



***Water for Life* Implementation Review 2016 to 2019**

BACKGROUND

- One of the primary tasks of the Alberta Water Council (AWC) is to steward the implementation of the Government of Alberta’s *Water for Life* strategy and to champion the achievement of the strategy’s goals. The AWC facilitates this through the standing [*Water for Life Implementation Review Committee*](#), which convenes every few years to undertake a strategic review of the *Water for Life* implementation progress. The current review covers the period from 2016 to 2019 inclusive.
- For this review, the AWC undertook two additional tasks: 1) review and update the committee methodology in line with its standing terms of reference and How-to Guide, and 2) develop a preliminary suite of performance indicators to better assess the implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy and the achievement of goals. (Note: these indicators are to help with the review process, not to audit the Government of Alberta or *Water for Life* partners.)
- This work supports the direction of *the AWC 2019-2021 Business Plan* associated with the *Water for Life* Implementation Review, which identifies the following three strategies:
 - identify and develop metrics for advancing the *Water for Life* goals
 - identify gaps in the implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy
 - prioritize actions and identify roles and responsibilities for achieving the outcomes of *Water for Life*
- The 2016 to 2019 Implementation Review aligns with the completion of the 10-year *Water for Life: action plan* (2009) authored by the Government of Alberta. The recommendations provided in this review have the potential to provide direction and to suggest next steps for the provincial government’s water stewardship strategy.
- The AWC initiated work drafting a suite of performance indicators during the 2016 to 2019 review process. A consultant was commissioned to provide background information and recommendations. Based on the information provided, the AWC compiled a list of potential performance indicators and distributed them for stakeholder review. However, these indicators will not be used to audit the Government of Alberta or *Water for Life* partners in future reviews.

The selected indicators could not be tested or verified because of the reduced capacity of AWC stakeholders due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is recommended that AWC staff test and finalize the indicators before the next review process. The list of potential performance indicators can be found in the *Water for Life* Implementation Review How-To Guide.

- The AWC updated the *Water for Life* Implementation Review How-To Guide to include new processes around the timing of reviews, the information gathering process (including performance indicators), organizing information, and sharing results.
- To inform the 2016 to 2019 review, the AWC used several different methods to gather data and information. Methods included reviewing several pertinent documents and initiatives, distributing a sector survey, holding roundtable discussions with Government of Alberta staff involved in implementation activities, and working with Watershed Planning and Advisory Council managers to gather input from their boards.
- In the 2016 to 2019 *Water for Life* Implementation Review, the AWC observed the following:
 - The actions outlined in the *Water for Life: action plan* are largely complete, and many actions have become part of daily business for people working in water management and stewardship across the province.
 - Significant progress has been made toward all three goals outlined in the *Water for Life* strategy; however, it is recognized that some areas (e.g., Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems) need more attention.
- After gathering and synthesizing information, the AWC made the following 15 recommendations to improve *Water for Life* implementation progress and water and watershed management in Alberta:
 - Recommendation 1. New *Water for Life* Action Plan
 - Recommendation 2. Improved *Water for Life* Reviews
 - Recommendation 3. Small Systems Standards
 - Recommendation 4. Drinking Water Safety Plan Audits
 - Recommendation 5. State of Drinking Water Report
 - Recommendation 6. One-Water Approach
 - Recommendation 7. Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems Review
 - Recommendation 8. Water Use Data
 - Recommendation 9. Sustainable Economy
 - Recommendation 10. Improved Modelling
 - Recommendation 11. Preparedness
 - Recommendation 12. Education and Outreach
 - Recommendation 13. Knowledge Integration
 - Recommendation 14. Partnerships Review
 - Recommendation 15. Advancing Conservation, Efficiency, and Productivity

The report is available [here](#) and more information on the AWC can be found at www.awchome.ca.

The Alberta Water Council is a collaborative partnership that provides leadership, expertise, and sector knowledge and perspectives to help governments, Indigenous Peoples, industry, and non-governmental organizations to advance the outcomes of Water for Life.

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