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Results at a glance: Horizontal Evaluation of the Chemicals Management Plan

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Program context

The Chemicals Management Plan (CMP) is jointly managed by Health Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). Launched in 2006, CMP assesses health and environmental risks posed by chemical substances and organisms and manages toxic substances according to the risks they present. The program brings together various federal chemicals programs under a single strategy and implements actions under multiple federal laws, including the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* (CEPA).

CMP has been funded in four phases:

- Phase I: 2006-07 to 2010-11
- Phase II: 2011-12 to 2015-16
- Phase III: 2016-17 to 2020-21
- Phase IV: 2021-22 to 2023-24

The Public Health Agency of Canada C also received CMP funding; however, these activities will be assessed under the Travel and Border Health Evaluation.

Evaluation approach

The Office of Audit and Evaluation collected information on Health Canada and ECCC activities from the first two years of CMP Phase IV (2021-22 and 2022-23).

The evaluation used the following data collection methods:

- Document review;
- Interviews;
- Performance data analysis;
- Financial data review; and
- International scan.

What the evaluation found

- CMP has made progress in achieving program outcomes across each activity area. The program has addressed 95% of established priority substances and it has assessed and managed new substances in a timely manner. Various Performance Measurement evaluations indicate that collectively, risk management activities, compliance promotion and enforcement actions have served to reduce human and environmental exposures.
- Although the program continues to run a successful public information campaign on hazards in household products, some of CMP's information is not easily accessible or understandable for non-technical audiences. In terms of collaboration with external partners and stakeholders, CMP engages frequently and in a transparent way,

but more could be done to engage in a meaningful way with Indigenous partners.

- The evolving Canadian chemicals management landscape and expectations of increased transparency from Indigenous partners and stakeholder groups make CMP's work increasingly complex. In addition, the evaluation identified several challenges for the program, including the increasing complexity of substances, obtaining the necessary data for timely decision making for environmental risk assessment and risk management, and potential resource limitations.
- Looking to the future, CMP is facing program renewal and new priorities introduced through the modernization of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* with Bill S-5. CMP has well-established processes and collaborations to support necessary future changes. However, the program will need to review its priorities to better meet future needs and expectations.

Recommendations

- Review program priorities and align resource allocation across all thematic work areas based on reviewed and renewed priorities.
- Address the ongoing need for data and improve data infrastructure.
- Improve risk communication to people in Canada and support technical communication across different partner and stakeholder groups.
- Develop and maintain engagement across different external partner and stakeholder groups, including Indigenous partners.

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