

COUNTRY PROFILE: CANADA

The proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are relevant for Canada and align well with national level priorities. Canada will need to take significant steps to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Aboriginal peoples in its adoption of the SDGs to ensure that benefits of progress are shared and “no one is left behind.” Improving the sustainable management of natural resources and addressing climate change will also be a priority.

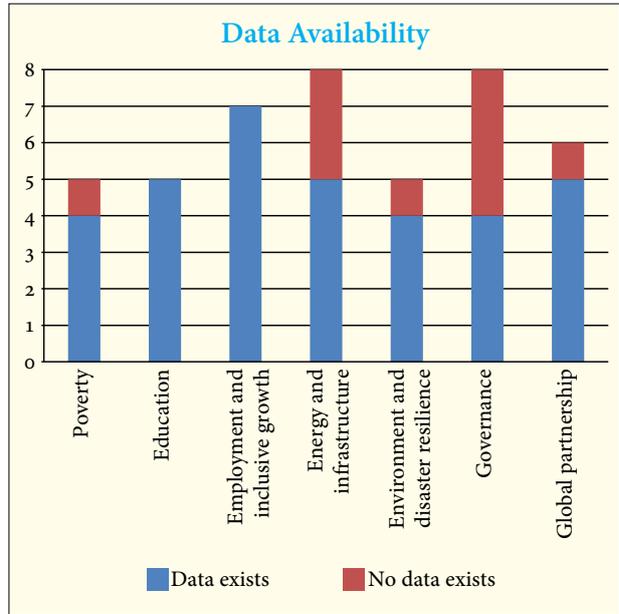
Ongoing efforts in Canada provide a roadmap for SDG implementation and potential exists to harness existing policies and coordination mechanisms across federal, provincial and territorial, and municipal jurisdictions. Going forward, Canada can prepare for the SDGs by bringing together Canadian stakeholders, including sub-national governments, the private sector and civil society, to begin a national conversation on what Canada’s SDG priorities should be and how they can be achieved.

-  Reduce overall poverty | Address poverty for Aboriginals, people with disabilities, female-headed households, recent immigrants and the homeless
-  Improve access to child care | Improve secondary school completion rates for Aboriginal peoples | Increase the number of young adults with problem-solving and critical-thinking skills | Increase the number of adults participating in lifelong learning
-  Promote decent work | Support inclusive growth and reduce income inequality | Ensure equal pay for equal work | Achieve full and productive employment for all including women, youth and Aboriginal peoples
-  Ensure access to safe, efficient and affordable transportation | Improve maintenance of public transport infrastructure | Ensure access to energy and improve efficiency and sustainability of energy supply, including renewable energy
-  Address climate change | Build resilience and reduce vulnerability to natural disasters | Safeguard ecosystems and biodiversity | Improve air and water quality | Reduce per capita waste | Improve integration of biodiversity, ecosystem services and benefit sharing
-  End discrimination and address inequalities of Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, women and recent immigrants | Increase access to justice | Increase political participation | Reduce bribery and corruption
-  Address special needs of developing countries | Promote better statistics for development | Support climate change adaptation and mitigation | Strengthen domestic resource mobilization in developing countries | Implement ODA commitments | Promote global citizenship

National Statistical System

Canada’s highly centralized national statistical system is based on a sound legal framework with a relatively high degree of political autonomy. Statistics Canada serves as the central statistical office and collects data on nearly all aspects of Canadian life, though other government agencies and also produce official data.

Canada is well placed to measure progress on the SDGs, with gaps existing largely for newer goal areas, namely energy and infrastructure and governance. The availability of good quality data is excellent. Statistics Canada’s Quality Assurance Framework provides a set of management tools and mechanisms to ensure the interpretability, accuracy, timeliness, accessibility and coherence of data produced.



Data Quality Assessment¹

Goal area	Relevance	Accuracy and reliability	Timeliness and punctuality	Accessibility and clarity	Coherence and comparability
Poverty	4	4	5	5	5
Education	4	4	5	5	4
Employment and Inclusive growth	3	4	5	5	5
Energy and Infrastructure	3	4	4	4	4
Environment and Disaster resilience	4	4	4	4	4
Governance	3	4	4	4	4
Global partnership	3	3	4	4	5

Political Economy of the Data Revolution

While Canada has an excellent statistical system, challenges exist. The government’s commitment to good quality data has been questioned owing to budget cuts which have reduced the quality of data for affected programs and led to insufficient human resources. Changes to data collection practices has also been a driver of data gaps. Nevertheless, data accessibility is excellent. Canada’s adoption of open government principles has greatly improved the availability of official produced data, particularly through Canada’s Open Data Portal. A significant amount of Statistics Canada’s data is also freely available online and through public use microdata files.

An examination of the data availability-transparency-accountability nexus in Canada shows that Canada’s legal framework provides an appropriate basis for accountability. Canada’s media reports on official data, as well as independent research, and serves as an important accountability mechanism. However, closing space for advocacy and dissent – particularly in the form of government funding cuts for the research and public engagement activities – may undermine the ability of civil society to hold the government to account.

¹ A scored from 1 – 5. Five means that the data sources in the goal area meet all components of the data quality assessment framework while 1 means they meet none. To score a three, the basket of data sources used for the goal area must meet at least half of the data quality components.