

# Alberta Water Council Association

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## 2022–2024 Business Plan

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Approved by the AWC Board of Directors November 3, 2022



## Introduction

The Alberta Water Council (AWC) 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\*](#). It advises industry, governments, and non-governmental organizations on matters pertaining to stewarding the outcomes of the *Water for Life* strategy and on effective water resources management policies, practices, and tools.

Since its establishment as a not-for-profit society in 2007, AWC has developed and followed multi-year business plans to guide its work in providing advice on subjects of provincial significance and on topics that affect multiple sectors across Alberta's watersheds. In that time, AWC has released more than 25 major reports with information, advice, and recommendations directed to its members and other participants who are involved in managing Alberta's water resources. The advice of the AWC generally has the consensus support of its members and is consistently considered when informing water resources management in Alberta.

## Looking Ahead

This Business Plan covers 2022–2024. It is predicated on AWC's demonstrated and ongoing ability to leverage substantial contributions of time, knowledge, experience, and money from its diverse and committed participants who collaborate to provide policy recommendations, tools, and advice regarding Alberta's water resources. With its existing structure and proven track record, AWC is ideally positioned to tackle difficult issues as they relate to water and to propose solutions that meet Albertans' needs. In recent years, AWC has demonstrated its ability to successfully take on some projects under expedited timelines for emerging priorities (e.g., Alberta's Water Future project, Wetland Policy Implementation Review project) and has delivered new kinds of outputs, such as the Protecting Sources of Drinking Water in Alberta: Guide to Source Water Protection Planning or the Building Resiliency to Multi-Year Drought in Alberta Guide, in support of our broad network of water managers in Alberta.

In developing this plan, two new themes emerged from AWC members for the Council to focus on over the next few years and represent significant upgrades to this plan from the previous one: strengthening partnerships, and considering how the AWC and its members can address the potential impacts of climate change as individual organizations or as a collective. These two themes are not necessarily mutually exclusive and open the possibility for cross-sectoral collaboration, however they emerged as the clear top-two most supported options among a list of six identified by board members. The relative importance of these themes is already reflected through the work of the recently completed AWF project and the recently launched *Water for Life* Action Plan project (WFLAP). The Alberta's Water Future project identified four main risks

to the future of the Alberta water management system which include climate change, growth, governance and trust, and knowledge. And, the WFLAP was undertaken with a stated intent to adopt a strengthened partnership approach that embraced shared accountability among all the members of the AWC and others, including Indigenous Peoples and communities, for achieving the goals of *Water for Life*. Those two projects should feature prominently in the AWC's work for the next years, and the goals and strategies have been updated to incorporate these new priorities into the long-standing core businesses.

The development and adoption of the Action Plan is an opportunity for AWC members to recommit to a renewed partnership. The multi-sector nature of the action plan raises all AWC members to a shared level of accountability by committing to achieving the goals they set and reporting on their implementation. The Action Plan includes draft actions that are directed at the AWC itself, all based on recommendations from the most recent iteration of the *Water for Life* Implementation Review report or other recently completed reports. These recommendations were approved by consensus and direct the AWC to take on projects in the areas of water conservation, efficiency, and productivity; defining what a reliable water supplies for a sustainable economy means, particularly through a lens of simultaneously managing multiple environmental media as well as greenhouse gases; reviewing the state of healthy aquatic ecosystems and their management; reviewing the *Water for Life* partnerships system and other partners that support the goals of WFL; and continuing to make progress on source water protection in Alberta. Each of these projects has linkages to the threats and opportunities identified in the Alberta's Water Future project. These broad topics provide an opportunity for all AWC members to contribute to these cross-cutting actions as well as ones specific to their own sectors.

Climate change may be the defining challenge of our time and its impacts will permeate through every environmental management decision for the foreseeable future. AWC members are participating in numerous initiatives at all levels of influence to adapt to a rapidly changing world, where every decision to adapt to one issue may be fraught with unintended consequences or outcomes. Managing environmental interests, economic activity, and social needs must be considered in an integrated manner as climate change may be accelerating competition between objectives. Integrated advice should consider the shared and cross-cutting impacts on environmental management, economic activity, and social needs across sectors and across media.

## Vision, Mission, and Values

### Vision

Albertans work together to ensure our water resources are safe, secure, and healthy for current and future generations.

### Mission

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

### Values

The Alberta Water Council is characterized and guided by the following attributes:

<b><i>Collaborative</i></b>	Works to build consensus by listening and seeking to understand diverse ideas and perspectives
<b><i>Fair</i></b>	Makes decisions without favoritism or prejudice
<b><i>Innovative</i></b>	Brings together diverse expertise and experience to develop creative solutions to water resources issues
<b><i>Respectful</i></b>	Shows respect to all participants
<b><i>Responsive</i></b>	Acts on core business water resources issues in relevant timeframes
<b><i>Transparent</i></b>	Is open and accessible, with established processes to share information about its activities
<b><i>Trustworthy</i></b>	Strives to be a respected advisory body through the application of its multi-stakeholder, consensus building process

## Core Businesses

Core businesses reflect the ongoing key responsibilities that an organization must do well to support its mission. The core businesses of the Alberta Water Council are to:

- 1. Advance the outcomes of *Water for Life***
- 2. Provide advice that informs policy or actions**
- 3. Provide a forum to discuss water perspectives**

# Goals, Strategies, Performance Measures and Targets

## Core Business 1: Advance the outcomes of *Water for Life*

**Goal One** Review and provide integrated advice on the implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy and action plan.

### Strategies

1. Identify actions from across AWC sectors and partners to achieving the outcomes of *Water for Life* and consider how to address the challenges of climate change, growth, the need for knowledge, and the need for better governance and trust.
2. Complete the inaugural partner-focused AWC *Water for Life Action Plan* and regularly review and update it.
3. Identify gaps in implementation of the *Water for Life* strategy and find potential actions or synergies between sectors to address the gaps.
4. Continue work on developing appropriate metrics to evaluate and advance *Water for Life* goals.

### Performance Measure

- 1.a) Percentage of AWC members contributing to the *Water for Life* implementation review and action plan renewal process.

Target: 100% of AWC Members contribute to the *Water for Life* implementation review and action plan renewal process.

## **Core Business 2: Provide advice that informs policy or actions.**

**Goal Two Alberta Water Council’s policy recommendations, advice, actions, and tools are integrated, based on a multi-stakeholder perspective, and are responsive to water resources challenges and opportunities.**

### **Strategies**

1. Inform policy recommendations, tools, and advice through broad knowledge focused on risks identified in the Alberta’s Water Future project, current evidence, emerging issues, and traditional knowledge.
2. Develop priorities and suggest actions to appropriate AWC members that align with their needs and contribute to address the challenges of climate change, growth, the need for knowledge, and the need for better governance and trust.
3. Document and communicate the participants’ points of view, work towards consensus and capture diverse perspectives.
4. Engage implementers early to increase the effectiveness of policy recommendations, advice, and tools.

### **Performance Measures**

- 2.a) Percentage of projects completed in the timeline prescribed in the approved project terms of reference.

Target: 100%

- 2.b) Percentage of issues identified by AWC project teams addressed with consensus recommendations.

Target: 85%

## **Core Business 3: Provide a forum to discuss perspectives on water.**

**Goal Three The Alberta Water Council has an effective process for participants to discuss water resources management challenges and opportunities.**

### **Strategies**

1. Provide a process for participants to identify and discuss important or emerging water resource management challenges, including but not limited to those related to the findings of the Alberta's Water Futures report, at the board and project team levels as appropriate.
2. Work with groups that can provide perspectives that cross environmental media to support discussions that lead to integrated solutions.
3. Seek opportunities to coordinate efforts with *Water for Life* partnerships and other groups.

### **Performance Measures**

- 3.a) Percentage of directors satisfied that the AWC's processes give them an opportunity to discuss water resources management challenges and opportunities

Target: 100% of directors are satisfied that the AWC provides effective opportunities to discuss water resources management challenges and opportunities.

- 3.b) Percentage of identified process gaps being appropriately addressed within 6 months of coming to the AWC's attention.

Target: 100%