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JUN 30 2020

Chair, Standing Committee on Public Accounts
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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As agreed upon in the Government Response to the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts entitled *Report 5, Canadian Armed Forces Housing, of the Fall 2015 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada*, National Defence submits its update on Recommendation 1.

Sincerely,

Jody Thomas

Enclosures: 2

**Response to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts
Report 5, Canadian Armed Forces Housing, of the Fall 2015 Reports of the
Auditor General of Canada**

Recommendation 1

That the Department of National Defence provide the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Accounts with its new operational requirements for military housing by 30 June 2017, and its revised accommodation policy by 31 December 2018.

Background

In its 2015 audit of Canadian Armed Force housing, the Auditor General recommended that National Defence complete a review of its military housing policy and clearly define its operational requirements for military housing. National Defence agreed and committed to reviewing its operational requirements for military housing by fall 2016, and to producing a revised accommodation policy by fall 2017.

In its 2016 Management Action Plan, National Defence revised its timelines, committing to reviewing its operational requirements by early 2017, and using these requirements to produce a revised living accommodation policy suite by the fall of 2018. National Defence clarified that this policy suite would be comprised of: 1) Queen's Regulations and Orders (the policy's overarching regulatory framework); 2) a Defence Administrative Order and Directive (the departmental policy); and 3) a Living Accommodation Instruction (to guide personnel in implementing the policy).

In June 2017, National Defence provided the Committee with its new operational requirements for military housing, focused on new entrants, training, and the unique military service lifestyle. In that update, National Defence stated that it would review and revise its housing policy to address the requirements by fall 2018.

In December 2018, National Defence reported that it had broadened the scope of its review and was developing entirely new provisions to meet the evolving needs of Canadian Armed Forces members and their families. National Defence stated that this would create additional delays, but that the policy would be in place by fall 2019. In May 2019, National Defence again revised its timeline, stating that it would have a completed living accommodation policy suite in place by November 2020.

Update on the living accommodation policy suite review

Significant work remains to review and revise the three component parts of National Defence's living accommodation policy suite. National Defence acknowledges that it has misjudged the time required to complete this review, due primarily to underestimating the complexity of reviewing and updating the Queen's Regulations and Orders. National Defence has re-evaluated the process in its entirety, and is focused on completing all aspects of the policy review by spring 2024.

In the interest of transparency and accountability, National Defence has attached to this update its timeline on the way forward. The timeline demonstrates key steps and milestones for each element of the living accommodation policy suite. It accounts for the time required to analyze, develop, review, and approve the Queen's Regulations and Orders, which are the key to advancing the rest of the policy suite. National Defence will then ensure all elements of the new policy suite are aligned and implemented at the same time. The timeline also accounts for any possible delays due to COVID-19.

Further, as can be seen in the timeline, National Defence commits to updating the Committee every six months – by 31 December and 30 June each year – until the review is complete and a new policy suite is in place.

Reviewing the Queen's Regulations and Orders

Work continues on reviewing the Queen's Regulations and Orders. As can be seen in the attached timeline, teams of subject matter experts are continuing to analyze and review regulatory articles, and are creating instructions for legal drafters on the regulations that will be amended. In October 2020, these teams will begin consulting all stakeholders who may be affected by changes to regulations.

Reviewing the Defence Administrative Order and Directive

Concurrent to reviewing the Queen's Regulations and Orders, National Defence continues to revise and draft the Defence Administrative Order and Directive. As committed in its May 2019 update, National Defence began wider stakeholder review in December 2019. This review remains ongoing.

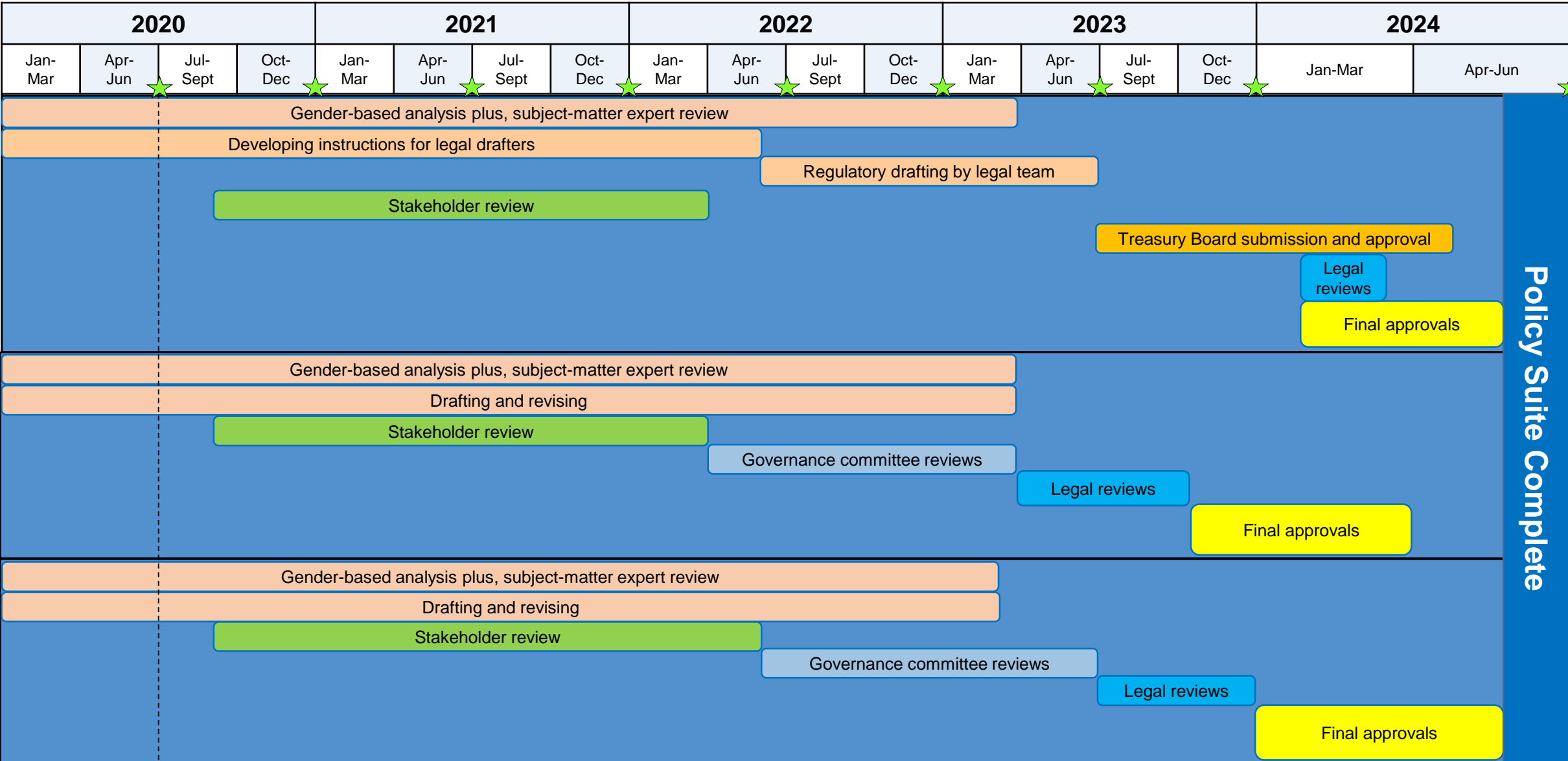
Reviewing the Living Accommodation Instruction

Work also continues to modernize the Living Accommodation Instruction, to provide the Defence Team with additional guidance on implementing the regulation and policy changes. National Defence has completed new portions addressing pet ownership and rule violations, and others are still being considered by subject-matter experts. National Defence will begin consulting various stakeholders on elements of the Instruction in September 2020. National Defence will continue to develop the Instruction in line with progress on the regulations and the Defence Administrative Order and Directive.

Looking forward

National Defence remains committed to developing a policy which addresses its operational requirements and serves as a foundation for a long-term accommodation plan. National Defence is also dedicated to meeting its new timelines without further delay. National Defence will once again update the Committee on its progress by December 31, 2020.

Living Accommodation Policy Suite Timeline



Policy Suite Complete

= semi-annual PACP update due June 30 and December 31