Prevent. Support. Believe.

Queensland’s Framework to address Sexual Violence

Action Plan 2021-22

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# Message from the Premier and Attorney-General

In October 2019, the Queensland Government launched *Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland’s Framework to address Sexual Violence* (the Framework) to prevent and respond to sexual violence in Queensland. We are now pleased to be able to launch Queensland’s first Sexual Violence Prevention Action Plan.

The Queensland Government has made strong progress in addressing sexual violence, along with intersecting forms of violence like domestic and family violence.

The Framework is the first of its kind in Queensland, with its focus on addressing all forms of sexual violence and bringing together existing work and new directions and commitments. The Framework is organised around three priority areas for action – Prevention, Support and healing, and Accountability and justice.

This new whole-of-government action plan is the next step in our journey to address sexual violence and work towards our vision of a Queensland where everyone is free from the fear, threat or experience of sexual violence.

In the time since the Framework’s release, the conversation in Australia about sexual violence has shifted. More Australians now recognise the risks and prevalence of sexual violence in the community, the drivers of sexual violence, and that victims should be believed.

The world has also shifted entirely. The challenges experienced due to COVID-19 during 2020 and 2021 have had a significant impact on our health systems, economy and communities. In response we have seen the resilience and strength of many Queenslanders, but unfortunately also an increase in the severity and complexity of sexual, domestic and family violence and child abuse and neglect. These impacts are exacerbated for higher risk population groups including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disability, sex workers, and people in the custodial system.

We have listened to sector stakeholders, including the Sexual Violence Prevention Roundtable, as well as victims and survivors, about their needs during these challenging times. In addition to $7.5 million additional state funding and $25.64 million in Commonwealth funding for Queensland sexual, domestic and family violence services announced in 2020, we were also able to announce in the 2021-22 Budget a further $30 million over four years for those services. The Commonwealth Government has also committed further funding over the next two years, with the exact allocation for Queensland being negotiated. This funding is in addition to the Queensland Government’s record whole-of-government investment of more than $600 million dollars in programs, services and strategies to address domestic, family and sexual violence since 2015.

Since the Framework’s release, Queensland Government agencies have continued to work hard to implement the strategies outlined in the Framework, with progress made despite the challenging times we have faced. This action plan sets our path forward as we continue our work across multiple areas, including strengthening consent education; working within the Queensland Police Service to strengthen a victim-centric approach; and implementing initiatives to address youth sexual violence and abuse.

A significant part of our work will also be guided by the outcomes of the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce, which is currently examining women’s experience in the criminal justice system with a specific focus on victims and survivors of sexual violence.

We look forward to working with our Queensland Government colleagues, our sexual violence sector partners, and the broader Queensland community, to continue to work towards ending sexual violence in Queensland.

Hon Annastacia Palaszczuk

Premier and Minister for Trade

Hon Shannon Fentiman

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

# Prevent. Support. Believe.Queensland’s Framework and Action Plan to address Sexual Violence

*Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland’s Framework to address Sexual Violence* (the Framework) sets out Queensland’s overarching approach to preventing and responding to all forms of sexual violence in Queensland, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, technology-facilitated sexual violence, child sexual abuse and youth sexual violence. It was released during Sexual Violence Awareness Month in October 2019.

Our vision, as outlined in the Framework, is for a Queensland where everyone lives free of the fear, threat or experience of sexual violence. The Framework is organised around three priority areas for action – Prevention, Support and healing, and Accountability and justice – and identifies objectives and strategies for each priority area to guide our work.

The Framework was developed following extensive engagement and consultation with the community, service sector, academic experts, advocacy organisations and peak bodies; guidance from the Queensland Sexual Violence Prevention Roundtable; and comprehensive research and analysis. Importantly, we listened to the voices of people with lived experience of sexual violence, who generously shared their experiences and views on how to make a difference.

As a result, we were able to define the key issues facing Queensland when it comes to sexual violence, identify strengths and gaps in the current service responses, and highlight best practice initiatives underway in other locations that we could adopt in Queensland.

The Framework is available at www.justice.qld.gov.au/about-us/services/women-violence-prevention/violence-prevention/ sexual-violence-prevention. A summary of the Framework’s vision, principles, priorities, objectives and strategies is provided on the following page.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented and unforeseeable impact on Queensland communities, the economy, and the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders. Guided by the Framework and building on the initiatives already underway, the action plan sets out what the Queensland Government can do in the current environment to prevent and respond to sexual violence in Queensland.

Despite COVID, significant actions have been taken to address sexual harassment, assault and abuse since the release of the Framework, as outlined in the pages following. At a national level, there has also been movement, for example through the responses of State, Territory and Commonwealth Governments to the release of the *Respect @ Work: Sexual Harassment in the Workplace* report by the Australian Human Rights Commission, and progress towards development of a new *National Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse*.

There are also a range of other connected commitments and strategies, including Queensland’s commitment to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which includes the target *“By 2031, the rate of all forms of family violence and abuse against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is reduced at least by 50%, as progress towards zero”.*

This action plan outlines new and continuing initiatives the Queensland Government is undertaking to implement the Framework. Actions are organised by the priority area and strategy they are most closely aligned with.

This is a whole-of-government action plan, with agencies responsible for children, violence prevention, women, health, education, justice and youth justice, policing, corrections, housing and disability services all committed to actions listed. The agencies listed next to each action are those with lead responsibility, noting that many actions require collaborative effort across multiple agencies.

# Queensland’s Framework to address sexual violence

Our vision: Everyone in Queensland lives free of the fear, threat or experience of sexual violence

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| --- | --- |
| What do we mean by sexual violence?   * Sexual assault and rape * Child sexual abuse * Child sexual exploitation * Sexual harassment * Technology-facilitated sexual violence * Intimate partner sexual violence * Youth sexual violence and abuse | Responding to all Queenslanders   * Children and young people * Women * Men * Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people * People from culturally diverse backgrounds * People who identify as LGBTIQ+ * People with disability * Older people * Sex workers * People in the custodial system |

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| **Our principles** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sexual violence is a violation of human rights and will not be tolerated | Preventing and responding to sexual violence is everyone’s responsibility and requires shared accountability, partnerships and local responses | | Preventing sexual violence begins with addressing the cultural norms, structures and practices that condone and enable violence to occur | | Addressing gender inequality and power structures that enable sexual violence is critical to ending it | Prevention activities and responses should recognise and address the diversity and lived experiences of all people in Queensland | The choice and dignity of people who have experienced sexual violence should be at the center of all responses | | Systems and services should be accessible, integrated, trauma-informed and culturally responsive | | Interventions and responses must be informed by evidence, data, ongoing evaluation and supported by resources |
| **Our priorities for future action** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Priority 1: Prevention | | | | Priority 2: Support and healing | | | | Priority 3: Accountability and justice | | | | |
| Objective: Everyone works together to bring about cultural, behavioral and structural change to prevent sexual violence | | | | Objective: All people who are impacted by sexual violence are believed and supported to recover and heal | | | | Objective: The justice system is responsive to the needs of victims and survivors, and perpetrators are held to account their actions | | | | |
| Strategies   * Increase knowledge and understanding of sexual violence and its drivers in the broader community * Equip families, children and young people with accurate information on healthy relationships, consent and sexual violence * Challenge attitudes, practices and structures that lead to sexual violence and stop people speaking out * Strengthen the capacity of workplaces and institutions to prevent sexual violence * Implement targeted prevention and early intervention activities tailored for and designed by specific population groups | | | | Strategies   * Provide timely, integrated and victim-centric support for people who have experienced sexual violence * Increase the capacity and cultural capability of specialist and mainstream services to be trauma-informed and meet the diverse needs of people who have experienced sexual violence * Expand access to early intervention programs for children and young people displaying harmful sexual behaviours or who are at risk of experiencing sexual violence | | | | Strategies   * Investigate and seek to address barriers to victims and survivors reporting sexual violence and accessing justice responses * Continue to strengthen support to navigate the criminal justice system for people who are impacted by sexual violence, and investigate expansion of alternative justice responses * Continue to provide and strengthen interventions that help perpetrators of sexual violence to take responsibility for their actions and change their attitudes and beliefs to prevent re-offending * Continue to review and evaluate justice processes and relevant laws in Queensland to ensure that victims of sexual violence are supported and perpetrators are held accountable | | | | |
| Core element: An integrated and effective service system  Objective: service systems are integrated and effective so everyone impacted by sexual violence can access support where and when they need it | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Core element: building the evidence base  Objective: activities to prevent and respond to sexual violence are underpinned by robust data, evidence, and evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Outcomes** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Communities are safe and free from sexual violence | | People who have experienced sexual violence are believed and supported | | Relationships are respectful | | Services meet the needs of all people impacted by sexual violence | | The justice system is responsive to victims and survivors | | Perpetrators are held to account and stop committing sexual violence | |

# Priority 1: Prevention Everyone works together to bring about cultural, behavioural and structural change to prevent sexual violence

### Achievements in 2019-2021

In 2019-2021 we have:

* worked to enhance respectful relationships education in all Queensland state schools by: developing resources and online modules to support a whole-of-school approach to respectful relationships education
* updating resources to support schools with identifying and responding to harm associated with domestic and family violence
* incorporating key learnings from the Our Watch respectful relationships education in primary school pilot into online module content
* establishing a Respectful Relationships Education Advisory Group to provide specialist advice on best practice
* developing a quality assurance tool to support schools in the assessment and identification of appropriate respectful relationships education resources or programs (Department of Education)
* provided $400,000 to deliver youth sexual violence prevention activities in West Cairns and Aurukun (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* made community education and prevention a key element of new initiatives addressing youth sexual violence, for example in new place-based trials in Yarrabah, Fraser Coast and Toowoomba (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* continued engagement with the Sexual Violence Prevention Roundtable (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* established an annual grants program and provided $100,000 in grants to community organisations to support prevention and awareness-raising activities in local communities as part of Sexual Violence Awareness Month (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* provided an additional $50,000 to R4Respect to help meet growing demand for their peer-to-peer respectful relationships work (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* supported Safer Schoolies activities in 2019 through: providing online resources on sex and consent;
* providing videos and resources for parents to facilitate conversations with young people about sex and consent;
* working with the Gold Coast Centre against Sexual Violence, Queensland Health and OurWatch to promote information about sexual violence, sexual health and the ‘The Line’ campaign (Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs)
* commenced implementation of the Royal Commission’s child safe standards within government departments providing services to, or working with children and young people; and undertook targeted consultation on options for potential regulation of child safe standards with relevant sectors in Queensland (Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs).

### New actions for 2021-2022

**In 2021-2022 we will:**

**Increase community understanding about sexual violence by:**

* continuing to support prevention and awareness activities in local communities via the annual Investing in Women grants program (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* commissioning research about the drivers of sexual violence (Department of Justice and Attorney-General).

**Equipping families, children and young people with accurate information by:**

* developing a community awareness campaign about consent, in consultation with the specialist sexual assault sector and key stakeholders, leveraging existing resources and communication mechanisms (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* consulting with a range of key stakeholders to identify whether existing educational programs on consent and the reporting of sexual assault meet the needs of Queensland students (Department of Education)
* reviewing the *Respectful Relationships Education Program* to strengthen understandings of consent, help-seeking strategies, the drivers of gender-based violence and reporting of sexual assault and harm (Department of Education).
* Challenge attitudes that lead to sexual violence and stop people speaking out by:
* identifying training that could be offered to frontline, program and policy staff across government to improve understanding of sexual violence (all agencies).

**Strengthen the capacity of workplaces and institutions to prevent sexual violence by:**

* supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the Commonwealth-commissioned Respect@Work report as relevant to the Queensland jurisdiction (Department of Justice and Attorney-General and partner agencies)
* reviewing the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*, including options to legally requiring all employers to take positive measures to eliminate sex discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation as far as possible in their organisations (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* reviewing *the Industrial Relations Act 2016* to investigate protections for workers subject to sexual harassment under the Act (Department of Justice and Attorney -General)
* working with sporting organisations at the state level to challenge attitudes towards women and girls and promote gender equality (Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport, Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* making the *Preventing Harm: Promoting Respect* training module resources available to managers and supervisors across Queensland Health (Queensland Health)
* continuing to provide guidance for mental health clinicians in the secondary and tertiary health system through the distribution of a systemic approach for the identification, assessment and management of consumers at risk of violence, including sexual violence (Queensland Health)
* continuing to provide mandatory training to ensure Residential Care Officers within Accommodation and Respite Services are skilled in understanding domestic, family and sexual violence and making appropriate referrals (Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships)
* investigating the development of a Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment (Office of Industrial Relations)
* investigating the re-establishment of a public sector Sexual Harassment Referral Office and an advisory and representational service for women, including identification of potential funding arrangements for gender equity, sexual harassment and sex discrimination initiatives (Public Service Commission).

**Tailor prevention and early intervention for specific population groups by:**

* implementing the new disability worker screening framework for NDIS supports and services (and state-based disability worker screening clearances for services provided outside the jurisdiction of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission) (Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships)
* promoting sexual violence prevention resources and training for carers and disability support providers, particularly those providing care in congregate settings (Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships)
* working with relevant agencies on the development of domestic, family and sexual violence awareness campaigns to ensure intimate partner sexual violence as experienced by older people is better understood (Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* continuing to work with the Commonwealth Government, states and territories on the National Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse (Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs)
* working with other agencies to provide advice that assists the development of culturally appropriate programs and prevention campaigns, communications and documents to tailor strategies and messages to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships)
* supporting the place-based response to youth sexual violence and abuse in Yarrabah and identifying learnings for other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities (Department of Justice and Attorney-General).

# Priority 2: Support and healing All people who are impacted by sexual violence are believed and supported to recover and heal

### Achievements in 2019-2021

In 2019-2021 we have:

* implemented a $2.5 million grants program (funded through the National Partnership on COVID-19 domestic and family violence responses) to support domestic, family and sexual violence services to respond to the ongoing challenges of COVID-19 (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* allocated $11.8 million to 33 service outlets for specialist sexual assault services in 2020-21 (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* committed $1.8 million over five years to ensure the North Queensland Combined Women’s Services to continue the Townsville Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* provided victims of sexual assault the option of having a ‘just-in-case’ forensic examination whether or not they have made the decision to report the assault to police, and trained more nurses around the state in forensic procedures (Queensland Health)
* continued to participate in the National Redress Scheme to acknowledge the hurt caused by institutional child sexual abuse (Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs)
* worked with the Queensland Sexual Assault Network to enhance their online sexual violence information hub as a key resource for people impacted by sexual violence (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* completed a review of the specialist counselling services program for young sexual offenders, the outcome of which will inform future service system improvements and strengthen interventions for young perpetrators of sexual violence and their victims (Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs).

### New actions for 2021-2022

**In 2021-2022 we will:**

**Provide timely, integrated and victim-centric support by:**

* continuing to provide core funding to sexual assault services of $12 million across 33 service outlets in 2021-22 (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* continuing to increase the number of clinicians that are trained to provide clinical forensic examinations to ensure local and timely delivery of these services (Queensland Health)
* supporting people who have experienced sexual violence to access housing assistance, coordinated with specialist sexual violence prevention services and other relevant mainstream services (Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy).

**Increase the capacity of services to meet the needs of people who have experienced sexual violence by:**

* allocating an additional $7.5 million per annum over four years to boost support for sexual, domestic and family violence services (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* negotiating a new National Partnership Agreement with the Australian Government to allocate further new funding for sexual, domestic and family violence services (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* embedding trauma-informed practice training for targeted service delivery staff in relevant agencies (all agencies)
* continue to invest in Specialist Counselling Services and develop the capability of other providers in the market to deliver services for young people in the youth justice system who have committed sexual offences, and for their victims (Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs)
* ensuring best practice service responses to older people experiencing intimate partner violence including sexual violence, and consider capacity and capability building initiatives and ways to strengthen referral pathways between elder abuse and domestic and family violence services (Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships).

**Expand access to early intervention for children and young people displaying harmful behaviours or at risk by:**

* continuing to implement place-based responses to youth sexual violence and abuse in Toowoomba, Yarrabah and the Fraser Coast (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* evaluating the youth sexual violence and abuse service enhancements in areas of high need to ensure that the government response is supported by a strong evidence base (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* continue work underway nationally with all jurisdictions on children with harmful sexual behaviours (Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs and Queensland Health.

# Priority 3: Accountability and justice The justice system is responsive to the needs of victims and survivors, and perpetrators are held to account for their actions

### Achievements in 2019-2021

**In 2019-2021 we have:**

* commenced a program of work to address barriers to reporting sexual assault to the Queensland Police Service (QPS), and strengthen a victim-centric focus, including: establishing a pilot of dedicated sexual violence liaison officers in the Townsville and Logan QPS districts
* undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the Sexual Violence Liaison Officers pilot to determine its effectiveness and impact, and feasibility of extending the model across QPS regions
* launching an online QPS reporting form to provide another avenue for victims of sexual assault to make reports to police
* engaging the University of Queensland to undertake scoping and consultation to develop a state-wide, sustainable victim-centric and trauma-informed training program for QPS
* reviewing and updating existing public facing information on the QPS sexual violence site
* appointing a QPS Sex Work Police Liaison Officer as a key contact with industry bodies around the treatment of sex workers as victims of crime
* establishing a new sexual violence prevention working group (Queensland Police Service)
* considered the recommendations of the Queensland Law Reform Commission Review into Consent and Mistake of Fact, and passed legislation through the Queensland Parliament to implement the recommendations (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* passed legislation to implement a range of recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, which:
* provide tough new penalties for those who supply, produce or possess child sex dolls, including prison sentences of up to 20 years
* create a new offence of failure to report to police belief of a child sexual offence that applies to all adults
* create a new offence of failure to protect a child from sexual abuse in an institutional setting
* ensure offenders for child sexual offences are sentenced in accordance with the sentencing standards at the time of sentence, rather than the time of offence. (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* passed legislation to implement certain recommendations of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council’s report on the classification of child exploitation material for sentencing purposes, including:
* ensuring consistency between sentencing principles and child exploitation material offences in the Criminal Code
* ensuring the relationship between an offender and a child who is the subject of offending is considered at sentence
* ensuring the offender’s conduct and behaviour in relation to child exploitation material or child abuse object is considered at sentence (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* referred the development of an appropriate regulatory framework for the sex work industry to the Queensland Law Reform Commission for review (Department of Justice and Attorney-General).

### New actions for 2021-2022

**In 2021-2022 we will:**

**Investigate and address barriers to reporting and accessing justice responses by:**

* developing and delivering the Queensland Police Service’s Sexual Violence Response Strategy to enhance the service’s capacity to prevent, disrupt, respond to and investigate sexual violence, put victims first, and hold perpetrators accountable (Queensland Police Service)
* continuing the program of work to address barriers to reporting sexual assault to the Queensland Police Service (QPS), including: embedding a strengthened victim-centric and trauma-informed focus through the Queensland Police Academy
  + partnering with the University of Queensland to deliver a state-wide, sustainable victim-centric and trauma-informed training program for QPS between 2020 and 2024
  + implementing the sexual violence liaison officer model state-wide
  + undertaking targeted engagement with specialist sexual assault support services to review and promote the new QPS formal online reporting form and the informal online alternative reporting option (ARO)
  + implementing new sexual violence training and education program for officers in the South Eastern Region, as part of a partnership with the Gold Coast Centre against Sexual Violence and in support of the global initiative Start by Believing
  + ongoing review and upgrade of public information on the QPS sexual violence site (Queensland Police Service).

**Strengthen support for victims to navigate the criminal justice system and investigate expansion of alternative justice responses by:**

* exploring options for specialised court support for sexual violence victims in criminal proceedings (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* reviewing practice standards for relevant government funded services, including those funded by Victim Assist Queensland, to increase capacity of services to provide trauma-informed responses to people who experience sexual violence (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* commencing a witness intermediary pilot program in relation to child sexual offence prosecutions, to assist witnesses and victims with communications difficulties to give their best evidence (Department of Justice and Attorney-General).

**Provide and strengthen interventions that help perpetrators to take responsibility and stop reoffending by**:

* continuing and improving service responses for young people who have admitted or been found guilty of a sexual offence through:
  + delivering restorative justice conferences in appropriate circumstances supported by Specialist Counselling Services
  + improving access to Specialist Counselling Services
  + additional targeted training for staff, professional development and improved screening (Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs)
* reviewing current domestic and family violence behaviour change programs for adolescents and men to ensure programs address intimate partner sexual violence (Department of Justice and Attorney-General).

**Review and evaluate justice processes and relevant laws to ensure victims are supported and perpetrators held accountable, by:**

* through the Women’s Safety and Justice Taskforce, undertaking a comprehensive review of women’s experience in the criminal justice system, including the experience of women as victim-survivors of sexual offences (Department of Justice and Attorney-General)
* supporting improved responses to victims and increased perpetrator accountability through improved data collection and monitoring the movements and outcomes of perpetrators across the justice system. (Department of Justice and Attorney-General).

# Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

*Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland’s Framework for addressing Sexual Violence* outlines three priority areas, three objectives, and 12 strategies through which we aim to fulfil the vision that everyone in Queensland lives free of the fear, threat or experience of sexual violence.

In addition, the Framework outlines six key outcomes —our aspirational goals — that we will continue to work towards achieving. These goals cannot be achieved by any single Framework or Action Plan alone. They will require long-term, whole-of-community effort to achieve.

A monitoring and evaluation plan will be developed in 2021, including consideration of specific indicators and measures to align with the Framework’s objectives and long-term outcomes, based on existing and projected data capability. The reporting framework will support us to track progress and outcomes against key objectives, and document learnings to help inform future direction.

Actions will continue to develop and evolve as we make progress and identify new opportunities.

We will report on achievements under the action plan by releasing a snapshot of achievements at the end of the Action Plan’s lifespan, in December 2022.