the proposed funding allocation system; policy development took place in coordination with the modelling and the implications identified by the working group were taken into consideration. • On February 7, 2020, the Ministry announced the first phase of changes to the Kindergarten to Grade 12 funding model including a new funding supplement to support children and youth in care, students with mental health challenges and those living in low-income families. School districts can use this supplement to deliver services based on local needs including school meal programs, trauma counselling, additional classroom supports and transportation services. • While the current CommunityLINK funding formula is not changing at this time, the new funding supplement will serve as an interim step to better address the needs of students living in low-income families.

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		<p>New operating grant manual and tables for 2020/21 school year; transition information for stakeholders; and monitoring and evaluation plan for Ministry.</p> <p>Target Date: March 13, 2020</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: Partially implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 13, 2020: New operating grant manual and tables for 2020/21 school year; transition information for stakeholders; and implementation, monitoring and evaluation plan for Ministry. • Monitoring and post-evaluation of the implemented recommendations will be on-going after release.

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<p>7. Yes</p>	<p>That the Ministries of Health and Education work together with their delivery partners to identify and address barriers to the implementation of healthy eating and physical activity programs and policies.</p>	<p>Building on actions identified in Recommendation 1, planning across all levels will identify implementation barriers, and will determine and apply corresponding approaches to mitigate these barriers for healthy eating and physical activity programs and policies.</p> <p>Target Date: September 2020</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: Substantially Implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: The recommendations from the OAG have provided a platform for the Ministries of Health and Education to collaborate on actions both directly related to the audit findings, and on those that support larger system-wide transformation strategies, including:</p> <p>The Ministries have developed a Memorandum of Understanding that addresses collaboration in the context of working with partners.</p> <p>In addition to ensuring alignment with Canada’s new food guide, the Ministries of Health and Education will be updating the <i>Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools</i> and the related <i>School Meal and School Nutrition Handbook</i> to address any barriers experienced by end-users identified through the School Food Environment Survey and subsequent engagement with parent advisory committees, teachers and service delivery partners during the 2020/21 school year.</p> <p>All government initiatives now incorporate intentional analysis using GBA+ to consider intersectionality in identifying and mitigating barriers to service and inequalities.</p> <p>The Ministry of Health recently initiated a Shared Cost Arrangement with the Sport for Life Society for the development and implementation of a school-based initiative focused on physical literacy and physical activity, with strong connections to mental wellbeing. Determined collaboratively between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, the initiative will focus on providing professional development opportunities and resources for elementary educators that are low-barrier to access and meet the unique needs of educators supporting vulnerable students. Also, that the initiative supports equitable and inclusive participation, with an initial focus on reaching rural and remote schools. To ensure rural and remote school communities are receiving quality physical activity and physical literacy supports as part of the initiative, key community-based organizations (e.g. Engage Sport North) are partnering with the Sport for Life Society in order to leverage the existing local partnerships, relationships, and trust in these communities and schools.</p> <p>The Healthy Schools BC granting process has been updated to address application barriers and to prioritize access for First Nations schools. Program staff have reached out directly to First Nations schools across the province to encourage them to apply for a grant, and to reduce barriers to successful submission of an application.</p>
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			<p>In partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Education, work has commenced to adjust the grant deliverables associated with the BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutrition Program. Program objectives have been updated to better reflect the shared priorities of the partner ministries. The program coordinator guide continues to provide ideas on how to support vulnerable students to access extra fruits and vegetables in a way that reduces stigma, including that leftover product should be placed in a basket at the office so students can help themselves. Additionally, Ministry of Health staff have worked with program staff to explore ways to extend the reach of the program to remote communities with non-conventional school settings.</p> <p>Farm to School BC continues to focus its services on school communities that serve a higher proportion of students experiencing vulnerability as defined by socio-economic status and geography.</p> <p>Incorporation of daily physical activity requirements into the new Physical and Health Education curriculum allowed for the elimination of the stand-alone Daily Physical Activity policy, which many schools/districts reported to be onerous in terms of record keeping/reporting, and disconnected from student learning.</p>
8. Yes	That the Ministries of Health and Education report publicly on shared performance measures that are consistent with key indicators for the physical health and well-being of children and youth.	<p>Work with key partners (e.g. Provincial Health Officer) to validate shared performance measures as consistent with key indicators for the physical health and well-being of children and youth.</p> <p>Target Date: December 2020</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: Partially Implemented.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: The Ministries have initiated a project to identify and gather established indicators of physical health and wellbeing of children and youth from credible sources. Building on these results, and leveraging a complementary project led by Child Health BC in partnership with the Provincial Health Officer, the Ministries will affirm which indicators can be used to best assess the physical health and well-being of children in the setting of schools, and will bring them forward to senior decision-making tables and key partners for consideration and validation.</p>
		<p>Build on existing provincial tools (e.g. Student Learning Survey, Adolescent Health Survey) to collect data on shared performance measures.</p> <p>Target Date: September 2021</p>	<p>Progress Assessment: No action taken.</p> <p>Actions Taken & Discussion: Planned action is sequenced to follow the selection and validation of indicators.</p>

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		Integrated shared performance measures and reporting into Ministry guidance and strategic documents. Target Date: September 2021	Progress Assessment: No action taken. Actions Taken & Discussion: Planned action is sequenced to follow the selection and validation of indicators.

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