

Appendix B Questions standing committees can ask

When reviewing reports on plans and priorities and departmental performance reports, committees can ask several questions.

Government policy and direction

- Are the strategic outcomes (objectives) and costs of the program reasonable?
- Would taxpayers agree that these are wise investments and the right priorities?
- Do the program and its objectives continue to make sense in today's context?
- Is the level of resources appropriate?
- Are the risks, challenges, and the course of action adequately discussed?
- Are the strategic outcomes (objectives) and costs of the program clearly described and linked with other horizontal results?
- Is the program's overall direction clear?
- Is it clear what planned results are to be achieved in the short, medium, and long term; by when; and at what cost?
- Is it clear what would have to be accomplished for the program to be judged a success?
- Is the program adequately linked to the related horizontal results of other programs?

Benefits for Canadians

- Has the program delivered the planned results?
- Is there a logical, credible link between the outputs (services provided) and the planned outcomes?
- Is the program achieving its strategic outcome and planned results?
- Is the program sustainable in light of the risks and challenges?
- Is the financial information adequate?
- Is it clear what has been and will be spent on the program?
- Are significant year-to-year variations in expenditures or revenues explained?
- Was the program's contribution to the results achieved explained well?
- What things other than the program's activities could affect the results discussed, for example, external economic and social factors?
- Are the measures used to report results clear and reasonable?
- Is the evidence presented relevant and reliable?

Delivery of the program

- Was the program managed with proper attention to fairness, propriety, and sustainable development?
- Is there assurance that public sector values and ethics are integrated in management controls, for example, codes of conduct?
- Does performance information provide assurance of fairness in service delivery?
- Is the sustainable development strategy effective?



Better ways of delivering results

- Could the program be managed more efficiently?
- Can the program be redesigned to produce the same result at less cost or to produce better results for the same cost?
- Could the results be delivered more effectively?
- Has the right balance been achieved among the various delivery instruments, for example, policy, regulation, and direct program delivery?
- Would collaborating with other levels of government or the private sector be more effective?

Usefulness of the Estimates documents

- Could the documents be made more useful for the committee's policy and legislative agenda?
- Would including additional information in the Estimates documents be useful?
- Have the departments responded to previous committee suggestions and recommendations?
- Have appropriate cross references been provided to relevant documents, such as the Budget and Auditor General reports?

