IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP CANADA DETAILED ACTION PLAN
to the recommendations of the Audit of Settlement Services for Syrian Refugees of the Fall 2017 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada

Report Ref. No.	OAG Recommendation	Departmental Response	Description of Final Expected Outcome/Result	Expected Final Completion Date	Key Interim Milestones (Description/Dates)	Responsible Organization/ Point of Contact (Name, Position, Tel #)	*Indicator of Achievement* (For Committee Use Only)
Rec. 1 (3.49)	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada should improve its planning and approval processes to ensure the timely transfer of funding to service providers in order to meet urgent programming needs resulting from events such as the Syrian refugee initiative.	Agreed. A key element of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's success in managing its grants and contributions is ensuring funds are made available on a timely basis, aligned with where demand for services exist, and that the Department exercises due diligence in its disbursement. The Department planned for and completed deployment of funding for almost 750 new settlement and resettlement contribution agreements with about 500 separate recipients for the 2017-18 fiscal year, including the disbursement of funds within the unprecedented context of the Syrian refugee initiative. The Department intends to review where it can make further improvements to its planning and approval processes, particularly for urgent and unexpected programming needs such as the Syrian refugee initiative, by December 2017. This review will include business processes established by the Department to effectively manage grants and contributions. The review will also examine the Department's mechanisms to engage and work collaboratively with provincial and territorial governments and other stakeholders, regarding Settlement Program funding, priorities and intake processes.	Update G&C Manual - Chapter 2 – Planning. The chapter will elaborate on planning, business and priority-setting processes at the Sector, program, regional and local levels to support timely and effective evidence-based decision-making. Update the Procedure on Spending Authority for Grants and Contributions with the goal of streamlining processes to ensure timely decision-making, information sharing and disbursement of funds to service provider organizations (SPOs) to ensure continuity of service delivery.	July 2018	December 2017: Preliminary review of business/ planning processes and advanced release of information to regional offices to facilitate their planning for disbursement of funds. Status: Completed. Notional budget information for 2018-19 was released to regional offices earlier than previously planned which has enabled IRCC officers to work with recipient organizations to make budget adjustments and have amended agreements in place by April 1, 2018. May 2018: English draft - updated manual chapter on planning, as warranted. May 2018: English Draft – updated procedures on releasing notional funding information to regional offices to better support continuity of service delivery. July 2018 - Final versions of updated manual chapter and procedures.	Stephanie Kirkland DG, Settlement Network 613-437-5813 Christopher Meyers, DG, Financial Management 613-437-8537	
Rec. 2 (3.62)	To more efficiently manage and meet the	Agreed. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada recently created the	Updated Waitlist Management and Referral Guidelines	July 2018	January 2018: Draft updated guidelines for SN regions and service provider feedback.	Stephanie Kirkland	

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	demands for language training, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada should improve its management of wait-lists in consultation with service providers.	Settlement and Integration Sector to provide a single point of accountability for the strategic vision and oversight of the department's settlement and integration policy, programs and operations. This will also allow for a more focused and integrated approach and will help support our commitment to ensuring that newcomers to Canada receive timely, high quality Department -funded settlement services. The Department has already conducted a review of language training and wait-time issues so that it can better understand the dynamic nature of contributing factors, such as financial, structural, geographic or personal factors. This review is already informing plans to improve wait-list management monitoring and reporting and, going forward, will encompass the sharing of best practices among provinces, territories and key stakeholders. Further, in collaboration with provinces and territories, the Department is currently advancing a Pan-Canadian Language Strategy to improve the coordination of English as a second language (ESL) and French as a second language (FSL) programming for adult immigrants and refugees in Canada (outside of Quebec). The Strategy, which was approved by senior federal and provincial officials in May 2017, is now being implemented, with enhancements anticipated by March 2019 in the areas of employment-related language training, ESL/FSL literacy and e-learning. Finally, the Department is	aligned with findings from the language training and wait-time internal review. Refined wait-list reports and accompanying assessment tools to facilitate IRCC's Settlement Network (SN) officer follow-up with recipients on seat occupancy requirements. Paper outlining options for a national waitlist management system.		Status: completed. IRCC is completing analysis of feedback and is on track to issue final guidelines in February. February 2018: Final updated guidelines that provide greater clarity, including technical tips and operational best practices, on IRCC requirements related to service provider organizations' (SPOs) management of their waitlists. June 2018: New wait-list report requirements finalized. July 2018: Refined wait-list reports that will facilitate IRCC-SPO discussions on a community approach to language training seat availability, including referrals between SPOs. June 2018: draft options paper regarding a national waitlist management system developed. July 2018: final paper that will outline the feasibility of enhancing IRCC's iCARE waitlist module to facilitate SPOs' compliance with IRCC's requirements related to waitlist management and referral practices; should these enhancements not be feasible, the paper identify other options. The Department has been taking a number of actions to facilitate more robust measures to address the demand for language training and better understand how language training service provider organizations manage their waitlists. Such measures include :	DG, Settlement Network 613-437-5813	

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		exploring options for a national waitlist management system, including expanding the Ontario system (HARTS) to other provinces on a pilot basis.			• Issued Waitlist Management and Language Referral Guidelines in February 2016 to all IRCC-funded language service provider organizations to standardize waitlist management and improve waitlist data accuracy. The guidelines also instructed service provider organizations to prioritize all refugee clients, including Syrian refugees, in accessing language training.
					 • Provided targeted funding for additional language training support. Nationally, in 2016-17, over 40% (over $27.6 M) of the Syrian Supplementary Funding ($67M total envelope) was allocated to language services at literacy and basic language ability levels. This created over 7,300 new language training seats across Canada (outside of Quebec) to meet the needs of Syrian refugees. The supplementary funding also went towards increased support services, such as childcare, that facilitate newcomers' participation in language training,
					 • Created monthly summary waitlist reports since January 2017 to enable IRCC program officers to track waitlist patterns locally, by service provider and by language training level.
					 • Conducted a review of language training and wait-time issues from June to September 2017. This review consisted of analyzing waitlist data and holding discussions with six service provider organizations in BC, Alberta and Ontario. Next steps from this review include:
					    o Updating Waitlist Management and Referral Guidelines based on the findings from the exercise;
					    o Enhancing the monthly summary waitlist		

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					reports so that IRCC program officers can better monitor the usage of language training services; and o Exploring options for a national waitlist management system. • Convened a teleconference of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Language Forum in July 2017 to discuss potential areas of FPT collaboration, including work to achieve a common understanding of waitlist dynamics and improving data sharing. The Department will continue to work closely with provincial and territorial partners to develop a common understanding on issues related to wait times for language training. • Held a meeting with the National Language Advisory Board in December 2017 to share national perspectives on the nature of language training waitlists and possible national approaches moving forward. The Department will continue to seek advice from this forum of experts in newcomer language assessment and training.		
Rec. 3 (3.71)	To ensure that the quality of settlement services across Canada is consistent, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada should include clear service expectations in contribution agreements for services delivered by settlement service	Agreed. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is committed to ensuring value for money in the delivery of all its grant and contribution programs. The Department has already set clear service expectations in almost all April 2017 to March 2020 contribution agreements for language training and assessment services. The Department will expand this by developing more robust service expectations for other settlement services in new and amended agreements. Service expectations will build on existing program descriptions, standards and policies, as well as any new guidance/policies emanating	To ensure that the quality of settlement services is consistent across Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada will include clear service expectations for information and orientation services (I&O), needs assessment and referral services (NARS), community connections (CC), employment-related services and support services are set out in all relevant and active contribution agreements for	March 2019	April 2018: draft requirements for Information & Orientation, Needs Assessment and Referral Services, Community Connections in line with existing Settlement Program descriptions, guidelines and policies. May 2018: final service requirements for the above service components added to the Grants and Contributions System. June 2018: draft requirements for support services and employment-related services in line with existing Settlement Program descriptions, guidelines and policies.	Stephanie Kirkland DG, Settlement Network 613-437-5813	

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	providers.	from follow-up actions related to the Settlement Program evaluation. This will be addressed throughout the duration of the existing agreements and before the signing of the next round of agreements, which is planned for March 2020.	services delivered by settlement service providers.		November 2018: final service requirements for the above service components added to the Grants and Contributions System. May and November 2018: implementation guidance issued to IRCC officers May 2018 to March 2019: requirements added to contribution agreements during scheduled amendment updates to minimize administrative burden on recipients. During the audit period, IRCC: • Implemented service expectations for language assessment and training services in all applicable contribution agreements effective April 1, 2017. • Convened a Working Group on Support Services to provide policy and operational guidance on IRCC-funded support services. New guidance documents will inform service expectations for crisis counselling and other support services. • Initiated a review of relevant policy and program documents to inform the development of service expectations for remaining settlement program themes.		
Rec. 4 (3.91)	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada should update and implement its performance measurement strategy for the Syrian refugee initiative to ensure that the Department can fully and consistently monitor the integration of Syrian refugees in	Agreed. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada developed a comprehensive framework for the monitoring of outcomes for Syrian refugees. This framework was anchored in a multi-year approach and based on multiple data sources. The Department also completed a rapid impact evaluation of early outcomes of the Syrian refugee initiative. As a significant amount of performance information on resettlement and settlement was collected and reported regularly to	Updated Outcomes Monitoring Framework (OMF) and Performance Information Profile (PIP) for the Syrian Refugee Initiative that is also fully aligned with the IRCC's Resettlement Program and Settlement Program Performance Information Profiles. Ongoing efforts to	January 2018	The Department has updated its Outcomes Monitoring Framework (OMF) and Syrian Performance Information Profile (PIP), which contains updated, focused list of indicators and key data needs. Status: completed. In addition to these foundational documents, IRCC has also put in place a multi-pronged data strategy to further strengthen departmental capacity to monitor, analyze and report on outcomes for Syrian refugees, and course correct as needed. A summary is	Ümit Kiziltan, Director General Research & Evaluation Branch 613-437-6106	

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	Canada.	partners and the public, data collection strategies were adjusted to reflect and meet the critical information and reporting needs of both internal and external stakeholders. The Department will update its Outcomes Monitoring Framework, including its performance measurement strategy, by January 2018, and continue to report internally and externally on the integration of Syrian refugees as more data and performance information become available.	strengthened departmental capacity to monitor, analyze and report on outcomes for Syrian refugees, and course correct as needed.		provided below: The Integration Contribution Agreement Reporting Environment (iCARE) system tracks all IRCC-funded settlement service usage for services such as language training, needs assessments and referrals, employment services, etc. Detailed client data is provided by Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) and updated monthly, allowing IRCC to monitor uptake and trends in settlement services by client, gender, age, small geography, language level progression, etc. Results from ongoing research on the Syrians from the 27 IRCC-SSHRC co-funded projects are being tracked and analysed to inform policy/program innovation and will include findings on specific Syrian settlement topics, including successful practices, impact of Syrian refugee arrivals on receiving communities, and settlement experiences. Two new emergent data sources will provide valuable new insight into Syrians' settlement, including about their early labour market participation (e.g., incidence of employment, earnings, social assistance use). The 2016 Census, linked with the IRCC's admissions data for the first time in Canadian history, and the Longitudinal Immigrant Tax Filer Database (IMDB) 2015 tax data will be analysed in the first part of 2018. Another key initiative to further improve the ability to monitor the outcomes for this population will be data linkages. IRCC has linked health and immigration data with		

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					Ontario and British Columbia; and will complete similar linkages with New Brunswick and Manitoba in 2018, which supports advanced research on health outcomes of Syrians. The Department is already developing data-sharing arrangements with Provinces to enhance the flow of performance information between jurisdictions in areas such as education and social services, to further augment performance information on the social outcomes of Syrians. Noting, however, that such data takes time to become available, collect and merge. The Department is also developing a settlement outcomes survey for Syrians, to be administered in 2018 Spring which will provide timely and regular outcomes information on areas such as Syrians' knowledge of Canadian labour market, employment, knowledge of Canada, use of official languages, and participation in Canadian society. IRCC capacity to monitor the outcomes of Syrians is further enhanced through the new data linkage with the Statistics Canada's Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), which will enable analysis on immigrants, including Syrians', life satisfaction, sense of belonging, civic participation and social connections, and mental health. The Department is also exploring additional socio-economic outcomes data on immigrants at large, including the Syrians, in partnership with Statistics Canada within the context of its modernization initiative.		

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					In terms of its reporting strategy, IRCC produces a Syrian Results Monitor, updated quarterly - a multi-layered dashboard that provides a synthesis of settlement results from a multitude of sources – service usage, research and evaluation results, provincial data (where available), service provider reports. A series of tables on Syrian settlement services (based on iCARE data) is updated monthly and is posted on the Government of Canada Open Data Portal monthly. Additional Syrian results reporting will continue to take place in the annual public Departmental Results Report. Together, these efforts will provide timely and increasingly more comprehensive results information for Syrians in 2018 and for the years to come and broaden the results reporting on outcomes.		