Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Accessibility Plan
2023-2026

Canada

Accessibility plan at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

On this page

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Message from the CFIA President and Executive Vice President

We are pleased to present the first Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) 2023-2026 Accessibility Plan. The Agency developed the CFIA Accessibility Strategy (accessible only on the Government of Canada network – RDIMS 14909178) and Plan in response to the *Accessible Canada Act* and the Clerk of the Privy Council's 2021 Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service. The CFIA Accessibility Plan is also part of the Agency's broader Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2025 (accessible only on the Government of Canada network – RDIMS 15778848) which describes the activities CFIA is taking to enhance diversity and inclusion.

The CFIA's accessibility vision is to establish, maintain and support a fully accessible, respectful, and inclusive workplace that values and enables disabled persons. To work toward that vision, the Accessibility Plan has five goals:

- Improving recruitment, retention and promotion of disabled persons
- Making information and communications technology (ICT) accessible for everyone
- Enhancing the accessibility of the built environment
- Designing and delivering accessible programs and services (including procurement); and

- Creating and maintaining a culture of accessibility (includes communications other than ICT).

The Agency designed the Accessibility Plan to drive change by focusing on integrated, collective action across the organization. In particular, when implementing the actions in this Accessibility Plan, officials will consider actions under way through the Agency's broader Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan. This will help coordinate diversity and inclusion efforts, and it will reduce duplication. Implementing these 2 plans in an integrated manner will give employees the knowledge, resources and support they need to make the work environment and service to Canadians more accessible and inclusive.

This is the Agency's first Accessibility Plan. CFIA will assess progress annually, and will renew the plan every three years. CFIA will use the Plan's performance measurement framework and employee feedback to assess progress and areas to improve.

We are asking all employees to learn about accessibility, work with disabled persons to understand how barriers affect their CFIA experience, reduce stigma around disabilities, and actively contribute to an accessible culture at the Agency. Together, let's work toward realizing our CFIA accessibility vision and the Government of Canada's vision of being the most accessible and inclusive public service in the world. Let's create a work environment where every employee can make their best contributions.

Siddika Mithani, Ph.D.
President

J.-G. Forgeron

Executive Vice-President

Message from the Employee Accessibility Network Champion and Co-Chairs

As CFIA's Champions and Co-chairs for the Employee Accessibility Network, we are passionate about creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace.

In addition to our regular engagement with disabled persons and holding various events and awareness campaigns, in 2020 we began working on the first CFIA Accessibility and Action Plan. We used focus groups, surveys and document review to take stock of the state of accessibility at CFIA and began to identify barriers to accessibility and inclusion. We did this in consultation with disabled persons and the Agency's broader Equity and Diversity Committee and network, and we were supported by a dedicated Accessibility Team and the Human Resources Branch Diversity and Wellness Team,

Based on this work, we prepared the CFIA 2023 to 2026 Accessibility Strategy and Plan. It will help CFIA staff to fully identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility, and will enable disabled persons to participate in our workplace with dignity and independence.

Many CFIA employees have shared their personal stories and experiences with us, and we've been touched and encouraged by their passion and determination to drive change.

We will continue to work with the CFIA Accessibility Advisory Committee, senior management and every employee (particularly disabled persons within and outside the CFIA) to establish an accessible and inclusive culture that values and leverages the lived experience and insight that disabled persons bring to the Agency.

Let's work together to create an accessible and inclusive environment, free from stigma, where every CFIA employee has the opportunity to contribute and succeed to their full potential!

Jo Butler

Outgoing Champion and Executive Lead, Employee Accessibility Network

Louis-Philippe Vaillancourt

Champion, Employee Accessibility Network

Naheda Sahtout and Geoff McDiarmid

Co-chairs, Employee Accessibility Network

General

The *Accessible Canada Act* and Regulations

The *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) came into force in 2019. Its intent is to achieve a barrier-free Canada by 2040. The legislation benefits all Canadians, especially persons with disabilities, by proactively identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility in 7 priority areas:

- employment

- the built environment
- information and communication technologies (ICT)
- communication other than ICT
- the design and delivery of programs and services
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities
- transportation

The ACA requires regulated entities to prepare and publish accessibility plans, set up feedback processes and report openly on progress. The ACA gives the authority to create and enforce accessibility regulations.

The ACA establishes a framework for advancing accessibility through a combination of new and existing organizations and positions that administer and enforce the ACA and monitor outcomes.

The legislation established Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC) to develop national accessibility standards. ASC has established several technical committees that are actively developing standards that remove barriers in several different priority areas. Compliance with standards developed by ASC is voluntary unless they are adopted into regulations.

The ACA also created two new roles:

- the Chief Accessibility Officer: as an adviser to the Minister on accessibility issues, the Chief Accessibility Officer will release annual reports on what has been achieved in realizing a barrier-free Canada
- the Accessibility Commissioner: the Commissioner is responsible for compliance and enforcement under the ACA

A summary of the *Accessible Canada Act* is available online.

The _Accessible Canada Regulations_ operationalize the ACA's accessibility planning and reporting requirements.

A note on usage

While advocates, including government, have advised using person-first language ("person/people with a disability"), many disability advocates now promote using identity-first language ("disabled person/people").

To reflect that diversity of views, we have used both versions in this document.

CFIA feedback process

The Director of the _Speak Up, We're Listening_ Program will be responsible for receiving feedback on barriers and accessibility at CFIA.

Feedback may be provided to the Director of the _Speak Up, We're Listening Program_ via online form, telephone, mail and email.

We will acknowledge all accessibility feedback in the same manner in which it was received, except feedback that is sent anonymously.

By telephone:

Phone lines are open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday to Friday.

Toll-free: 1-855-670-0943

By mail:

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

c/o Speak Up, We're Listening

1400 Merivale Road, Tower 1

Floor 6, Room 258

Ottawa ON K1A 0Y9

By email:

CFIA.SpeakUp-OsezParler.ACIA@inspection.gc.ca

This contact information will allow CFIA employees and the public to do the following:

- request the CFIA accessibility plan in one of the alternate formats described in subsection 8(2) of the regulations
- request the description of the CFIA's feedback process in one of the alternate formats described in subsection 9(5) of the regulations
- provide feedback to the CFIA on barriers and accessibility

Current State

At CFIA, employees do not yet systematically integrate accessibility into their everyday business. Employees often treat accessibility as an afterthought, and some employees have a narrow definition and understanding of what a disability is.

Accessibility initiatives across branches and across functions are ad hoc and often siloed, and the Agency has no governance to link accessibility initiatives together strategically.

CFIA has invested in the National Employee Well-Being Program which includes, among other related supports, duty to accommodate services that are available to managers. The services are not yet available to all CFIA regions, but the Agency plans to make them available across the organization by the end of fiscal year 2022 to 2023.

The Agency's Health Accommodation Office (HAO) helps provide fair and consistent access to workplace supports and services. The HAO removes financial barriers for managers throughout the employee accommodation process and connects them with various services and supports. These include information technology adaptive tools and services accessed through Shared Services Canada's Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program, and other external community partners.

The Agency has some mechanisms for branches, regions, and employees to share best practices, such as the Employee Accessibility Network and the Accessibility Advisory Committee, which the Agency created in 2021.

Through draft Accessibility Plan consultations, the CFIA team responsible for developing the Agency's Accessibility Plan identified the need for an Accessibility Office with sufficient subject matter expertise and capacity to support the Plan's successful implementation.

Recent CFIA actions to improve accessibility

The Agency has already taken some steps to improve accessibility.

It was an early adopter of the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport Initiative <u>GC Workplace Accessibility Passport</u> and piloted the Passport in the Ontario area.

It mandated training on unconscious bias and preventing discrimination and harassment for all CFIA employees.

It created a web non-compliance form for all new web postings so that an accessibility lens is applied to all requests.

Accessibility Statement

The CFIA Accessibility Strategy vision is to create a fully accessible, respectful and inclusive workplace that values and enables disabled persons.

To achieve that vision, the Agency designed the Accessibility Plan to help all employees:

- Learn about accessibility, and the definition and types of disabilities
- Understand how barriers affect disabled persons
- Involve disabled persons from the start
- Design experiences to be more accessible and inclusive
- Make communications accessible for everyone
- Develop the knowledge and skills to provide accessible programs and services
- Contribute to an accessible culture

Taken as a whole, CFIA's Accessibility Plan addresses the following key elements that create change and drive a culture of accessibility:

1. Policy: The Agency will apply an accessibility lens and update its policies to provide clarity and consistency about what needs to be done, how it needs to be done and who is responsible for doing it.
2. Performance measurement: The Accessibility Plan includes a performance measurement framework to allow CFIA to understand progress toward the goals and whether the Agency needs to adjust along the way.
3. Training and learning: All CFIA employees will receive training to understand the new policies and processes, and their role in implementing them.
4. Key process integration: The Agency will integrate accessibility into every aspect of the design and delivery of programs and services, and CFIA will integrate digital accessibility into key development and business processes to maximize accessibility and inclusion.
5. Procurement: CFIA relies heavily on external services and supplies, so the procurement life cycle will apply an accessibility lens at every stage.
6. Prioritization: Leadership will consider all the elements of the Accessibility Plan and will prioritize which to tackle first, based on actions that will make the biggest impact and that will build momentum and drive change.
7. Performance management: CFIA will drive accountability for employees, management, and executives by including objectives related to the Agency's Accessibility Plan in performance agreements, and by recognizing and rewarding results.

CFIA Accessibility Plan

Goal 1: Improve recruitment, retention, and promotion of disabled persons

Employment

In 2020 to 2021, CFIA took stock of accessibility by gathering information through the following methods:

- engaging with disabled employees with focus group sessions
- consulting with the CFIA National Manager's Committee and the Equity and Diversity Committee,
- doing an internal survey
- reviewing documents, including the CFIA results in the Public Service Employee Survey (PSES)

In 2021, the Agency also conducted an Employment Systems Review. This identified barriers and potential solutions to support employment opportunities and an accessible and inclusive workplace.

These exercises identified the following barriers to accessibility related to employment of disabled persons at CFIA:

- Recruitment, retention and promotion policies and processes do not proactively consider and address the needs of persons with disabilities
- Managers and supervisors do not proactively consider employees' accessibility and accommodation needs
- The accommodation process is not easy to navigate and it is not timely

- CFIA lacks clear and easily accessible policies and procedures, and training and guidance for managers and supervisors so they know how to appropriately manage accessibility and accommodation requests
- Some CFIA managers refuse requests for accommodation, citing lack of budget
- CFIA lacks sufficient capacity and subject matter experts to meet disability and accommodation demand
- The process to collect, analyze and report on duty to accommodate cases and outcomes is manual, so it is not easy to understand performance and report readily on results

To improve employment and representation of disabled persons at CFIA, Goal 1 actions focus on identifying barriers and solutions, removing barriers, and maintaining accessible recruitment, retention, and promotion systems and processes.

When implementing actions, consider the CFIA Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan to coordinate and streamline diversity and inclusion efforts.

Expected outcomes:

- CFIA identifies whether the Agency's recruitment systems and processes are accessible for disabled persons
- CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's recruitment systems and processes
- CFIA provides accessible recruitment systems and processes
- CFIA identifies barriers to retaining disabled employees

- [CFIA addresses barriers to retaining disabled employees](#)
- [CFIA improves retention of disabled employees](#)
- [CFIA identifies barriers to promoting disabled employees](#)
- [CFIA addresses barriers to promoting disabled employees](#)
- [CFIA provides equal opportunities to disabled employees](#)

Expected outcome: CFIA identifies whether the Agency's recruitment systems and processes are accessible for disabled persons

Activity: Identify barriers: Confirm and document barriers to recruitment of disabled persons. Do this by using the CFIA 2020 to 2021 Accessibility Strategy taking stock results, the Human Resources Branch 2021 Employment Systems Review (ESR) and the 2022 engagement on the draft Accessibility Plan. Identify potential solutions to support an accessible and inclusive recruitment process (in consultation with disabled persons).

Targeted date of completion: 2023 to 2024

Expected outcome: CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's recruitment systems and processes

Activity: Update CFIA policies, guidance and processes: Supported by the 2021 ESR results, apply an accessibility lens to review and update CFIA staffing policies, guidance and processes related to recruitment, and incorporate the new definition of disability under the *Accessible Canada Act*.

Update CFIA recruitment systems: Supported by the 2021 ESR results, apply an accessibility lens to review and update CFIA recruitment systems to remove any barriers.

Hold information sessions and prepare an Agency-wide information bulletin to promote the updated resources to employees and hiring managers.

Targeted date of completion: 2024 to 2025

Activity: Targeted recruitment of disabled persons: Actively target and successfully recruit disabled persons by using

- the 2021 ESR results
- data on disabled persons representation gaps by organization/classification/ occupation/level
- research on good practices to build accessibility into Agency and branch-level human resources and communications strategies and action plans.

Examples include establishing and recruiting from disabled student inventories and staffing pools, partnering with organizations that promote employment for disabled persons (such as LiveWorkPlay) and doing a targeted communications campaign to recruit disabled persons.

Targeted date of completion: 2025 to 2026 (to meet workforce availability target)

Activity: Support hiring managers: Provide education, support, and tools to hiring managers to increase their awareness and ability to recruit disabled persons. Examples include:

- updated policies, guidance and tools that incorporate an accessibility lens
- training and learning on how to successfully recruit disabled persons

- support via the Human Resources Branch Health Accommodations Office, the Agency's centralized accommodations fund, and subject matter experts such as CFIA's duty to accommodate case managers

Targeted date of completion: 2023 to 2024

Activity: Encourage self-identification: Promote the benefits of self-identification to disabled job applicants to increase CFIA's ability to recognize and support disabled employees.

Targeted date of completion: 2023 to 2024

Expected outcome: CFIA provides accessible recruitment systems and processes

Activity: Use feedback to monitor and continuously improve: Use feedback from disabled job applicants (successful or not) to verify that CFIA's staffing systems and processes are accessible, and to identify, document and remove barriers.

Targeted date of completion: 2023 to 2024

Expected outcome: CFIA identifies barriers to retaining disabled employees

Activity: Identify barriers: Use the CFIA 2020 to 2021 Accessibility Strategy taking stock results, and the 2022 engagement on the draft Accessibility Plan, to identify and document the following:

- barriers faced by disabled employees and managers to accommodating and supporting disabled employees
- solutions to create an accessible and inclusive workplace where disabled employees have the accommodations and supports they need

to do their job well, participate fully with their team and in the workplace generally, and succeed to their full potential

Targeted date of completion: 2023 to 2024

Expected outcome: CFIA addresses barriers to retaining disabled employees

Activity: Update CFIA policies, guidance and processes: Supported by the 2020 to 2021 taking stock results and the 2021 ESR results

- apply an accessibility lens to review and update CFIA policies, guidance and processes to include accessibility
- incorporate the new definition of disability under the *Accessible Canada Act*

Update CFIA accommodation systems: Apply an accessibility lens to review and update CFIA accommodation systems to remove any barriers and to enable employees.

Related to this, provide an integrated, Agency-wide approach to CFIA accommodation: Ensure that all CFIA functions (Human resources, real property, Information technology, communications, finance) are integrated to support accommodation for disabled employees.

Hold information sessions and prepare an Agency-wide information bulletin to promote the updated resources to employees and hiring managers.

Targeted date of completion: 2024 to 2025

Activity: Support managers:

- Update policies, guidance and tools, including a "one-stop-shop" manager accessibility toolkit
- Ensure managers are aware of the funds available to support accessibility for employees, and how managers can access them
- Promote relevant training and learning on how to successfully manage, engage and support disabled employees
- Provide support via the Human Resources Branch Health Accommodations Office, the Agency's centralized accommodations fund, and subject matter experts such as CFIA's duty to accommodate case managers
- Promote Government of Canada (GoC) supports/resources such as Shared Services Canadas Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program, Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) and Public Services and Procurement Canada's (PSPC) Shared Travel Services <u>travel management solution</u> which allows employees travelling on government business to indicate specific travel requirements

Targeted date of completion: 2023 to 2024

Activity: Encourage self-identification: Promote the benefits of self-identification to disabled employees to increase their manager's ability to successfully manage, engage and support them.

Related to self-identification, promote using the <u>GC Workplace Accessibility Passport</u> to disabled employees to increase their manager's ability to successfully manage, engage and support them.

Note: Disabled employees are responsible for declaring their needs and discussing with their managers, but they need the confidence and support to do so without fear of stigma, harassment or discrimination. The Accessibility Plan includes other actions to eliminate stigma, harassment and discrimination, and to encourage disabled employees to self-advocate. See Goal 5: Culture.

Targeted date of completion: 2025 to 2026

Expected outcome: CFIA improves retention of disabled employees

Activity: Use feedback to monitor and continuously improve: Identify, document and improve areas where managers require additional support and development. Do this by using feedback from:

- managers to assess whether they know how to support disabled employees and have the support they need
- disabled employees to assess whether they have the supports they need to do their job well, participate fully in their team and in the workplace, and to succeed to their full potential

By monitoring and taking continuous action on barriers feedback, the CFIA will improve retention of disabled employees.

Targeted date of completion: 2023 to 2024

Expected outcome: CFIA identifies barriers to promoting disabled employees

Activity: Identify barriers: Use the CFIA 2020 to 2021 Accessibility Strategy taking stock results, and the 2022 engagement on the draft Accessibility Plan, to identify and document:

- barriers faced by disabled employees and managers to accommodating and supporting disabled employees
- solutions to remove the barriers and create an accessible and inclusive workplace where disabled employees have the accommodations and supports they need to do their job well, participate fully with their team and in the workplace generally and succeed to their full potential

Targeted date of completion: 2023 to 2024

Expected outcome: CFIA addresses barriers to promoting disabled employees

Activity: Update CFIA staffing policies, guidance and processes: Supported by the 2020 to 2021 taking stock results and the 2021 ESR results, apply an accessibility lens to

- review and update CFIA employee staffing policies, guidance and processes to include accessibility
- incorporate the new definition of disability under the *Accessible Canada Act*

Here are some examples:

Official languages
- Remove systemic barriers to increase accessibility to official languages training for disabled employees
- Provide flexible official language requirements for positions, and use non-imperative staffing to target and increase representation of disabled persons
- Allow official language requirements exemptions where a candidate's disability prevents them from meeting the requirements

Staffing boards

- Establish a diverse selection board program
- Promote awareness and use of accessibility lens

Targeted staffing strategies

- Promote inclusive career development and mentorship programs to prioritize disabled persons, including those identified as future leaders

Hold information sessions and prepare an Agency-wide information bulletin to promote the updated resources to employees and hiring managers.

Targeted date of completion: 2025 to 2026

Activity: Support managers:

- Apply an accessibility lens and update staffing policies, procedures, guidance and tools, including a "one-stop-shop" manager accessibility toolkit
- Identify best practices, and provide accessibility training and learning on how to successfully coach, develop and support disabled employees
- Provide support via the Human Resources Branch Health Accommodations Office , the Agency's centralized accommodations fund, and subject matter experts such as CFIA's duty to accommodate case managers [1]
- Promote GoC supports/ resources such as Shared Services Canadas Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program and TBS Office of Public Service Accessibility

Targeted date of completion: 2024 to 2025

Expected outcome: CFIA provides equal opportunities to disabled employees

For disabled employees to be included and achieve equality within CFIA, the Agency must make reasonable adjustments and remove barriers so that disabled people are not at a disadvantage.

Activity: Use feedback to monitor and continuously improve: Identify, document and improve areas where managers require additional support and development by using feedback from:

- managers, to assess whether they know how, and have the support they need, to develop and support disabled employees to succeed to their full potential
- disabled employees, to assess whether they have the supports they need to progress in their public service careers

By monitoring and taking continuous action on feedback about barriers, CFIA will improve the development and promotion of disabled employees.

Targeted completion date: 2023 to 2024

Goal 2: Make information and communications technology (ICT) accessible for everyone

Information and communication technologies

In 2020 to 2021, CFIA began taking stock of accessibility barriers related to information and communications technologies This exercise identified the following barriers to accessibility:

- CFIA information and communication systems, software, tools and equipment are not all accessible for everyone

- CFIA does not have a dedicated digital accessibility team to drive ICT accessibility
- CFIA employees are not all aware of available accessibility services, support, and tools (for example, Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) and screen readers)
- CFIA was not positioned to comply with web accessibility requirements by the Accessibility Regulations 2022 deadline (Communications) (However, the Agency did identify the need to take a complete inventory of, and map out, ICT)

Therefore, to make CFIA ICT accessible for everyone, the Agency's Goal 2 actions focus on three areas: identify barriers and solutions, remove barriers, and maintain accessible ICT.

When implementing actions, consider the CFIA Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan to coordinate and streamline diversity and inclusion efforts.

Expected outcomes:

- CFIA identifies whether the Agency's information and communications technologies (ICT) are accessible for everyone
- CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's information and communications technologies (ICT)
- CFIA provides accessible information and communications technologies (ICT)

Expected outcome: CFIA identifies whether the Agency's information and communications technologies (ICT) are accessible for everyone

Activity: Identify barriers:

- Take an inventory of, and map out, the Agency's current ICT in the areas of:
    - information and data access
    - technology software
    - technology hardware
- Apply an accessibility lens to review the inventory and identify and document any barriers, in consultation with: disabled persons, Human Resources Branch Health Accommodation Office, Duty to Accommodate Office, and IT Client Care Centre

Identify solutions to remove barriers:

- Engage with Shared Services Canada's Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program, to learn about and access the Program's adaptive computer technologies, tools, training, services and resources
- Join government-wide accessibility communities of practice to learn what other government organizations are doing to identify best practices and remove barriers to ICT
- Research what accessibility tools and processes exist in other organizations, and assess whether they would help make CFIA ICT accessible for everyone
- Create a prioritized accessibility stream in the intake process of the Digital Enablement Experimentation Lab, to quickly analyze accessibility issues and determine the best solution to expedite removing barriers

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

Expected outcome: CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's information and communications technologies (ICT)

Activity: Support employees responsible for delivering and supporting ICT programs and services:

- Create a dedicated digital accessibility team led by a disabled employee to drive ICT accessibility at CFIA
- Apply an accessibility lens and update policies, procedures, and guidance in the areas of information and data access, use of technology software, and use of technology hardware
- Provide accessibility training and learning
- Add accessibility checkpoints in IT projects and methodologies and consult with disabled persons from start to finish

Hold information sessions and prepare an Agency-wide information bulletin to promote the updated resources to employees and ICT staff.

Support managers:

- Provide support via the CFIA IT Client Care Centre, Human Resources Branch Health Accommodations Office, the Agency's centralized accommodations fund, and via subject matter experts such as CFIA's duty to accommodate case managers
- Promote GoC supports/ resources such as Shared Services Canadas Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program and TBS Office of Public Service Accessibility

Support disabled employees:

- Provide disabled employees with timely and easy access to ICT that is accessible by default.
- Ensure assistive technology is compatible in both official languages
- Ensure that accessibility features are enabled for IT solutions and equipment
- Develop and maintain a lending library for assistive technology so that technology is on hand to quickly respond to accommodation requests
- Provide accessibility resources within the IT Client Care Centre knowledgebase, which will also include a landing page where future articles related to ICT accessibility can be linked
- Explore using free applications to enhance communication for employees with disabilities (for example, speech-to-text apps for employees with hearing disabilities)

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

Expected outcome: CFIA provides accessible information and communications technologies (ICT)

Activity: Use feedback to monitor and continuously improve: Collect and use feedback from disabled employees to identify and address areas where ICT is not accessible.

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

Goal 3: Enhance the accessibility of the built environment and transportation

Built environment

CFIA's 2020 to 2021 taking stock exercise identified the following barriers to accessibility related to the built:

- CFIA has not yet done a full accessibility assessment of the built environment of its custodial properties to identify how they could be more accessible and inclusive
- Public Services and Procurement Canada has also not yet done a full accessibility assessment
- CFIA disabled employees are concerned about whether CFIA will meet their accessibility and accommodation needs when they return to the workplace

To make the built environment accessible, the Agency's Goal 3 actions focus on three areas: identify barriers and solutions, remove barriers, and maintain an accessible built environment.

When implementing actions, consider the CFIA Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan to coordinate and streamline diversity and inclusion efforts.

Expected outcomes:

- CFIA identifies whether the Agency's leased and custodial built environment is accessible
- CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's leased and custodial built environment
- CFIA maintains the accessibility of the Agency's leased and custodial built environment

Expected outcomes: CFIA identifies whether the Agency's leased and custodial built environment is accessible

Activity: Identify barriers:

- Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) is responsible for approximately [2] 97 CFIA leased office locations. (The number of PSPC buildings leased by the CFIA can change annually).
    - Support PSPC as it develops new office standards to promote a barrier free environment (see <u>PSPC's accessibility action plan</u> for its planned leased space actions)
    - In consultation with disabled CFIA employees, integrate an accessibility lens into existing office deficiency identification processes, and work with PSPC to address as required
- The CFIA owns 129 buildings (custodial spaces).
    - Of these, 9 are laboratories and 3 are inspection stations, storage sheds, barns, and screen- and green-houses.
    - And 12 of the buildings are occupied by CFIA employees and/or have common areas.
- Assess applicable common areas against the suitable accessibility standards to determine deficiencies, in consultation with disabled employees, CFIA Human Resources Branch Health Accommodation Office, and the Duty to Accommodate Office (For common spaces as per D.2.2.2. in the Standard on Barrier-Free Access to Real Property – <u>Directive on the Management of Real Property</u>)
- In consultation with disabled employees, integrate an accessibility lens into existing deficiency identification processes

- Engage with PSPC to apply relevant approaches, lessons learned, and good practices on building assessment approaches to the CFIA's efforts

Targeted completion of activities:

2024 to 2025
2025 to 2026: All 9 CFIA-owned laboratories and three inspection stations assessed for accessibility

Identify solutions to remove barriers:

- Support and contribute to the development of an Agency-wide approach to CFIA employee accommodation so that all CFIA functions (human resources, real property, information technology, communications, finance) are integrated to support accommodation for disabled employees
- Engage with PSPC on major projects to apply relevant approaches, lessons learned and good practices, and to learn what other government organizations are doing to remove accessibility barriers in the built environment
- Join government-wide accessibility communities of practice to learn what other government organizations are doing to remove accessibility barriers in the built environment, and to identify best practices
- Consult with other science-based government departments to see what they are doing to remove accessibility barriers in the built environment, and assess whether they are feasible for CFIA
- Assess and consider TBS Office of Public Service Accessibility's Centralized Enabling Workplace Fund to help finance activities aimed at

removing barriers to workplace accommodation
- Develop a CFIA real property strategy and plan that will integrate accessibility considerations and remove barriers in the built environment

Targeted completion of activities:

2023 to 2024: As the assessments identify barriers, CFIA will prioritize based on risk and address

2024 to 2025: As the assessments identify barriers, CFIA will prioritize based on risk and address

2025 to 2026

Expected outcomes: CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's leased and custodial built environment

Activity: Short-term

- New builds and retrofits within the CFIA custodial built environments are accessible and in accordance with accessibility best practices and standards, where feasible
- Address immediate accessibility barriers identified by CFIA disabled employees:
  - Take steps to retrofit or adapt employee's physical workspace to make it accessible and enable the employee to do their job well, and participate fully with their team and in the workplace

Targeted completion of activities: 2023 to 2024

Longer-term

Implement the CFIA real property strategy and plan:

- Develop a real property strategy that will include all the elements required for sound real property management including governance, performance measurement, information management, professional capability, funding sustainability, environmental risk, indigenous engagement, and gender-based analysis plus (GBA+)
- Apply an accessibility lens and update any real property policies, procedures and guidance
- Implement feasible recommendations from accessibility assessments

Targeted completion of activities: 2025 to 2026

Support employees responsible for implementing the CFIA real property strategy and for general management:

- Hold information sessions with real property specialists to support and promote the concept of applying and implementing an accessibility lens
- Verify that real property projects meet applicable accessibility standards
- Consult with disabled persons during the planning stage for fit-up projects

Targeted completion of activities: 2023 to 2024

Expected outcomes: CFIA maintains the accessibility of the Agency's leased and custodial built environment

Activity: Use feedback to monitor and continuously improve:

Collect and use feedback from disabled employees to identify and address areas where CFIA's built environment is not accessible.

Targeted completion of activities: 2025 to 2026

Transportation

The goal of the Transportation area under the *Accessible Canada Act* is to ensure a barrier-free federal transportation network.

This priority area does not apply to CFIA at this time. For this reason, we have not developed activities related to transportation.

CFIA maintains a fleet of vehicles for specific operational purposes, such as inspections. In cases where an employee requires accessibility features in order to operate a fleet vehicle, an accommodation would have to be made.

Goal 4: Design and deliver accessible programs and services (including procurement)

CFIA provides programs and services to the public and private sector to meet its mandate to safeguard food, animals and plants which enhances the health and well-being of Canada's people, environment and the economy. The Agency provides a variety of services, such as issuing permits, licences, and approvals, providing laboratory services and food recalls, and conducting inspection and enforcement services. CFIA also provides internal programs and services to support employees, such as information equipment and technology services, human resources support, guidance and advice, and real property and security services.

CFIA's 2020 to 2021 taking stock exercise identified that the Agency had not done a full accessibility assessment of all its programs and services, and that the Agency lacked the financial and human resource capacity to conduct this assessment.

To make CFIA's programs and services accessible, the Agency's Goal 4 actions focus on three areas: identify barriers and solutions, remove barriers, and design and deliver accessible programs and services.

When implementing actions, consider the CFIA Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan to coordinate and streamline diversity and inclusion efforts.

Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Expected outcomes:

- CFIA identifies whether the Agency's programs and services are accessible
- CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's programs and services
- CFIA designs and delivers accessible programs and services

Expected outcome: CFIA identifies whether the Agency's programs and services are accessible

Activities: Identify barriers:

- Apply an accessibility lens to assess CFIA's existing programs and services to identify and document barriers. Do this in consultation with disabled employees, CFIA Human Resources Branch Health Accommodation Office, and the Duty to Accommodate Office
- To help identify barriers, engage with large federal government service organizations such as Employment and Skills Development Canada (ESDC) to apply relevant approaches, lessons learned, and good practices

Identify solutions to remove barriers:

- Engage with large federal government service organizations such as ESDC to apply relevant approaches, lessons learned and good practices to the CFIA's efforts to remove accessibility barriers in the Agency's design and delivery of programs and services
- Join government-wide accessibility communities of practice to learn what other government organizations are doing to remove accessibility barriers in the design and delivery of programs and services, and to identify best practices
- Research what other organizations are doing to remove accessibility barriers from their programs and services, and assess whether they are feasible for CFIA
- Determine whether CFIA can use existing technology to improve access to CFIA's programs and services
- Develop a plan to progressively make the design and delivery of CFIA's programs and services more accessible

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

Expected outcome: CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's programs and services

Activities: Implement the plan to make the design and delivery of CFIA's programs and services more accessible:

- Apply an accessibility lens, and include all the elements required for sound design and delivery of programs and services, such as governance, performance measurement, information management,

professional capability, funding sustainability, risk management, and gender-based analysis plus (GBA+)

Support employees responsible for design and delivery of CFIA programs and services:

- Apply an accessibility lens and update policies, procedures, and guidance
- Provide accessibility training and learning
- Add accessibility checkpoints in key design and delivery stages and consult with disabled persons from start to finish, as well as with subject matter experts such as CFIA's duty to accommodate case managers and the TBS Office of Public Service Accessibility

Hold information sessions and prepare an Agency-wide information bulletin to promote the updated resources to employees.

Targeted completion of activities: 2025 to 2026

Expected outcome: CFIA designs and delivers accessible programs and services

Activities: Use feedback to monitor and continuously improve:

Collect and use feedback from disabled employees to identify and address areas where CFIA's programs and services are not accessible.

Targeted completion of activities: 2025 to 2026

Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

Expected outcomes:

- [CFIA identifies whether the Agency's procurement of goods, services and construction is accessible](#)
- [CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's procurement of goods, services and construction](#)
- [CFIA provides accessible procurement of goods, services and construction](#)

Expected outcome: CFIA identifies whether the Agency's procurement of goods, services and construction is accessible

Activities: Identify barriers:

- Apply an accessibility lens to assess CFIA's existing procurement systems and processes to identify and document barriers, in consultation with disabled employees, CFIA Human Resources Branch Health Accommodation Office, and the Duty to Accommodate Office
- Engage with large federal government service organizations such as Employment and Skills Development Canada (ESDC) to apply relevant approaches, lessons learned, and good practices to the CFIA's accessibility assessment of the Agency's procurement of goods, services and construction

Identify solutions to remove barriers:

- Engage with large federal government service organizations such as Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) to apply relevant approaches, lessons learned and good practices to remove accessibility barriers in the Agency's procurement systems and processes

- Join government-wide accessibility communities of practice to learn what other government organizations are doing to remove accessibility barriers in procurement, and to identify best practices
- Research what other organizations are doing to remove accessibility barriers from their procurement systems and processes, and assess whether they are feasible for CFIA
- Determine whether CFIA can use existing technology to improve its procurement processes and services
- Develop a plan to progressively make CFIA's procurement of goods, services and construction more accessible

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

Expected outcome: CFIA improves the accessibility of the Agency's procurement of goods, services and construction

Activities: Support employees responsible for procurement:

- Apply an accessibility lens and update policies, procedures, and guidance. For example, update the CFIA Procurement and Contracting Directive to include a section on accessible procurement, include guidance and additional resources on accessible procurement directly in ePro
- Hold information sessions and prepare an Agency-wide information bulletin to promote accessible procurement and increase awareness for CFIA Business Owners and procurement specialists
- Provide accessibility training and learning. For example, support compliance with the TBS Directive on the Management of Procurement

by having business owners complete an accessibility certification for every CFIA procurement

- Embed accessibility in procurement processes. For example, add mandatory accessibility checkpoints in key procurement stages. Include an accessible procurement certification in ePro that will that require CFIA business owners to consider accessibility when procuring goods, services and construction, and make this mandatory at the requirement identification stage, before a procurement request can be submitted to the Contracting and Procurement Policy Division.
- Consult with disabled persons throughout, as well as with subject matter experts such as CFIA's duty to accommodate case managers and the TBS Office of Public Service Accessibility

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

Expected outcome: CFIA provides accessible procurement of goods, services and construction

Activities: Use feedback to monitor and continuously improve:

Collect and use feedback from disabled persons to identify and address areas where CFIA's procurement of goods, services and construction are not accessible.

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

B) Design and delivery of programs and services

Goal 5: Create and maintain a culture of accessibility

Communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies

"Communication, other than ICT", as identified in the Act, differ from CFIA's because commitments and activities related to these areas are reflected under our organization's "Culture" priority area.

The Agency's Goal 5 is to create and maintain a culture of accessibility. Culture means the values, beliefs, behaviours, language and communication common to a group of people.

CFIA's 2020 to 2021 taking stock exercise identified the following barriers to accessibility related to a culture of accessibility at CFIA:

- CFIA employees with disabilities, particularly invisible disabilities, do not always request accommodation or discuss their accessibility needs for fear of stigma
- CFIA employees with disabilities, particularly invisible disabilities, feel the evidence to receive accommodation is too heavy; demonstrates a lack of trust
- Previous CFIA PSES results show employees with disabilities reported experiencing higher rates of harassment

Goal 5 actions focus on driving behavioural change, so that accessibility becomes part of the Agency's culture. Every employee will understand what accessibility means and why it matters, and they will take proactive action to create and maintain a fully accessible, respectful and inclusive workplace that values and enables disabled persons.

Goal 5 actions are designed to: identify barriers and solutions, remove barriers, and ultimately create and maintain a culture of accessibility.

When implementing actions, consider the CFIA Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan to coordinate and streamline diversity and inclusion efforts.

Expected outcomes:

- CFIA identifies whether the Agency has a culture of accessibility
- CFIA improves the Agency's culture of accessibility
- CFIA maintains a culture of accessibility

Expected outcome: CFIA identifies whether the Agency has a culture of accessibility

Activities: Identify barriers:

- Apply an accessibility lens to assess CFIA's existing culture to identify and document barriers to being a culture of accessibility, in consultation with disabled employees, CFIA Human Resources Branch Health Accommodation Office, and the Duty to Accommodate Office
- Engage with large federal government service organizations such as Employment and Skills Development Canada (ESDC) to apply relevant approaches, lessons learned, and good practices to CFIA's initial assessment of the state of the Agency's culture of accessibility

Targeted completion of activities: 2023 to 2024

Identify solutions to remove barriers:

- Engage with other federal government organizations to identify and apply relevant approaches, lessons learned and good practices to CFIA's efforts to promote a culture of accessibility
- Join government-wide accessibility communities of practice to learn what other government organizations are doing to promote a culture of accessibility
- Research what other organizations are doing to promote a culture of accessibility and assess whether they are feasible for CFIA
- Develop a communications plan to promote a culture of accessibility at CFIA

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

Expected outcome: CFIA improves the Agency's culture of accessibility

Activities: Implement the communications plan to promote a culture of accessibility at CFIA:

- Apply an accessibility lens, and include all the elements required for sound design and delivery of culture of accessibility communications plan, such as governance, performance measurement, information management, professional capability, funding sustainability, risk management, and gender-based analysis plus (GBA+)
- Raise awareness of the experiences of people with disabilities in the Agency through storytelling and interviews from their own voices with the new Beyond2020 story series "Beyond Barriers: Stories from Persons with Disabilities"

- Launch campaigns and events to combat stigma and myths, and to encourage self-identification and participation in accessibility groups
- Build on existing processes, such as CFIA's proactive disclosure of discrimination and harassment cases, to highlight CFIA's efforts to resolve cases directly related to accessibility
- Engage with all employees to promote awareness and understanding; consult via internal employee surveys, town halls, unions, and occupational health and safety meetings

Support employees responsible for CFIA communications:

- Apply an accessibility lens and update policies, procedures, and guidance
- Provide accessibility training and learning
- Add accessibility checkpoints in key communications design and delivery stages, and consult with disabled persons from start to finish, as well as with subject matter experts such the TBS Office of Public Service Accessibility

Support executives:

- Identify best practices, and provide accessibility training and learning to support CFIA executives to know how to proactively foster a safe, positive environment that encourages conversations about accessibility and inclusion and in the work environment
- Then ensure that a "proactive, accessibility-aware" culture is promoted from the top down (Vice-President level) via information sessions,

workshops, dialogue targeted to branch executives and decision makers

Support employees:

- Develop and implement an annual communication and engagement plan to raise CFIA awareness and understanding of workplace accommodation and the suite of information, tools and support available

Make all employees accountable, then reward and recognize:

- In consultation with Human Resources Branch, create and include objectives related to creating and maintaining a culture of accessibility in performance agreements
- Document completed accessibility training and learning in performance agreements

The above actions will also increase employees' awareness of the importance of creating and maintaining a culture of accessibility.

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

Activities: Feedback process:

Establish a confidential process for disabled employees to provide feedback on accessibility at CFIA.

Targeted completion of activities: 2023 to 2024

Expected outcome: CFIA maintains a culture of accessibility

Activities: Use feedback to monitor and continuously improve:

Collect and use feedback from disabled employees to identify and address areas where CFIA's communications and broader culture does not support accessibility.

Targeted completion of activities: 2024 to 2025

Consultations

From 2020 to 2021, CFIA took stock of accessibility by gathering information through the following activities:

- conducting virtual focus groups with disabled employees
- consulting with the CFIA National Manager's Committee and the Equity and Diversity Steering Committee
- doing internal surveys
- reviewing documents, including the CFIA results in the Public Service Employee Survey (PSES)

In 2021, the Agency also conducted an Employment Systems Review (ESR) to identify barriers and potential solutions to support employment opportunities and an accessible and inclusive workplace.

Between July and September of 2022, the Agency consulted on the draft Accessibility Plan with the following groups:

- Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Equity and Diversity Steering Committee
- Employee Accessibility Network
- National Managers Community

- Senior Management Committee
- National Occupational Health and Safety Policy Committee

We asked the following questions of all participants:

1. Do the actions under each of the five goals make sense? In other words, if the Agency implements these actions, do you agree that the organization will be more accessible?

2. Are there any actions in the Plan that you do not understand and that you think we should reword to make clearer?

3. Is there an important action that you don't see in the plan that you believe we should consider including?

   In some instances we consulted on the performance measurement framework as well, in which we asked:

4. Does the Plan's performance measurement framework make sense? In other words, do you agree that the measures will provide information to senior management on whether the Agency is making progress toward the expected outcomes

Footnotes

1   Digitize the Duty to Accommodate Program's process to collect, analyze and report on the program's case management and outcomes, to make it easy to understand performance and report readily on results.

2   The number of PSPC buildings leased by CFIA can vary from year to year.

Date modified:

2023-11-09