

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ROADMAP DEVELOPMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE HEALTH SYSTEMS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA



Between 2023-2024, three British Columbia Health Authorities—[Fraser Health](#), [Interior Health](#), and [Vancouver Coastal Health](#)—developed Planetary Health organizational strategies, with the aim to guide and inform each organization’s efforts and priorities in creating a climate-resilient, sustainable and low-carbon health system. Based on their experiences, below are key considerations for organizations undertaking similar efforts, grouped in four sections:

- (1) Governance and Leadership**
- (2) Strategic Alignment**
- (3) Measurement**
- (4) Overall Learnings**

For more resources, view [CASCADES’ Strategy & Performance for Sustainable Health Systems](#).



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- ❑ Ensure active and visible support and commitment from the Board and Senior Leadership.
- ❑ Designate accountable leaders at the senior level (e.g., Chief Executive Officer, Vice President of Transformation, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Medical Health Officer, Public Population Health Officer).
- ❑ Articulate and clarify how the Planetary Health agenda is relevant to each Vice President portfolio and Senior Executive Leader.
- ❑ Establish a multidisciplinary core team of experts to lead the development of the Strategic Roadmap.
 - ❑ The core team can include members from the following areas: Transformation, Facilities Management and Operations, Energy and Environmental Sustainability, Population and Public Health, Quality and Patient Safety, Indigenous Health, Infection Prevention and Control, Medical Affairs, Communications, and Health Emergency Planning. Support for core team members can be in-kind, dedicated roles, or compensated through specific funding.
- ❑ Determine a clear mechanism for communication between the core team, Senior Executive Leaders, and Board members for the approval, endorsement, and advancement of drafted recommendations and roadmap implementation.
- ❑ Consult external advisors for learning, resources, and evidence- and data-driven processes (e.g., external consultants, [Centre for Sustainable Healthcare](#), [CASCADES](#), and other healthcare organizations).
- ❑ Establish a robust and inclusive engagement strategy to learn from key partners about priority areas, opportunities, and challenges. Engagement strategies can include focus groups, surveys (internal and external), sprints, workshops, and key informant interviews.



- Align Planetary Health with the organization's strategic framework.

Examples include:

- Establishing Planetary Health as an organizational foundational pillar and/or strategic priority.
 - Articulating the interconnection and the role of Planetary Health in helping fulfill other organizational and strategic goals (e.g. connection with Indigenous Health, achieving high-quality care, linkages to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, etc.)
 - Embedding Planetary Health in the organizational reporting process and systems, with clear goals and objectives to track and monitor over time.
- Establish mechanisms to trickle down the Planetary Health goals and strategy to embed all levels of the organization. Examples include:
 - Developing a work plan at the unit/department/division level, with clear action items and leads
 - Delegating a Planetary Health improvement initiative to each subordinate or team and track with the performance management systems
 - Provide regular Planetary Health updates and reports to Senior Executive Team, Boards and Organization through scheduled meetings, townhalls, etc.
 - Determine short- and long-term (aspirational) actions and goals to ensure Planetary Health remains at the forefront and priority for the organization.



- When determining environmental sustainability metrics and targets, refer to any relevant provincial regulatory frameworks (e.g. [Climate Change Accountability Act](#) and British Columbia's [CleanBC plan and Roadmap](#))
- Ensure that all goals and targets are aligned with the overall organizational strategy
- Indicators and targets do not have to be fully developed at the outset. You can begin with a basic framework and refine and adapt as you progress.
- Metrics should cover various areas relevant to the organization and its operations, including facilities and energy emissions, waste, clinical services, climate change adaptation, and emergency management.
 - There may be structures, processes, and expertise that allow for more advanced and detailed measurement—start with what you have and build from there.
- Determine and involve different departments, teams, and leaders early on to help with collecting, reporting, and interpreting the data.
- Whenever possible, translate high-level organizational metrics into metrics relevant at different levels of the organization.
- Prepare regular reports to showcase the progress with the different metrics, for both internal and external partners (e.g. [The Climate Change Accountability Report \(CCAR\)](#) and [Environmental Performance Accountability Report \(EPAR\)](#)).

LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



- Involve cross-portfolio teams in the development of the roadmap.
- Engage and partner with senior leaders early and throughout the process to ensure alignment and promote visible sponsorship.
- Encourage Boards and senior leaders to receive training on sustainable health systems to level-set and ensure consistent understanding.
- Consult front-line staff and those involved in day-to-day operations to understand how climate change impacts health systems and workflows.
- Map and strengthen existing efforts across the organization that have high-impact potential and align with strategic priorities. There is lots of great work happening within the organizations and you don't have to start from scratch.
- Leverage existing organizational processes and structures to advance the roadmap.
- Assign specific actions or areas of the plan to an executive leader for accountability and implementation.
- Conduct a literature review (including local, national, and international roadmaps) to inform the roadmap with the latest recommendations, data, and relevant legislation.
- Balance urgency with a meaningful and timely engagement process, recognizing that meaningful engagement takes time.
- Anticipate and manage resistance.
- Recognize and celebrate quick wins to generate excitement and momentum for the work.
- Start where you are, using existing resources, and build incrementally—don't wait to have everything figured out.