RECOMMENDATIONS

Governments, businesses and communities must get serious about putting adaptation policies and practices into place now, while better identifying the physical and social climate risks threatening well-being and future prosperity. The following policy recommendations provide a starting point:

1 All orders of government should significantly scale up public funding for implementing adaptation.

A lack of foresight on climate change risks should not be a barrier to significantly scaling up adaptation investment. Addressing climate-related risk and building resilience implicates many, if not most, government activities and programs. Successful implementation therefore requires not only dedicated government capacity and expertise on adaptation, but mechanisms to integrate and fund adaptation in existing government programs and public investments, including infrastructure, health care, Indigenous affairs, Northern programs, economic development, energy, public safety, natural resource management, and environmental protection. To drive this change, government programs and investments should transparently evaluate their effects on current and future climate risks, and the costs and benefits of incorporating adaptation and resilience. As our analysis shows, adaptation faces barriers to implementation, but returns multiple benefits.

2 The federal government should convene provincial, territorial, Indigenous and municipal governments to co-develop a more coordinated approach to governing adaptation.

The need to deploy adaptation at the scale and speed that Canada requires transcends administrative, geographic, and sectoral boundaries. Adaptation must be tailored and implemented at a local level to reflect local context. Yet coordination can reduce overlap, inconsistencies, and gaps. A coordinated, collaborative approach could set adaptation priorities, goals, and measures of progress, establish roles and responsibilities, identify policies that are essential for driving adaptation at all scales, and coordinate and leverage finance.

3 Governments and financial regulators should systematically enhance public disclosure and transparency of the economic and social implications of climate change risks across both the public and private sectors.

As the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures and Canada's Expert Panel on Sustainable Finance have highlighted, transparency about climate change risks is essential for allocating investment away from risk and towards resilience. This extends beyond disclosure rules for large, publicly traded companies; it also includes increased transparency around the climate risks that governments, communities, and individuals face. Whether incorporated into government credit ratings or real estate home inspections, this information will help governments, firms, and individuals better prepare for a changing climate. It will also shift investments toward resilient solutions, galvanizing a range of adaptation actions.

Three ways governments should make climate change a national priority:

Dramatically scale up public investment in adaptation, given economic and other benefits.

Work with other governments in Canada to improve efficiency and coordination.

Systematically enhance disclosure of physical climate risks to mobilize planning and investment decisions.

The uncertainty inherent in climate change requires acting decisively on what we already know while also developing improved foresight.