

# The Case for a **National Food Policy Council**

Report by the *ad hoc* Working Group  
on Food Policy Governance

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# Introduction

As the Government develops *A Food Policy for Canada* to provide an integrated approach to food-systems, governance has emerged as a critical issue. This report was compiled at the request of an informal network of organizations from the food business, farming, civil society, philanthropic and academic sectors interested in national food policy, convened by the Arrell Food Institute at the University of Guelph, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Food Secure Canada, Maple Leaf Foods, and the McConnell Foundation (see contributors in Appendix I).

The report builds on multi-stakeholder discussions that took place in March at the University of Guelph,<sup>1</sup> in June at the Canadian Federation for Agriculture,<sup>2</sup> at the Ottawa Food Summit convened by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and at a September meeting in Ottawa at which an initial draft of this paper was discussed. The following recommendations are based on food-system governance research from domestic and international jurisdictions. We propose a governance structure that will make adaptive changes to policies, programs and regulations at different levels, over time, and that recognizes the need for a process that goes beyond the initial launch of *A Food Policy for Canada*.

Our recommendations, after analysis and discussion with stakeholders, are: (1) the creation of a National Food Policy Council as soon as possible; (2) implementation of four short-term recommendations for improving food policy governance in Canada; and (3) consideration of certain longer-term options for institutional support of food policy governance.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see: [https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/finalbrainstormonfoodpolicysummaryreport\\_0.pdf](https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/finalbrainstormonfoodpolicysummaryreport_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see: [http://www.cfa-fca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Finding-Common-Ground-Summary-of-Discussion\\_Final2.pdf](http://www.cfa-fca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Finding-Common-Ground-Summary-of-Discussion_Final2.pdf)

## National Food Policy Council

Above all, however, the analysis and discussion with stakeholders has led the group to suggest the development of a National Food Policy Council, a new independent multi-stakeholder body that convenes actors from across the food system including governments, civil society groups, academic experts, and private-sector stakeholders to provide consistent monitoring, well-researched advice, and broad stakeholder support for *A Food Policy for Canada*. The National Food Policy Council would proactively engage with these diverse stakeholders to provide ongoing input into the implementation of *A Food Policy for Canada*. Equally important, it would help build collaboration, elevate and coordinate programs, and drive change among these diverse stakeholders to accelerate progress towards the food policy's objectives.

The idea of a National Food Policy Council has been raised repeatedly in the consultations referred to above as an important governance innovation that could help resolve two critical problems facing our food system: (1) the lack of a specialized agency to monitor and improve coordination across departments and levels of government involved in food, and (2) a lack of inclusivity in food policy-making. These two limitations in current arrangements compromise policy coherence and effective action and contribute to the growing disconnect between Canada's food producers and the broader Canadian public. If properly established, such a council can play a key role in setting Canada in long-term direction towards an economically robust, innovative and sustainable food system in which all Canadians can fully enjoy their right to healthy food and in which the industry flourishes. This report provides some reflections on the governance challenges and opportunities before us.

A food policy council is a group of stakeholders from across the food system that meets to discuss and act on food issues. As membership generally includes actors from various sectors of the food system, food policy councils tend to have a more comprehensive and pluralistic view of food policy issues than could individual actors. Food policy councils achieve success by allowing multiple food-systems actors to discuss complex issues, to work together on solutions that take the concerns of various sectors into account, and to find resources through their networks that can push implementation. Since the emergence of the Food Policy Council model as an advisory council to Toronto's Board of Health in 1991, over 200 Food Policy Councils have been created, mostly at the level of municipal and state (in the US) governments. Multi-sectoral bodies akin to an NFPC have also been established in several countries and have been successful in bringing together diverse actors and providing sound advice (see Appendix II for international examples). Examples of similar kinds of advisory councils have also existed in Canada in other domains (see Appendix III).

Between the council itself, its staff and the working groups or task forces it convenes on priority issues, the NFPC would involve key federal government departments and agencies (eg. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Health Canada; Environment and Climate Change; Innovation, Science and Economic Development; Employment and Social Development; and Indigenous Services), academics and researchers, food industry representatives from across the value chain (including farmers and fish harvesters), a broad cross-section of civil society, the philanthropic sector and Indigenous

peoples' representatives.<sup>3</sup> It is crucial that membership reflect the Canadian food system's many actors in order for the NFPC to be effective and to build trust. We envision a tripartite structure in which government, industry and civil society are represented in a balanced way on a Board or Executive governing body, which should be a manageable size.<sup>4</sup> These sectoral leaders would need to have a broad vision of Canada's food system and capacity to represent the views of their respective constituencies and to report back to them in formal and credible ways. Beyond the considerations of balance and representation, the precise details surrounding membership warrant further research and discussion, notably by deepening the case studies in Appendix III.

If the Council is created as an Act of Parliament, and appointments to the Board were to be made by Governor in Council, the Act could define the scope of criteria that should be considered, and certain safeguards could be built in, as was the case in Rights & Democracy (see Appendix III). Alternatively, the government, along with stakeholders from industry and civil society, could collaborate on the creation of a new institution without an Act of Parliament. In any case, the NFPC should have a well-resourced secretariat, based in Ottawa, with partners and collaborators across the country and would not require a significant allocation of funds from a single source. Conceivably, over time, it could have a funding mandate to support work on the ground that furthers the objectives it seeks to fulfil and could receive contributions from other organizations interested in supporting its mandate.

## ***The Mandate of a National Food Policy Council***

The main purpose of the NFPC would be to support the ongoing development and implementation of *A Food Policy for Canada* with specific attention to creating more cohesion in policy interventions and improved dialogue among a diversity of stakeholders, through research and monitoring, benchmarking and target-setting and convening workshops, conferences and dialogues where cross-sectoral and inter-governmental collaboration could be beneficial.

### **Specifically, the NFPC could be given the following mandate:**

1. Align purpose, expertise and actions to implement *A Food Policy for Canada* across sectors
2. Advise government on critical food policy issues as they emerge while ensuring departments retain independent authority over their mandates
3. Work to build consensus and engagement while fostering efficiencies among diverse stakeholder groups and government actors

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<sup>3</sup> Two examples of the many food policy councils that include a mix of government, civil society and industry representation are Finland's National Nutrition Council (<https://www.evira.fi/en/foodstuff/healthy-diet/national-nutrition-council/>) and Michigan's Interdepartmental Collaboration Committee (ICC) Food Policy Subcommittee [http://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1572\\_2885\\_70065---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mdard/0,4610,7-125-1572_2885_70065---,00.html)

<sup>4</sup> The International example that best represents a cross-sectoral council working on the full range of food system challenges is the UK's Council of Food Policy Advisors, created in 2008 (and disbanded after a change in government in 2011). <https://www.wired-gov.net/wg/wg-news-1.nsf/0/32437AA89B964566802574DA003C4855?OpenDocument>

4. Provide research and expertise that incorporates data and analysis from across the food system to inform government policy-making
5. Provide regular venues for dialogue and information-sharing, such as web platforms, conferences, workshops
6. Set benchmarks to independently monitor progress on achieving the goals set out in Canada's food policy
7. Provide support to resource-constrained stakeholders, enabling inclusive participation in relevant food policy discussions
8. Proactively engage stakeholders to facilitate coordination of activities, alignment and accelerate the pace of change towards the objectives of *A Food Policy for Canada*
9. Potentially, given adequate resources and coordinated support from private and philanthropic organizations, fund projects that meet food policy goals

## **Rationale**

In recent years, various countries have developed national food policies or strategies designed to address, in a more coordinated and harmonized manner, an array of complex food-system issues (see Appendix II). While the impetus behind each country's national food policy development varies, a common denominator of each of the countries examined is that most have introduced some form of multi-stakeholder and intra-/inter-governmental co-governance mechanisms to assist with implementation, stakeholder engagement and monitoring. Notably, in cases in which inclusive and transparent multi-stakeholder processes do not exist (e.g. Australia and Wales), the result is incomplete and implementation has been contested.<sup>5</sup>

Canada has potential to show leadership with a fully integrated approach. Canada could be the first major global food exporter to develop an integrated food policy supported by cross-sectoral co-governance mechanisms. This step could give Canada a competitive edge in the world of food trade by focusing policies on the triple-bottom line goals of economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Canadian stakeholders have long discussed various elements of an integrated governance approach, and the Government is already convening 16 departments and agencies as it develops *A Food Policy for Canada*. If the government fulfils its commitment to deliver a policy statement on food by mid-2018, there will necessarily be many unresolved issues and policy dilemmas that will require further dialogue among stakeholders, and more work, including research, consultation, coordination, program delivery and public education. The time is ripe to work together to produce a broad policy framework that provides cohesion and direction to improve food security, health and safety,

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<sup>5</sup> For an analysis of the tensions that emerged in Australia's food policy development, see 'Blueprint for a National Food Strategy'. Centre for Agriculture and Food Systems at Vermont Law School and the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic <http://foodstrategyblueprint.org/> (pages 29-30 and 79-82). For a critique of the Welsh process, see: Marsden, T., K. Morgan and A. Morley. Food Policy as Public Policy: A Review of the Welsh Government's Food Strategy and Action Plan. Public Policy Institute for Wales. Cardiff University. <http://ppi.w.org.uk/files/2016/06/PPIW-Report-Food-Policy-as-Public-Policy.pdf>

environmental sustainability, innovation and economic development – and a governance structure to ensure successful implementation from across society.

***National food policy governance is important to various food-system actors for different reasons:***

- Industry actors across the food-system value chain have long advocated for an interface through which they can engage whole-of-government approaches to explore and understand and address policy issues that extend beyond the domain of any single department. Furthermore, Canada’s agri-food industry stakeholders continue to grapple with the growing distance between the average Canadian and the production of their food.<sup>6</sup> The dialogue among stakeholders involved in national food policy governance presents a potential forum to build common understanding and proactively address public trust concerns.
- Civil society actors have critical on-the-ground, evidence-based expertise in health and nutrition, environment, social justice and equity issues, a range of factors that could be better integrated in policy development. Civil society organizations and institutions have had little access to decision-making processes, despite frequently confronting policy barriers that compromise their own effectiveness and regularly contributing to consultations. Their integral participation offers opportunities for the federal government to foster innovation and use its resources more effectively.
- Academic experts also contribute clear, independent, peer-reviewed research across many disciplines to help forecast problematic policy issues, monitor impacts, evaluate programs and ensure that a wide and cross-disciplinary evidence base is consistently informing policy.
- Funders of all stripes are increasingly interested in working with governments, communities, businesses and organizations to make joint investments that use evidence of impact to drive investment decisions.

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<sup>6</sup> Industry has come together over the past two years to put together a steering committee and network of industry stakeholders focused on developing educational materials and messaging to help promote better understanding of the sector. The Canadian Centre for Food Integrity, an independent affiliate of the Centre for Food Integrity in the United States, was also established in 2016 as a resource to empower and support industry stakeholders in ways that earn public trust. Further information available at: <http://www.foodintegrity.ca/>

## ***Context for Food Policy Decision-Making***

Canada has many existing ‘decision-making nodes’ based on constitutional authorities, historical precedence, commonly accepted business practices and organizational mandates.<sup>7</sup> The challenge of a coherent national food policy is setting a unifying direction that helps align all of these nodes.

Many organizations already exist to help provide some coordination and alignment.<sup>8</sup> Given the complexity of the food system, however, governance within and across existing nodes is incomplete and coordination often weak. A national food policy sets the stage for progressive alignment of decision-making. Organizations and governments must progressively devote resources and introduce tools to encourage shifts that meet the shared policy objectives (a key feature of successful co-governance arrangements).

The proposals in this paper should be seen as part of an ongoing strategy to develop adaptive policy shifts, evaluate effects, and then take next steps. The authors of the proposed model take the view that a national food policy requires a pan-Canadian approach that touches all food-system sectors and decision-makers. In proposing this, we wish to avoid the limitations of the 1977 Food Strategy for Canada, which had national goals but did not actively include the provinces and other stakeholders in the development of the strategy or in commitments to implementation.

This proposal takes into account and reinforces the Government’s existing principles for *A Food Policy for Canada*, namely that it be: inclusive, participatory, in keeping with reconciliation efforts, collaborative, results-oriented, evidence-based, integrated, enabling of policy coherence (vertically and horizontally), systems-based, adaptable, innovative, accountable and transparent. A key aspect of activating those principles is to ensure that new collaborative structures are established, both across government and extending beyond it. Our proposed National Food Policy Council draws upon these values, as well as the municipal experience across Canada over the past three decades in which all stakeholders are encouraged to contribute experience, knowledge, and resources.

A central question for *A Food Policy for Canada* is how to govern our food system in a way that meets our social, environmental and economic goals. The policy must build on existing (complex) structures, decision-making nodes and market realities, while fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration that will help deliver action on the vision and priorities identified within it. Whichever priorities are announced, any new governance mechanism will need to show some short-term gains and

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<sup>7</sup> Such nodes include Parliament, and provincial and territorial legislatures, self-governing First Nations, and associated agencies responsible to them; Cabinets and cabinet committees; Departments/ministries and agencies; Central coordinating agencies and committees (PMO and premiers’ offices, civil service agencies, interdepartmental committees); FPT bodies (Councils of ministers, councils of civil servants); bilateral and multilateral agreements governing trade and investment as they relate to food; Municipal councils and department; First nations (from local Councils and organizations, to regional bodies such as First Nations Food Security Networks or Indigenous Food Circles, to national organizations) and nation-to-nation relations (legislation, treaties and agreements, co-management arrangements); Private businesses and farms, business associations, farm and commodity groups; Courts and tribunals; Non-governmental organizations and networks at the community, provincial and national levels; Roundtables (including various forms of multi-stakeholder committees and food policy councils)

<sup>8</sup> e.g. municipal food policy councils, First Nations councils, farm organizations, commodity groups, business associations, Value Chain Roundtables, FPT agreements (e.g. Canadian Agricultural Partnership), interdepartmental committees, central agencies, Cabinet committees, and House and Senate committees

efficiencies in meeting government goals, and to identify longer-term plans to tackle the more complex problems that will require sustained effort over many years by different actors.

## ***Additional Recommendations for Improving Food Policy Governance***

Research demonstrates that food policy-making is more effective if an inter-sectoral governance structure such as a food policy council is coupled with inter- or intra-governmental structures. A number of proposals have been developed by the working group, and they should be considered alongside the development of a NFPC. The NFPC could potentially be tasked with developing such recommendations in more detail in the first few years of its mandate.

- a. Adapt current interdepartmental mechanisms to create an inter-departmental food policy committee (comprising Deputy Ministers) under Privy Council Office (PCO) leadership (accountable to PCO), with a mandate for joined-up food governance, supported by a food policy secretariat housed within PCO. It could be built on structures created to develop food policy, but should have central government, rather than departmental, leadership: a core goal is to avoid levels and departments of government working at cross purposes, with clear principles and priorities established and agreed upon in *A Food Policy for Canada*.
  - i. **International Precedents:** Ireland's High Level Implementation Committee and Brazil's Inter-Ministerial Food and Nutritional Security Chamber
  - ii. **Key considerations:** This committee, and the new secretariat, must be closely coordinated with FPT processes, Indigenous consultation processes, and the multi-stakeholder National Food Policy Council.
- b. Initiate a Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) process of alignment with the national food policy supported by existing FPT support bodies. Build on existing meetings of ministers (e.g. Agriculture and Agri-Food, Health, Environment and Climate Change) or, potentially, create a new Council of Ministers for Food Policy. Alongside of this structure, a new FPT civil service committee on food policy should be created and existing relevant FPT committees should align with food policy priorities. Given the complexity of the file, a challenge is to identify for both committees the range of participating ministries.

- i. **Key considerations:** At a minimum, we recommend Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Health Canada; Environment and Climate Change; Innovation, Science and Economic Development; Employment and Social Development; and Indigenous Services.
  
- c. A Nation-to-Nation/Crown-to-Inuit process on food, between Indigenous peoples and the federal government, which would also involve creating mechanisms for Indigenous participation and input into local, regional and national food-policy-making bodies. This discussion, and the identification of suitable supports, would also involve, at a minimum, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the Métis National Council (MNC), the two new federal departments (Indigenous Services and Crown-Indigenous Relations); Health Canada; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Innovation, Science and Economic Development; Environment and Climate Change; and Employment and Social Development.
  - i. **Key considerations:** This process should be connected to the federal commitment to nation-to-nation relations and reconciliation.
  
- d. Annual Canadian Food Policy Meeting: Similar to the Value Chain Roundtable (VCRT) process, the leadership of a NFPC should meet annually with additional key deputy ministers who participate in FPT processes. The meeting would be hosted by the NFPC.
  - i. **International Precedent:** Brazil's annual food policy conference between government, industry and civil society actors. Domestic Precedent: VCRT All Chairs Forum
  - ii. **Key considerations:** Ideally, similar meetings would take place down the road within each province among the leadership of a provincial food policy council meeting with key provincial deputies involved in FPT processes.
  
- e. A food policy evidence centre to improve the way government and other organisations create, share and use a diversity of high-quality evidence for decision-making related to national food policy.
  - i. **International Precedent:** Seven What Works Centres in the UK collate existing evidence on the effectiveness of policy programs and practices, produce reports and systematic reviews in areas where they do not exist, assess the effectiveness of policies and practices against an agreed set of outcomes, and share findings in an accessible way.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For more information, see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-works-network#the-what-works-network> and Bridging the Gap, a recent Mowat Centre report on designing a Canadian What Works Centre. (<https://mowatcentre.ca/bridging-the-gap/>)

## Long-term options

Consistent with related areas and other jurisdictions, these structures and initiatives will need detailed consideration as the governance model develops.

- a. **Cabinet Committee on food:** Cabinet committee reconfiguration has historically been used to highlight complex files and political priorities.
- b. **Federal Departments of Food** to consolidate functions from many departments. Other jurisdictions have done this, including the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- c. **Canada Food Act (similar to the Canada Health Act):** Given some of the jurisdictional parallels between health and food in Canada, it may be worth in the long term creating a comparable Act that sets out the criteria for participation of all food-system actors in the change process.

# Appendix I

## *List of contributors*

Many individuals contributed to the research, analysis and construction of this report. It is the product of several rounds of drafting, discussion and feedback, and revision and represents the collective expertise of people from a wide range of places in the food system. Organizations are indicated for identification purposes only.

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## Appendix II

### *International cases examined*

In recent years, various countries have developed national food policies or strategies designed to address, in a more coordinated and harmonized manner, an array of complex food-system issues (each with different priorities). Notably, the countries discussed here are those that have explicitly developed national food strategies or similar food co-governance structures. Due to time constraints, we have not examined the food governance structures of other major agricultural exporters (with the exception of Brazil and Australia).

- Norway created its National Nutrition Council in 1975 to address two major issues: growing rates of cardiovascular disease within Norway, and the global food crisis of the mid-1970s (Blueprint, 26).
- Brazil developed its National Food and Nutrition Security Policy in 1999 to address poverty and improve the diet, nutrition, and health of the Brazilian population.
- Scotland (2009), the United Kingdom (2010), Wales (2010), Australia (2013), and Ireland (2014) all created national food plans and strategies primarily aimed at growing agricultural exports while concurrently addressing related issues such as climate change. To advance its food policy goals, each country has developed an array of substantive, procedural and institutional policy tools.

### *Examples of co-governance mechanisms created:*

- **Finland** initially set up a National Nutrition Council in 1936. It was restructured in the early 1980s to better facilitate policy deliberation and coordination. The council has 13 members representing key government departments, as well as representatives from industry, agriculture and consumer organizations. It proposes motions for authorities and undertakes research and reports on efforts by industry and other actors to improve the diet of the Finnish population (Roos et al. 2002).
- **Brazil's** Inter-Ministerial Food and Nutritional Security Chamber (also known as the Intersectoral Committee for Food and Nutrition) co-ordinates policy across relevant ministries, coordinates with sub-national authorities, and works closely with the National Food and Nutrition Security Council (CONSEA) to turn proposals into policy. One-third of CONSEA's membership comprises high-level government officials responsible for areas related to food security, with the remainder coming from civil society organizations (e.g. non-governmental organizations, religious institutions, and professional associations) (Leão and Maluf, 2013).
- **Norway** created its National Nutrition Council in 1975 to address growing rates of cardiovascular disease in the context of a growing global food crisis (Blueprint, 26). As in Finland, the main

purpose of the council is coordination and deliberation, and it has no formal executive power (Milio 1981; Klepp and Forster, 1985).

- The **UK** created a cross-sectoral 15-member advisory ‘Council of Food Policy Advisors’ in 2008. The Council included a secretariat (established under the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) with reporting functions. The Council played a key role in developing and implementing a whole-of-government food strategy document (‘Food 2030’, released in 2010) until a change of government.

### ***Examples of limited co-governance mechanism development or implementation:***

- **Australia’s** proposed National Food Plan (2013; never implemented due to a change in government) was intended to work with the states and territories on food-related policy through traditional mechanisms, including the Council of Australian Governments Legislative and Governance Forum on Food Regulation, as well as the Standing Council on Primary Industries. Australia also had a consultative/stakeholder engagement body (Australian Council on Food) made up mostly of industry representatives. Further, Australia’s high-level National Food Policy Working Group, designed to serve as a conduit between the food industry and government, had 10 of 13 members coming from industry. No parallel mechanism was created for engaging with civil society stakeholders (Blueprint, 29). The Australian government was challenged at multiple stages in the development of its food policy by civil society organizations who argued that its processes lacked inclusion and transparency (Carey et al. 2015).<sup>10</sup>
- A Food Strategy for **Wales** (2010) identifies “building connections and capacities” across the food system as a central priority. Food for Wales proposes that “a key feature of the Strategy is to encourage integration of disparate strands of food policy (such as nutrition, food hygiene, and food production) and to link food policies with other key initiatives (such as waste and energy minimisation, sustainable tourism and transportation)” (Food for Wales, 68). Marsden et al. note that despite its ambitious governance agenda, Welsh efforts fall short in five areas: a) engaging with stakeholders from across the agri-food system; b) using available policy levers; c) driving innovation for systemic and adaptive change; d) creating space for challenge and reflection; and e) focusing on the key dimensions of vulnerability in the Welsh food system (Marsden et al. 2016, p 10). A similar situation exists in Ireland (High Level Implementation Committee), Scotland (Food and Drink Leadership Forum).

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<sup>10</sup> This was one of the factors that led civil society organizations in Australia to form the Australian Food Sovereignty Alliance and develop *The People’s Food Plan* (2012).

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## Appendix III

### ***Domestic models examined (re: National Food Policy Council structure)***

Canada has a variety of institutional models that can provide inspiration and lessons for the establishment of a National Food Policy Council, depending on the precise mandate proposed. Research has shown that the most effective models have a direct link to government but a capacity for independent action that is not contingent on government agreement. The examples below are not an exhaustive list but illustrate options for how to approach a new institution like a National Food Policy Council and how it can accomplish core functions such as (1) providing independent advice to government, (2) sharing information from different fields and disciplines (e.g. health and agriculture); (3) brokering consensus among diverse stakeholders, (4) independent research and monitoring that provide valuable data to assist with policy development, (5) building public support for policy goals.

#### ***Rights & Democracy (officially the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development):***

Rights & Democracy's President and board members were appointed by order in council in consultation with opposition parties. Rights & Democracy reported to Parliament on an annual basis and was allocated budgets for five-year terms in order to ensure its independence (undermined in the latter years and eventually closed by the federal government). Every five years an independent

evaluation was done. Its budget started at \$1 million per year and expanded to \$5 million over the first five-year term. The failure to significantly diversify its funding (in contrast to IISD), and changing government priorities with regards to its mandate, eventually compromised its independence and efficacy. Rights & Democracy's Board had the power to name three representatives.

#### ***International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD):***

IISD received initial core funding (\$25 million over five years) from Environment Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Province of Manitoba to plan and

establish operations. IISD is well-regarded around the world and is heavily invested in UN processes.

### ***Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW):***

CACSW started as an independent advisory group with access to Parliament, but, over time, was taken over by government (e.g. publications were initially independent and peer-reviewed, but the Ministry of Employment and Immigration began to cull and even change the

work prior to publication, without always consulting the researchers responsible for the work). Doris Anderson, former president of CACSW, stated that an independent council should not report to a cabinet minister.

### ***Value Chain Roundtables (VCRTs):***

Currently, VCRTs support communication between industry and relevant government departments. For instance, an annual All Chairs Round Table includes the deputy minister from AAFC, deputy heads from other federal departments and agencies, and senior government officials from multiple departments. The Bee Health Roundtable is probably the most emblematic model for a

National Food Policy Council, given representation from across the supply chain, governments and an NGO, and a mission beyond just production. Interviews suggested that equal representation for non-profits, alongside government and industry, could support more diverse stakeholder representation.

### ***Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA):***

SUFA was meant to clarify roles and responsibilities of jurisdictions in health care, social services, post-secondary education, social assistance, and training. It was designed to set new rules for federal spending power and establish rules for cooperation and conflict in

social policy. However, several analysts believe that it did not fuel effective FPT collaboration as the federal government continued to introduce social policy initiatives that are exclusively provincial jurisdiction by using its spending power and not consulting with provinces.

### ***National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE):<sup>11</sup>***

The NRTEE was an advisory and research council that advised the federal government on the intersection of environmental and economic issues, established as a federal government agency through the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy Act, passed in 1993. It produced research reports, brought

together diverse experts from various environmental sectors, and provided policy advice to government. The NRTEE was "the only national organization with a direct mandate from Parliament to engage Canadians in the generation and promotion of sustainable development advice and solutions".

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<sup>11</sup> For more information, see: <http://collectionsCanada.gc.ca/webarchives2/20130322140948/http://nrtee-trnee.ca/>

NRTEE members were appointed by the federal government to serve for terms that lasted up to three years. Its members represented business, academia, environmental organisations, and labour and public policy organisations. The members were supported by staff managed by a President and CEO appointed by Governor in

Council. The NRTEE's Secretariat was responsible for the oversight of the research suggested by its membership and for the administration and communications work of the Round Table. It reported to Parliament through the Minister of the Environment. NRTEE funding was cut relatively easily because it did not have grassroots support.

### ***Commissioner of Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD):***

Part of the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), this position could be a model for monitoring functions related to food policy implementation. The OAG (and the CESD) reports to Parliament, has a significant budget allocated by Parliament and significant legislative authority to examine departmental spending. Unfortunately, however, the position is limited by that same legislation

to assess value for money, and does not have the authority to examine policy *per se*. Historically, a firewall has been constructed between the CESD and environmental groups which would be a limiting factor for the food policy case. Additionally, the emphasis is placed on federal government affairs rather than the entire policy network.