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# Evergreen Evaluation Strategy for the Invisible No More Project Report Card



**SICEMA**

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION AND  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN MILITARY AFFAIRS



Version 1.0

This resource was written by the team of the Invisible No More (INM) Project which is short for the project titled, “Invisible No More: Canadian Women Veterans Moving the ACVA Report Recommendations to Full Implementation,” located at the Centre for Social Innovation and Community Engagement in Military Affairs (SICEMA) at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Canada.

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**This is Version 1.0 of the Evaluation Strategy, which is an evolving document that will continue to be updated in the future. Feedback on this document is welcome and can be sent to Caleigh Wong, Veteran Project Partner, at [Caleigh.wong@msvu.ca](mailto:Caleigh.wong@msvu.ca).**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Definitions</b> .....	1
<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>Background Literature Review</b> .....	6
<b>The INM Report Card Evaluation Framework</b> .....	7
<b>1. Appropriateness</b> .....	9
<b>2. Acceptability</b> .....	9
<b>3. Adoption</b> .....	10
<b>4. Fidelity</b> .....	10
<b>5. Absorption</b> .....	11
<b>6. Sustainability</b> .....	11
<b>7. Women Veteran Centred</b> .....	12
<b>8. Equity/Intersectionality</b> .....	13
<b>9. Accountability</b> .....	13
<b>Evaluation Framework Summary</b> .....	15
<b>Intersectionality Considerations</b> .....	16
<b>References</b> .....	17

### Definitions

Meaningful implementation	Implementation that includes both formal completion and achievement of the spirit of a recommendation from the perspective of the group who is most impacted by the recommendation (i.e., women Veterans).
Women Veterans	In the context of the implementation of report recommendations, women Veterans includes serving and formerly serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) who self-identify as women or have medical needs related to XX chromosomes.
Women Veteran Interest Holders	An umbrella term to describe the different groups of women Veterans, including those who are part of the ACVA Study on the Experience of Women Veterans, the Invisible No More Project's Women Veterans Engage workshop, the Invisible No More Project research interviews, other Invisible No More Project engagements, and the women Veteran community at large.
Operationalization	The process of translating abstract policy/program goals (such as those mandated through external recommendations) into concrete actions, measurable indicators, and defined targets.
Outputs	Activities carried out by institutional owner(s) of a recommendation to operationalize its implementation.
Outcomes	The changes in target groups/services/norms (e.g., case managers, disability benefits, military sexual trauma disclosure protocols) resulting from a recommendation's associated outputs and operationalization.

Impacts	The short- and long-term effects on the experiences of women Veterans from the recommendation's operationalization and implementation.
Institutionalization	Where change is adopted by a relevant institution like the Department of National Defence (DND)/CAF, RCMP, and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) in a manner that is official, systematic, and sustainable.

## Introduction

The landmark parliamentary report, *Invisible No More. The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans*, was tabled in Parliament on June 12, 2024, by ACVA, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs. The report made 42 recommendations to improve research, recognition, services, supports, data collection, and accountability for the women who serve or have served in the Canadian Armed Forces and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The federal government disagreed with only one recommendation. With the tabling of this report, some of the unique needs of women Veterans have been formally recognized. The question now is whether the recommendations from the report are being implemented in ways that produce meaningful, measurable, and lasting improvements for Veterans.

The Invisible No More (INM) Project is a collaborative multi-year research and engagement initiative to support effective implementation of the recommendations of the parliamentary report. The Project aims to support government's implementation of recommendations by helping to make progress, challenges, and lessons learned more visible over time. The goal is to support implementation by identifying practical evidence, emerging progress, and remaining gaps in ways that can help departments, partners, and Veterans work toward better outcomes.

The INM Project is based on a key principle: research, policies, programs, and services are more effective when informed by the experiences of the people they are intended for. Women Veterans with direct experience of the systems being assessed are therefore pivotal partners in helping to shape the INM Project's priorities, activities, and outputs. The INM Project combines evidence-informed research, assessment tools, and Veteran perspectives to better understand what is working but also where further action may still be needed in relation to the implementation of the report's recommendations.

One of the INM Project's activities is to produce a 2027 Report Card on the implementation progress of the recommendations of the *Invisible No More. The Experiences of Canadian Women Veterans* parliamentary report. Informed by evidence and by the experiences of women Veterans, the INM Report Card is intended as a plain-language tool to support shared understanding of implementation progress.

This Evergreen Evaluation Strategy outlines a proposed evaluation framework to assess implementation progress on the 42 recommendations of the landmark parliamentary report, *Invisible No More. The Experiences of Canadian Woman Veterans*. This Strategy forms the contextualizing document for the INM Report Card, and offers guidance on the requirements for meaningful implementation of the 42 recommendations from the perspective of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) women Veterans. The aim of the INM Project is to establish a clearer understanding of the reasoning behind each recommendation; through this, the project welcomes the opportunity to revisit with government their responses to the 42 recommendations.

The function of the INM Report Card is to create an external accountability mechanism for the meaningful implementation of the 42 ACVA report recommendations. The INM Report Card intends to:

- provide external, women Veteran centred monitoring of implementation of ACVA recommendations;
- create public accountability for government commitments;
- provide participatory oversight by those affected (“nothing about us without us”);
- translate parliamentary recommendations into measurable implementation benchmarks.

The format of a report card has been chosen for its significance across the Five Eyes defence institutions, including for the Department of National Defence (DND), the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), and Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC). These organizations are regularly subject to external reviews, audits, committee studies, and advisory group recommendations. Report cards have been used both institutionally and by third-party monitors and advocacy groups for public accountability, monitoring, and evaluation. Given the uniquely insular, ‘black-box’ nature of the defence ecosystem relative to other public organizations, report cards establish a formal external accountability mechanism for the government’s implementation of mandated recommendations. Report cards tracking progress in implementation of recommendations focused on the military members and Veterans have been used by the Office of the Veterans Ombud (2017; 2018; 2019; 2021; 2022; 2023; 2024; 2025), the Office of the Auditor General (2018), the third-party external monitor assigned for the implementation of the Arbour report (2022) recommendations, and by academics such as Dr. Megan Mackenzie (2025). The DND/CAF Ombudsman (2025) also

publishes progress reports on the government's implementation of its report recommendations. Report cards of this nature have been used in other Five Eyes defence organizations, such as with the implementation of the Broderick report (2012) that produced 21 recommendations to improve the treatment of women in the Australian Defence Force.

The INM Project follows this approach to ensuring institutional accountability by producing a report card that tracks progress in the meaningful implementation of the ACVA report's 42 recommendations from the perspective of the group most impacted by these recommendations—women Veterans. This also introduces a form of participatory advocacy to the process of recommendation implementation, by opening up dialogue between government and those harmed or impacted by previous government decision making. This participatory approach serves the dual function of establishing meaningful implementation from the perspective of impacted groups, as well as offering the opportunity for healing and institutional justice. In the case of the ACVA report, such an accountability mechanism is particularly crucial as no third-party monitor or assessment authority has been assigned to the recommendations, which span multiple federal institutions.

## **Background Literature Review**

The use of theoretical approaches in implementation science can be categorized into three aims: guiding the process of translating research into practice, explaining what influences implementation outcomes, and evaluating implementation (Nilsen, 2020). The latter is the most relevant to the INM Project, and the least ‘theory-rich’ category. For example, while the aim of explaining what influences implementation outcomes relies heavily on classic theories from organizational behaviour and psychology, evaluating implementation is primarily guided by specific evaluation frameworks rather than wider theories.

Evaluation frameworks typically focus exclusively on outcomes, but can also draw upon models and concepts from wider implementation science such as “implementation climate”. However, these types of models and concepts are often more interested in predicting and explaining implementation effectiveness, rather than developing concepts of implementation success. For the purposes of the INM Project, we are formalizing an overarching evaluation framework that supports each of the recommendations’ meaningful implementation. There may be future opportunities to leverage this body of literature from implementation science to inform other research questions related to implementation, outside of the assessment of implementation itself.

## The INM Report Card Evaluation Framework

The proposed evaluation framework (see Figure 1 below) draws and builds upon Proctor et al.'s (2010) framework of implementation outcomes for evaluating implementation success, McPhail's (2003) Feminist Policy Analysis Framework, and Thomann and Lieberherr's (2024) process of policy implementation. For the purposes of this evaluation framework, the complex mechanism of policy/program implementation is simplified to begin with the ACVA study and its final recommendations (**studies and recommendations**), through to the departmental implementation activities (**outputs**) of DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC, onto the resulting changes of target departmental groups/services/norms (**outcomes**) and the intended effects of the recommendations for women Veterans (**impacts**), and finally to the departmental and/or third-party evaluation of policy/program effectiveness and implementation progress (**assessment and evaluation**). In this evaluation framework, operationalization is used to describe the process of translating policy/program goals (such as those mandated through external recommendations) into concrete actions, measurable indicators, and defined targets.

Fundamentally, the INM Report Card will seek to establish whether government operationalization and implementation of each recommendation incorporates women Veterans' perspectives on meaningful implementation. This perspective is captured through an extensive coding process that categorizes all women Veterans' testimony made during the ACVA Study into The Experience of Women Veterans. This coding process identifies each time a woman Veteran witness described specific outputs, outcomes, and/or impacts relevant to one of the 42 recommendations. From there, implementation rubrics identifying themes in women Veteran-identified outputs, outcomes, and/or impacts are built for each recommendation. Continuing to draw upon the coded testimony, these implementation rubrics will further identify relevant departmental ownership (e.g., DND/CAF, RCMP, VAC) and recipient groups involved (e.g., CAF Veterans, RCMP Veterans, active servicemembers, etc.). While the implementation of some recommendations may involve other government departments and ownership, this evaluation strategy is primarily focused on departmental ownership with regards to DND/CAF, RCMP, and VAC.

The women Veterans who gave parliamentary testimony and the women Veterans who participated in the INM Project interviews form the principal interest holders at this current stage of our work. However, at a later stage, other women Veteran interest holders will be engaged

through project workshops and community validation sessions to solicit their inputs into the recommendations' implementation rubrics. This evaluation strategy outlines the proposed approach to using these rubrics to assess whether each of the 42 recommendations have been meaningfully implemented from the perspective of women Veterans.

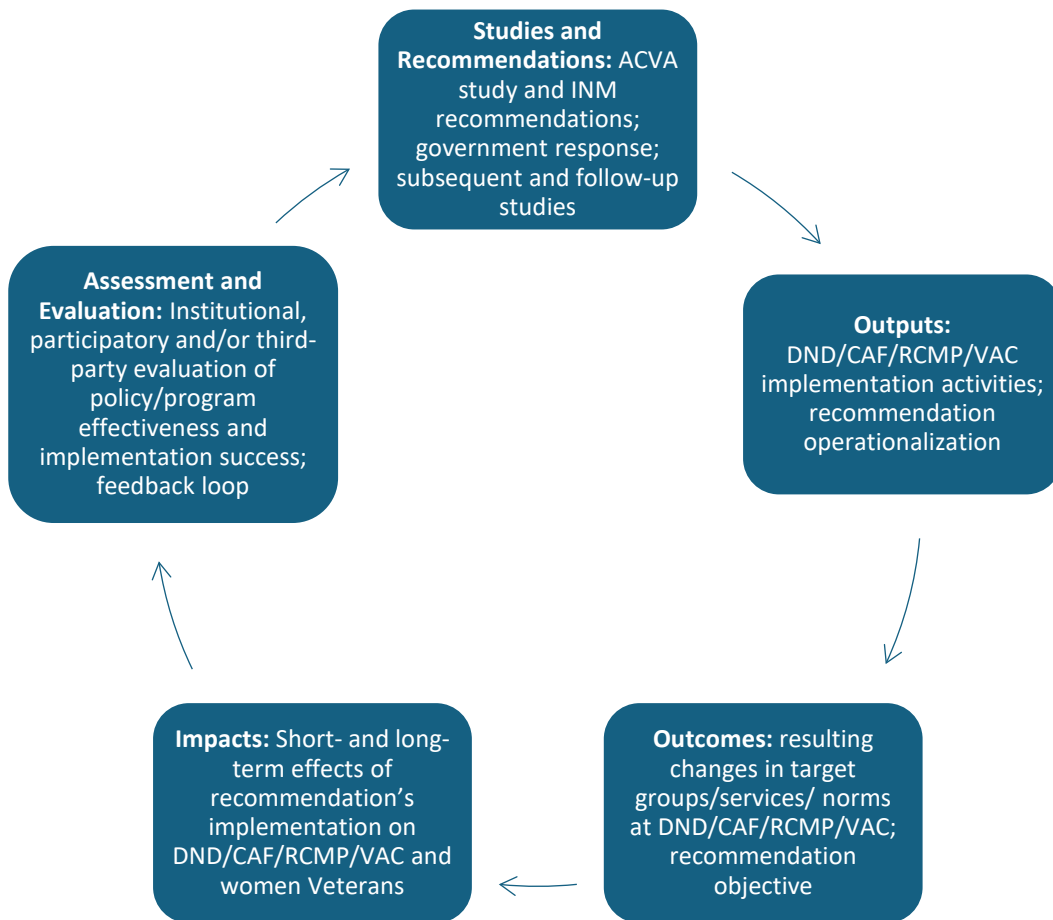


Figure 1. The complex causal mechanism of policy/program implementation simplified into a cyclical process.

Below are nine proposed conditions required for meaningful implementation of any given recommendation. Example questions to guide assessment of these conditions are offered under each. Not all questions will be relevant to each recommendation; rather, these can be interpreted as holistic guiding prompts that assist in the process of meaningful implementation from the women Veterans' perspective.

In the framework below, “women Veteran interest holders” is used as an umbrella term to describe women Veterans who are part of the ACVA Study on the Experience of Women Veterans, the INM Project Women Veterans Engage workshop, the INM Project research interviews, other INM Project engagements, and the women Veteran community at large.

## **1. Appropriateness**

*Appropriateness is focused on the outputs associated with the recommendation’s implementation and if these activities align with the context of the given policy/program/activity setting. This condition is interested in women Veterans’ perception of how implementation is being operationalized relative to the recommendation as written in the final report. Appropriateness is a process-oriented condition of meaningful implementation that is concerned with the problem(s) associated with the recommendation.*

1. Do the recommendation’s associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) fit the particular context or need, according to women Veteran stakeholder inputs?
2. Does the recommendation’s operationalization reflect the outputs described by women Veteran interest holders, i.e., from parliament testimony, research interviews, and engagement workshops?
3. Do what women Veterans describe as the ‘problem’ and what DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC describe as the ‘problem’ align in this policy change/initiative?
4. Do the outputs associated with this recommendation’s associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) align with civilian clinical practice guidelines and best practices?

## **2. Acceptability**

*Acceptability is focused on the outcomes associated with the recommendation’s implementation and if these results align with the target changes identified by women Veterans. This is a goal-oriented condition of meaningful implementation that is concerned with the objective(s) associated with the recommendation.*

1. Does this recommendation’s associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) objectives reflect the outcomes described by women Veteran interest holders?

2. Do the outcomes of this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) address the specific concerns described previously by women Veterans?
3. Have the outcomes of this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) reduced harm experienced by women during and after service?

### **3. Adoption**

*Adoption is focused on (early) outputs associated with the recommendation's implementation and the nature of "the decision of" DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC "to commit to and initiate an evidence-based intervention" (Rabin et al., 2008, p. 118). This condition for meaningful implementation is interested in the intention, initial decisions or actions to employ/deploy the recommendation's associated policy change(s)/initiative(s).*

1. Has uptake of the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) by the intended service provider or organization reflected meaningful institutional adoption?
2. Has this recommendation's implementation been set up for success from the perspective of women Veterans?
3. Has this recommendation's implementation process reflected meaningful commitments for adoption (rather than delay, dilution, or "pilot forever" approaches by DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC)?

### **4. Fidelity**

*Fidelity is focused on the comparison of initial DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC commitments for outputs associated with the recommendation, and the actual disseminated and implemented outputs. This is a process-oriented condition of meaningful implementation that is concerned with the policy changes' or initiatives' adherence to and (dis)continuity from initial government commitments and planning.*

1. Has the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) been delivered as described in official commitments, such as in government/Ministerial announcements?

2. Does the implemented policy change(s) or initiative(s) adhere to the original recommendation's associated policy change or initiative protocols, including the magnitude of the policy change(s) or initiative(s) and the quality of the delivery?
3. Have public announcements and commitments from DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC on policy change(s) or initiative(s) associated with the recommendation been followed?
4. Where applicable, have changes in government and federal leadership affected initial commitments to specific outputs associated with this recommendation?

## **5. Absorption**

*Absorption is focused on the institutionalization of both the outputs and outcomes associated with the recommendation's implementation. This condition for meaningful implementation is interested in the integration of the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) within DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC, their subsystems, and other government bodies.*

1. Have the outputs and outcomes of the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) been integrated into an agreed upon, critical proportion of the target departmental groups/services/settings to achieve women Veteran interest holders' described impact?
2. For recommendations involving multiple departments, have the outputs and outcomes of the associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) been coordinated between DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC, in line with their individual and overlapping departmental mandates and jurisdictions?
3. In the women Veterans' perspective, do the outputs associated with this recommendation's implementation involve all those identified as key parties?

## **6. Sustainability**

*Sustainability is focused on the outputs, outcomes, and impacts associated with the recommendation's full and meaningful implementation. This condition for meaningful implementation is concerned with whether the recommendation's associated policy*

*change(s) or initiative(s) is maintained within DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC's ongoing, stable operations.*

1. Have this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) been institutionalized at DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC? Has this policy change or initiative been widely advertised, communicated, and understood by the target audience?
2. If required, can the outputs of this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) be maintained over time in a way that reflects the original intention, which may require reviews and updates?
3. Have the outcomes of the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) been integrated into DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC departmental culture?
4. Are there provisions for long-term funding and resource allocation?
5. Are there provisions for ongoing enforcement, evaluation and monitoring, and adaptability to ensure the impact of implementation is maintained over time?
6. Has the recommendation's implementation process reflected any backsliding (e.g., through push back, removal, or silent death of earlier initiatives through termination of funding, or similar evidence of de-prioritization)?

## **7. Women Veteran Centred**

*This condition for meaningful implementation is concerned with the centring of women Veterans throughout the implementation process and is focused on the outputs, outcomes, and impacts associated with the recommendation's implementation.*

1. Are impacted women Veterans and their lived experiences clearly centred in the outputs of the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s)?
2. Do the outputs of the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) address the sex and gendered nature of the problem(s) women Veterans have described?
3. Do the outcomes of the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) shape institutional behaviour to be more aware of the lived experiences of impacted women Veterans?

4. Do the impacts of this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) increase the visibility of impacted women Veterans at DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC?

## **8. Equity/Intersectionality**

*Equity/Intersectionality is focused on the outputs, outcomes, and impacts associated with the recommendation's implementation. This condition for meaningful implementation is interested in whether the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) support aims of intersectional sex and gender equity at DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC.*

1. Does this recommendation's outcomes and impacts work to achieve equity for all women Veterans versus civilian women and military men including considerations of multiple identities and intersectionalities (e.g., race, rank, officer/NCM, Regular/Reserve Force, CAF/RCMP, young/old, single/married, urban/rural, sexual identity, class, religion, disability, etc.)?
2. Does this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) consider the different lived experiences of women Veterans of multiple intersectionalities (e.g., race, sexual identity, class, religion, disability, etc.)?
3. Will the benefit of this recommendation's outcomes and impacts be enjoyed equitably by women Veterans of multiple marginalities (e.g., race, sexual identity, class, religion, disability, etc.)?
4. Have DND/CAF/RCMP/VAC conducted SGBA+ analyses and followed SAGER principles on this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) and adjusted policy outputs as required?

## **9. Accountability**

*Accountability is focused on the outputs, outcomes, and impacts associated with the recommendation's implementation. This condition for meaningful implementation is concerned with accountability and transparency assurances for the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s).*

1. Is there any party or office specifically identified as accountable for the outputs, outcomes, and short- and long-term impacts, inclusive of the diverse lifecycle of this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s)?
2. Are data and evaluation results publicly accessible for this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s)?
3. Is there a public timeline available for the outputs and outcomes of this recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s)?
4. Are there any accountability measures in place in the case the recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s) are not carried out?

## Evaluation Framework Summary

1. **Appropriateness:** Whether the design and activities of the policy/program meaningfully fit the problem as defined by women Veterans, and align with the recommendation as written and with the real-world context.
2. **Acceptability:** Whether the outcomes achieved reflect the changes women Veterans actually wanted, including addressing harms and meeting stated needs.
3. **Adoption:** Whether institutions make genuine, timely commitments to implement the recommendation—moving beyond intent into concrete uptake rather than delay or symbolic action.
4. **Fidelity:** Whether the policy/program is implemented as originally promised, maintaining the integrity, scope, and quality of the initial design and commitments.
5. **Absorption:** Whether the policy/program is fully integrated across systems and actors, becoming embedded within institutions and coordinated across relevant departments.
6. **Sustainability:** Whether the policy/program is maintained over time through stable funding, institutional support, and ongoing monitoring.
7. **Women Veteran Centred:** Whether impacted women Veterans and their lived experiences are clearly represented and centred throughout implementation, shaping both outputs and institutional awareness.
8. **Equity/Intersectionality:** Whether implementation equitably benefits diverse women Veterans, accounting for intersecting identities and addressing differential impacts.
9. **Accountability:** Whether there are clear responsibilities, transparency, and consequences tied to implementation, including accessible data, timelines, and enforcement mechanisms.

## **Intersectionality Considerations**

While the *Invisible No More* report recommendations are grounded in public-facing consultations and interviews that brought to light important lived experiences of women Veterans, it is worth noting that not all intersecting dimensions of experience would necessarily have been captured equally. The INM Report Card framework does not revisit or assess the consultation methodology itself; rather, it offers a way of ensuring accountability for the ACVA recommendations that were ultimately proposed. To ensure that these early gaps do not gradually fade from consideration, this critique will be noted on the INM Report Card's public facing platform (i.e., on the [INM Project's website](#)).

The evaluation process itself will also attempt to capture intersectionality considerations in the implementation process, while working within the limits of the recommendations themselves. This will largely be achieved through Condition 8: Equity/Intersectionality that explicitly asks whether GBA+ and/or SGBA+ have been conducted for recommendation's associated policy change(s) or initiative(s). It is acknowledged that this does not necessarily capture how women Veterans of different marginalities experience targeted policy changes. Another aspect of the INM Project is to develop a military/Veteran-specific GBA+ tool, which will be incorporated into the evaluation framework.

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