



# 2023 Progress Report

On the implementation of the Environment and  
Climate Change Canada Accessibility Plan



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Environment and Climate Change Canada  
Public Information Centre  
Place Vincent Massey building  
351 St-Joseph boulevard  
Gatineau Quebec K1A 0H3  
Toll free: 1-800-668-6767  
Email: [enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca](mailto:enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca)

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# General

## Contact information

### Designated Person to receive feedback on barriers and on the ECCC Accessibility Plan:

Director, Wellness Programs, Human Resources Branch

Address: 351 Saint-Joseph Blvd., Gatineau, QC, K1A 0H3

Phone number: 1-844-690-8366

E-mail address: [RetroactionAccessibilite-FeedbackAccessibility@ec.gc.ca](mailto:RetroactionAccessibilite-FeedbackAccessibility@ec.gc.ca)

Anonymously: by mail, by phone, by electronic form

## Feedback process

Persons in Canada dealing with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) can formulate feedback on the way ECCC is implementing its Accessibility Plan and reporting on its progress. They can also report barriers encountered when dealing with ECCC. Persons in Canada can request the Accessibility Plan, Progress Report and Feedback Progress documents in an alternate format from the Designated Person.

An acknowledgement of receipt of feedback on accessibility will be provided in the same manner as it was communicated, except for anonymous feedback.

The feedback will be shared and coordinated by the Designated Person to receive feedback.

## Accessibility Statement

As of the date of publication, this document has been verified for accessibility.

## Summary

The goal of the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) is to make Canada barrier-free by removing and preventing barriers.

To do this, **ECCC developed its first Accessibility Plan**, to follow the ACA and the *Accessible Canada Regulations*, published in December 2022. This plan will be updated every three years, with regular progress reports to describe the results of our actions.

The progress report exercise aided us to establish each branch's commitment to implementing the accessibility plan. We will benefit from working together to share experiences, methods, and tools.

## Guiding Principles of the ECCC Accessibility Strategy

- “Nothing without us”: Persons with disabilities are involved in all stages of the design and implementation of the Accessibility Strategy.
- Enablement: Creating an enabling workplace that supports employees with evident and non-evident limitations to be their best selves at work.
- Collaboration: Employees, groups, unions, and partners in the public and private sectors working together to achieve results.
- Sustainability: Implementing a strategy and actions that will have a lasting impact.
- Transparency: Being open in the design, implementation, and reporting of the strategy, successes and failure to remove barriers.

# Areas in section 5 of the ACA and progress

In pursuing a fully accessible Canada by 2040, ECCC is committed to offer accessible services by default to all ECCC employees and Canadians.

The implementation of specific Accessibility Plan actions is overseen by each branch, as the Department offers a variety of services that require specific approaches to meet other regulations.

## 1. Culture<sup>1</sup>

ECCC’s Culture of Care aims to create an empathic, compassionate, and respectful workplace. It is transparent and honest with genuine conversations between managers and employees. ECCC will continue to show accessibility leadership through our actions, planning, caring and support for our employees, clients, and partners.

1.1 Engaging employees in creating a Culture of Care, through committees and networks.

### Progress:

ECCC promotes and takes concrete actions to encourage the Culture of Care. To do so, presentations are being given on a regular basis to promote the Culture of Care across branches and directorates’ committees. There are also workshops designed for new employee orientation ECCC 101 sessions.

The Human Resources Branch (HRB) created two positions in the Diversity and Inclusion Division to support employee networks in handling various activities related to their mandate. HRB also staffed two positions in the Accessibility Secretariat under the Wellness Programs Division.

The Deputy Minister met with each network to listen to the issues impacting their work and their various lived experiences. Proper actions are currently being taken to address various concerns and frustrations.

Two new coordinators sharing responsibilities have been assigned to help the Accessibility Champions in supporting the Employee Accessibility Network (EAN). The number of employees that are members of this network increased by 26% this past year. The coordinators have improved structure, function,

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<sup>1</sup> Additional pillar adopted by ECCC in addition to the priority areas of the ACA – Section 5

and membership. It connects regularly with its membership by newsletter, quarterly meetings, and personal meetings. The EAN gives guidance, support, assistance, education, and resources to the members of the EAN and employees with accessibility needs. A Neurodivergent Employee subgroup has been created. Frequent communication and collaboration are conducted with internal and external stakeholders such as the Human Resources Branch, Facilities, Respect Bureau (Ombuds), Senior Management, and the TBS Meeting of the Persons with Disabilities Champions and Chairs Committee (PwDCCC). To better support employees with accessibility and disability needs, the EAN conducts outreach with the various networks and across ECCC (consultations, education, awareness, presentations, speaker series) to increase awareness and reduce barriers. The EAN has created a safe space for members.

1.2 Raising awareness by promoting accessibility through various communication products, such as messages, articles, events, lived experiences.

**Progress:**

An accessibility communication plan was created and followed. Accessibility Champions issued internal articles on the publication of the Accessibility Plan and on the consultation through the second edition of the ECCC Accessibility Survey. Many messages to all employees on diversity, inclusion and employment equity initiatives and resources were shared. There were articles raising awareness on accessibility of communications such as plain language and accessible format of documents.

Many accessibility sessions took place at branch level to raise awareness. The ECCC 101 orientation sessions for new employees now include specific information on accessibility. In 2023, ECCC organized its annual internal Respect Day on the theme of Accessibility. Branches put in place targeted projects such as the Be Well initiative, the Positive Space and certification in Mental Health First Aid. The Employee Accessibility Network (EAN) planned events such as speaker series and awareness campaigns.

1.3 Encouraging employees to follow accessibility related training. For example, training on accessible documents, disability management, unconscious bias, and inclusive hiring practices.

**Progress:**

In a priority message, Diversity, Inclusion and Employment Equity Champions stated that we need to continue our momentum to eliminate the barriers and discrimination still embedded in our systems and practices. To help support these goals, ECCC launched new mandatory training for all employees. The courses will help respond to the Diversity, Inclusion and Employment Equity Strategy's Education and Awareness Pillar. New mandatory courses are the following:

- Understanding Unconscious Bias
- Overcoming Your Own Unconscious Biases
- Unpacking Unconscious Bias for all supervisors, managers, and executives
- Addressing Disability Inclusion and Barriers to Accessibility
- Reflecting on Cultural Bias: Indigenous Perspectives

There were also articles to raise awareness on accessibility of communications. For example, promoted training and tools on plain language and accessible format of documents.

## 2. Employment

Improve recruitment, retention, and promotion of persons with disabilities (evident or not).

- 2.1 Establishing job advertisement to solicit persons with disabilities to apply for positions at ECCC for which they are potentially qualified.

### Progress:

Human resources (HR) staffing advisors received specialized resources to offer their services with an accessibility lens. Hiring managers have been advised to better describe the work context, physical environment, and job requirements to provide a better perception of the aspects that could interfere with accessibility. We have made progress in drafting Statements of Merit Criteria to make them more accessible and inclusive.

Progress in providing flexible assessment options as part of the selection process.

Efforts to have a person with disabilities present during job fairs and on selection committees have been made. Participation at the Ottawa Career Fair for Students and Recent Graduates with Disabilities and the Canadian Congress on Disability Inclusion.

- 2.2 Creating job advertisement (posting) with plain language that describes the requirements of the position including the work environment.

### Progress:

HR staffing advisors received specialized resources to offer their service with an accessibility lens. Hiring managers have been advised to better describe the work context, physical environment, and job requirements to provide a better perception of the aspects that could interfere with accessibility.

In enforcing the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) 36(2), delegated managers received communications and training to raise their awareness on assessment tools needing to be accessible documents and written in plain language.

The HR staffing team reviews job advertisements to recommend concise and clear language in addition to mandatory format.

There were articles raising awareness on accessibility of communications such as plain language targeting hiring managers.

- 2.3 Ensuring that managers have the proper tools and resources to assess and hire persons with disabilities.

### Progress:

HR staffing advisors received specialized references to offer their services with an accessibility lens.

Enforcement of the PSAE new paragraph 36(2) mitigates biases and barriers in staffing assessment. All hiring managers must attend this training to maintain their sub-delegation. The Corporate staffing team strongly encourage managers and supervisors involved in selection committees to register.

Corporate staffing developed and shared with hiring managers an information document on accommodation measures in staffing processes.

GC Workplace Accessibility Passport presented in hiring and on-boarding processes.

HR staffing advisors continue to promote pre-qualified pools of candidates that self-declared as members of employment equity group. Also, some hiring managers frequently refer to those EE pre-qualified pools of candidates.

At ECCC, to obtain a staffing delegation, managers must pass mandatory courses, such as “Staffing: A Resourcing Tool for Managers” and “Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce”. As of October 16, 2023, 99% of delegated managers had completed the “Inclusive Hiring Practices for a Diverse Workforce” course. Selection committee members are also invited to do this course.

2.4 Ensuring that the organization’s environment is accessible and accommodation measures are in place to remove barriers to retain persons with disabilities.

**Progress:**

Granting specific accommodation measures to employees as needed. The Accessibility at Work single window of services has HR accommodation advisors to support managers and employees. This new team offers better coordination between the internal parties involved. More details are written in the built environment section of this report on the accessible environment.

From April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, 92 official accommodation requests files were addressed by the Accessibility at Work and Disability Management teams. Accommodation measures put in place by internal services, such as Information Technology and Facilities, are not calculated here.

The on-boarding material for new employees promotes the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport and the Accessibility at Work single window of services.

From April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, 57 persons with disabilities left the Department. This represents 11% of employees who self-identify as a person with a disability. Out of the 57 who left, 9% of them left for a medical retirement.

2.5 Developing employees with disabilities by offering various opportunities to develop their talents and achieve their career goal.

**Progress:**

From April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, 116 persons with disabilities started an assignment, acting or at level, that was recorded in the human resources management system.

The Enforcement Branch now provides a mixed learning format for their Officer Designation and Regulation training.

Work is in progress to revamp the departmental language training framework. There will be a focus on employment equity groups and considerations to accessibility needs.

2.6 Monitoring human resources data regarding employment equity gaps for representation of persons with disabilities.

**Progress:**

The Diversity and inclusion team monitors data to better understand the unique challenges and experiences of all employees at ECCC. They report to various committees to work towards a more

representative, diverse, and inclusive organisation. Newly hired employees are invited to self-identify in their job offer letter, in the ECCC 101 week and in the on-boarding process. The response rate to self-identification in My GCHR was 77% as of March 31, 2023. We hope to have an increase when the new public service self-identification system is launched and promoted.

Decrease in persons with disabilities (PwD) representation gap of 39% compared to March 31, 2021, data, as of March 31, 2023. The gap in the number of PwD was -114 as of March 31, 2023, out of a total of 7,518 ECCC employees and 502 employees with disabilities.

2.7 Maintaining the working group to continue to promote the hiring strategy of persons with disabilities.

**Progress:**

The working group was active and met six times during the year. The group developed a detailed hiring plan for employment equity and a hiring strategy for persons with disabilities at department level. Branches are currently developing detailed employment equity (EE) hiring plans. 77% of them are either completed or currently finalizing them.

Training provided on Bona Fide Occupational Requirements.

**3. Built environment**

Enhance the accessibility of the built environment within ECCC facilities.

3.1 Improving accessibility to ECCC office buildings (owned or leased) and sites open to the public, in collaboration with partners and central agencies, such as Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC).

**Progress:**

The Corporate Services and Finance Branch's Real Property Management Division completed floor modernization and improvements in different office buildings whether rented or owned by ECCC.

The Canadian Wildlife Service has upgraded the parking lot at Alaksen National Wildlife Area, by repairing and restoring it to better conditions, regardless of the mean of transportation.

To make sure that ECCC spaces are fully accessible and inclusive to everyone, the Employee Accessibility Network (EAN) works with internal partners to identify areas where there are needs for improvements to accessibility. The EAN organized a workshop on unassigned workspace with the Real Property Management Division to share information on challenges experienced.

3.2 Assessing the accessibility of specific sites, planning, and undertaking corrective measures.

**Progress:**

Our processes integrate accessibility aspect. We do continued consultation with various networks, we offer continuous support. We are conducting several accessibility audits this year, including custodial sites, namely:

- Canada Center for Inland Waters (CCIW)
- River Rd



- National Hydrology Research Centre (NHRC)
- Pacific Environmental Science Centre (PESC)
- Pacific Wildlife Research Centre (PWRC) Delta
- Centre for Atmospheric Research Experiments (CARE)
- King City – radar station
- Canadian Meteorological Centre (CMC)

This proactive approach will help us identify and address any accessibility barriers within these facilities. CMC has been completed.

The International Affairs Branch includes accessibility considerations in their planning of international events, such as COP28. The location for COP28 is Expo City Dubai, which aligns with the Dubai Universal Design Code. The requirements in this code cover a wide range of human abilities, embracing all. Staff on site are trained in inclusion awareness training and will assist guests. There are also two COP28 UAE accessibility help desks in the venue, in the main arrival area next to the registration counters, and an accessibility desk in the information and services hub of the Green Zone. Accessible shuttle services will also be available on site for those with mobility limitations. When designing, ECCC officials have worked with the UAE to ensure accessibility needs are met for the Canada Pavilion, including wider doorways, unobstructed pathways, access to elevators, and adding a ramp to the events stage in the pavilion itself. Pavilion staff will take measures to prioritize front row seating for people with various disabilities (for example, those who rely on lip reading will need to sit closer to speakers).

A similar commitment to accessibility is being applied to the planning process for Canada to host negotiations on the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-4) on Plastic Pollution in Ottawa in April 2024. This includes not only venue selection and the built environment, but also the approach to public consultation. To ensure an accessible approach, consultations are being carried out in multiple formats and via different platforms. This includes online written consultations in plain language and a series of virtual meetings.

3.3 Ensuring that facilities are made accessible according to current building codes and good inclusion practices when relocating or remodeling.

### **Progress:**

Integrating accessibility aspect into facility processes.

Specific to the Science and Technology Branch, for the renovation at 335 River Road, an accessibility assessment was performed by the staff as part of the procurement process for new fume hoods and laboratory benches in the laboratory. The Science and Technology Branch included accessibility considerations and requirements when planning the construction of GAW observatory.

Under the Canadian Wildlife Service, new interpretative exhibits designed with accessibility recommendations are implemented. At the Cap-Tourmente Interpretation Centre, a handrail was added for safe circulation in the stairs.

3.4 Identifying space in the workplace that can be used, assigned, or reserved for employees or candidates with disabilities with duty to accommodate requirements, such as air filters, dimmed lighting, soundproof, wider screen, etc.

**Progress:**

Each region has a generic inbox for facilities that is monitored for employees to reach out for any issues with accommodations. As part of our space modernization, we respond to employees with accommodation and accessibility needs. We ensure that a workstation meeting their needs is available to them when they report to the office.

The EAN works with ECCC partners to identify areas where improvements to accessibility are needed, so that ECCC spaces are fully accessible and inclusive to the public and to persons with disabilities and accessibility needs.

**4. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

Continue to make information and communication technologies usable by all.

- 4.1 Ensuring that any developed and acquired information and communication technologies will be accessible by design.

**Progress:**

In 2023, installation of Office 365 on more than 91.5% of all ECCC computers. That version of Office 365 contains the latest accessibility tools. Installation will continue.

Discussions initiated with Shared Services regarding accessibility assessment of the Government of Canada Secret Infrastructure.

The Access to Information and Privacy Division put in place an encrypted shared drive to allow program contacts to share larger volume documents. This technologic solution eliminates the need to move large hardcopy files.

- 4.2 Ensuring that *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* (WCAG) are applied, including digital applications and websites.

**Progress:**

Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC) procured user interface and user experience (UI/UX) services. This is to review the WeatherCAN app to meet core requirements of WCAG 2.1, which includes some aspects of mobile apps. There is currently no standard on accessibility for mobile applications by the Treasury Board Secretariat. This is because there are only two GoC applications: WeatherCAN and ArriveCAN. Assessing WeatherCAN against WCAG 2.1 helps to make the app more accessible.

- 4.3 Conducting the inventory of websites, mobile applications and other technologies developed for the branches and available to the public. Assessing the accessibility and identification of corrective measures to be included in the updates to the Departmental Accessibility Plan.

**Progress:**

Inventory of websites is ongoing. Canadian Wildlife Service completed its inventory and accessibility was verified. All Human Resources Branch external webpages are hosted on Canada.ca. The Public

Affairs and Communications Branch verified compliance. Assessment of external websites is also ongoing and aiming for Level AA conformance as set out in the WCAG improvement.

- 4.4 Ensuring that software chosen and used to meet business needs is accessible, including information management systems, by collecting and incorporating feedback from users in processes.

**Progress:**

In 2023, installation of Office 365 on more than 91.5% of all ECCC computers. That version of Office 365 contains the latest accessibility tools. Installation will continue.

The IT Service Desk can activate accessible functions, such as transcription, to employees' computers. The employee's request must confirm management's approval and that security of information was discussed.

- 4.5 Assessing the accessibility of publicly available technologies and planning required corrective measures.

**Progress:**

Corporate Services and Finance Branch will engage with application owners to make improvements. Assess all external facing ECCC applications to determine if they fully meet GoC accessibility standard. In 2023, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) has used several tools, both automated and manual to test several external applications for accessibility. Moving forward, OCIO will integrate a new testing tool currently in use at another department and continue to test external applications.

- 4.6 Identifying information and communication technologies that can test and improve the accessibility of communications.

**Progress:**

The Canadian Wildlife Service started the development of an internal document on best practices for making accessible maps to those with colour blindness or colour vision limitations.

## **5. Communication, other than Information and Communication Technologies**

Make information and communication accessible to all.

- 5.1 Using plain and simple language to make communications accessible, in both official languages.

**Progress:**

An accessibility communication plan was created and followed. There were articles raising awareness on accessibility of communications such as plain language and accessible format of documents. Guidelines and tools are available for employees to help them with the accessibility of their communications.

The Canadian Wildlife Service created a new recruitment video to meet accessibility requirements.

All new documents and pages on the [biodivcanada.ca](http://biodivcanada.ca) website, Canada's biodiversity clearing-house mechanism, are accessible.

5.2 Ensuring communication formats are accessible; once reviewed, an Accessibility Statement is added at the beginning of documents.

**Progress:**

Templates and tools for drafting memos and ECCC's corporate look templates have no accessibility check errors.

The Enforcement Branch engaged Legal Services. They seek legal opinion to better understand the options available regarding accessible legislated enforcement documents.

Accessibility is considered in the organization of the participation in international events. For instance, for COP28, the team is working with Communications and interpretation services. The purpose is to provide captions, transcripts, and audio descriptions for all videos highlighted on the Canada Pavilion screens.

Many branches ensure that internal communication to all staff is in accessible format.

The Creative Services and Production team under Public Affairs and Communications Branch (PACB) produces all internal and external videos in an accessible way. This includes transcriptions, closed captioning, translation and when requested, interpretation in sign language.

5.3 Ensuring that large departmental meetings are accessible by all and that tools are provided to managers and employees to create accessible meetings where possible.

**Progress:**

A recording studio in Place Vincent-Massey was designed and opened. Large departmental events can now be more accessible. Live translation, sign language interpretation and transcription for people in the conference room and on-line webcast are available options.

Improved accessibility for virtual departmental events by providing simultaneous translation and sign language. Tips and tools on best practices to host an accessible virtual meeting are available.

## **6. Procurement of goods, services, and facilities**

Ensuring goods, services and facilities are accessible by design and default. Improving the accessibility of tendering and procurement procedures.

6.1 Implementing accessibility verification for procurement of goods, services, and facilities.

**Progress:**

The Procurement and Contracting Division supports the implementation of the Accessibility Plan. To that end, Responsibility Centre Managers (RCMs) must identify how accessibility is addressed in each requirement submitted to Procurement & Contracting.

6.2 Assessing, identifying, and improving processes to facilitate an effective and rapid procurement for accommodation-related tools.

**Progress:**

Managers can get financial support from the departmental central duty to accommodate fund. This fund assists by defraying costs associated with unusually expensive accommodation needs for employees or candidates. The purpose of that centralized fund is to provide appropriate accommodation in a timely manner.

The Accessibility at Work team supports employees and managers in identifying reasonable solutions to meet the employer's responsibility under duty to accommodate. They also collaborate with internal services, such as the Procurement and Contracting Division.

Accessibility considerations are included in the contingency plans in case of an emergency, such as a pandemic. For example, including the purchase of masks with a transparent section overcomes at least one barrier for persons who read lips.

**7. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services**

Equip employees to design and deliver accessible programs and services, including policies.

- 7.1 Including consideration of disability and accessibility to eliminate negative impact of policies and programs on persons with disabilities when designing, developing, and updating policies and programs.

**Progress:**

When consulting Canadians on the *Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations*, identifying accessibility concerns was important. The Environmental Protection Branch organized two webinars to consult persons with disabilities. They heard about the importance of maintaining access to single use plastic straws, bendable ones, for accessibility purposes. To ensure accessibility, the *Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations* allow the production, import and sale of flexible straws under certain conditions. It is important that people with disabilities or medical needs continue to have access to flexible straws. The exceptions in the Regulations ensure that they will continue to be available on the Canadian market for suppliers and consumers.

- 7.2 Assessing the accessibility of services, programs, and policies.

**Progress:**

ECCC integrates Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) into its policy, program, and service delivery products. ECCC recognizes that consideration of the different needs of diverse groups of people is essential to the development of sound public policy, programs, and services. The "plus" in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences. It must consider other identity factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, age, and mental or physical ability.

The accessibility audits are completed for Last Mountain Lake, Big Creek, and Prince Edward Point.

- 7.3 Identifying corrective measures to be included in the updates to the Departmental Accessibility Plan.

**Progress:**

Some branches, such as Canadian Wildlife Service, conducted an accessibility assessment of their services. They will develop a more inclusive interpretive program. They are exploring potential for an accessible mentored hunt. They are also updating driving tours as an accessible nature appreciation activity.

7.4 Applying identified corrective measures to remove barriers and prevent the creation of new barriers.

**Progress:**

Accessible signs added or replaced in protected areas.

The Departmental Security Division launched a Guide for Persons Requiring Assistance (PRA). A PRA is a person who requires assistance to evacuate a workplace in the event of an emergency. Employees requiring assistance must identify themselves with their manager as a PRA, prior to an emergency.

Employee safety is our priority. Self-identification allows us to develop and implement a plan to ensure everyone's safety in the event of an emergency.

**8. Transportation**

While ECCC does not offer transportation services to Canadians, various transportation vehicles are utilized at various sites. Public transportation is used by employees for business purposes.

8.1 Acquire accessible electric vans such as Envirobus shuttle vans that will circulate between the two largest ECCC buildings in the National Capital Region.

**Progress:**

There are already shuttles between buildings. However, ECCC ordered accessible electric vans as a shuttle that will circulate between its two largest buildings.

Delays in the delivery to and from the manufacturer are not under ECCC's control. This maintains a barrier to persons with a mobility disability. This barrier is mitigated by taxi vouchers.

8.2 Assessing and identifying the processes that could identify accessibility needs when it comes to transportation matters, such as those relating to fleet vehicles.

**Progress:**

The purpose of this action is to prevent the creation of barriers. There was no barrier identified regarding the vehicles of the fleet. Awareness was raised to identify situations that could create a barrier to employees using vehicles from the Department's fleet.

8.3 Ensuring that employees with disabilities have appropriate accommodation measures in place to remove barriers when travelling for business.

**Progress:**

There was no barrier identified regarding accommodation needs for employees travelling for business purposes. Managers' awareness was raised that certain individual situations could lead to accommodation needs. Some management committees will collaborate with the Accessibility at Work team to identify workable solutions and measures to prevent.

**9. Broadcasting**

The Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC) leads the development of weather and related environmental programs, prediction models and diffusion of information to meet the needs of Canadians. This includes the provision of weather, ice, and other environmental prediction information to support Canadian operations. It manages the delivery of our information using a large range of mechanisms. MSC improves the delivery of our services through regular collection of feedback, assessment of client needs and strategic partnerships.

ECCC is the Authoritative Source of Weather Alerts 24/7.

9.1 Broadcasting weather information to equip Canadians, regardless of their disabilities, to make informed decisions according to the weather.

**Progress:**

[National Public Alerting System \(publicsafety.gc.ca\)](https://publicsafety.gc.ca) coordinates tornado alerts, and some severe alerts being broadcast intrusive. ECCC does not own or control those broadcast intrusive platforms. MSC is active in horizontal initiatives, so a wide range of platforms diffuse weather alerts.

9.2 Continuing to comply with the *Accessible Canada Act*, with the *Broadcasting Act* and with the Treasury Board Secretariat standards for web accessibility.

**Progress:**

Contract in place to consider user interface and user experience (UI/UX). The contractor will evaluate the WeatherCAN app against Web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) 2.1. There is currently no standard on accessibility for mobile applications by Treasury Board Secretariat.

For [Alert Ready](#), texts provided have a readability of grade 5.

9.3 Providing programming accessible by disabled persons should be provided within the Canadian broadcasting system as resources become available for the purpose.

**Progress:**

Our website and WeatherCAN app test accessibilities with each release. This means that we test our website and app against accessibility tools that comes with browsers and phones. We test functions such as VoiceOver, Zoom and others. WCAG 2.0 is applied to the weather app. Contract in place to consider user interface and user experience (UI/UX) WCAG 2.1 for the WeatherCAN app. This is to go above the current WCAG 2.0 standard.

9.4 Monitoring and maintaining the broadcasting network and responding to public feedback about all MSC's dissemination channels, including temporary accessibility issues on the [weather.gc.ca](http://weather.gc.ca) website.

**Progress:**

We maintain the automated telephone service [Hello Weather](#) serving also as alternatives to persons with a seeing disability. We keep [Weatheradio](#) which is a platform using voice technology. Weatheradio is specific to receiving weather information and is also broadcast intrusive.

9.5 Continuing to implement additional tables and descriptions to increase the accessibility of elements that are currently exempted from web accessibility standards.

**Progress:**

Under the [Standard on Web Accessibility](#), the interactive map has an exemption. Use of tables and texts summaries of weather forecasts and alerts as an alternate format to the interactive map.

# Consultations

Under the ACA, the regulated entity must consult persons with disabilities in the preparation of its accessibility plan, and every updated version of its accessibility plan, as well as its progress reports. The accessibility plan must set out the way the regulated entity consulted persons with disabilities in the preparation of the plan.

## Consultations preparing the progress report

### Consultation and collaboration with the Employee Accessibility Network (EAN)

Sustained collaboration with the Employee Accessibility Network (EAN) is essential to improve accessibility in our Department. The EAN changed its name in 2022 following a survey with its members. The network's former name was the "Persons with Disability Network". Members changed their network's name to better reflect the different abilities and importance of allies to the accessibility cause.

We consult them by different means, such as electronic, and anonymous forms, emails, and through virtual meetings. The EAN unites 106 members that are persons with disabilities or allies to accessibility.

We met with the members of the EAN to consult them in the preparation of our first progress report. EAN members commented on the importance of raising awareness on the experience lived by persons with disabilities. The interactions with supervisors, colleagues, and work environments may be hard sometimes. They raised awareness on various aspects of progress worth considering.

- Mandatory training is important, although EAN members shared their concerns. It may not change the mentality of some managers or bring about the development of interpersonal skills.
- Building standards are not always accessible by default; therefore, it is important to have accommodation mechanisms.
- The need for messages on how and where help can be found.



## **Consultation and collaboration with bargaining agents**

Updates are provided to Bargaining Agents during the Human Resources Labour Management Consultation Committee (HRLMCC) meetings.

On February 27, 2023, the duty to accommodate process was discussed. Sessions were offered to all ECCC employees regarding the return to the workplace and the duty to accommodate. Information on the hybrid work environment and accommodation process is also available on the intranet. Bargaining Agents were also reminded that there is a single window of services, Accessibility at Work, to address duty to accommodate cases.

On September 26, 2023, Bargaining Agents shared concerns about unassigned seating and lack of confidential space for employees. They stated that the unassigned seating model does not provide sufficient privacy for members. Meeting with their union representatives to discuss employment related matters needs to be confidential. Those concerns were shared with Facilities under the Corporate Services and Finance Branch.

## **Consultations results**

In support of the implementation of the ECCC Accessibility Plan, we conducted the following consultations.

### **Barriers to accessibility – what we heard**

The first edition of the ECCC Accessibility Survey took place in 2021 to consult persons with disabilities. We compared results with the second edition of the ECCC Accessibility Survey of 2023. We delved deeper into the results. This includes, 2022 Public Service Employee Survey (PSES), exit questionnaires and different consultations conducted throughout the year. Respondents were able to self-identify as a person with a disability.

### **ECCC accessibility survey 2023**

In April 2023, a message from the Disability and Accessibility Champions was sent to all ECCC staff. Inviting them to complete ECCC Accessibility Survey via electronic and accessible form. A total of 527 employees completed the survey. Some of the highlights from the survey include:

- The ECCC Accessibility strategy knowledge and understanding has an increased median of 7.5% in 2023.
- A 12% increase since 2021 in those interested in obtaining information to make the workplace more accessible and understanding accessibility challenges.
- The understanding of what is considered a disability has increased in 2023 by 7% compared to 2021 (84% in 2023 vs. 77% in 2021)
- 85% of respondents in 2023 are aware of the barriers in the workplace that can impact people with disabilities.
- ECCC's Accessibility intranet page has been consulted more in 2023 than in 2021. Particularly the Training section (24% in 2023 vs. 12% in 2021) a 10% increase, and Tools and resources (25% in 2023 vs. 17% in 2021) an 8% increase.

## Public Service Employee Survey (PSES)

([2022 PSES](#) Results, compared with [2018 PSES](#), [2019 PSES](#), and [2020 PSES](#) results.)

In the 2022 PSES, comparing responses from persons with a disability with persons without a disability reveal the following:

- (Question (Q)82) Since 2019, there has been an increase of 20 percentage point (pp) of persons with a disability indicating they are equipped to support employees in their work unit who are experiencing mental health issues.  
In 2022, results for persons with a disability (67%) were equal to the ECCC general population (67%).
- (Q73) In 2022, 28% of persons with a disability indicated that their work-related stress overall is high or very high.  
These results were higher than results for persons without a disability by 11 pp.  
Since 2019, the results for persons with a disability have decreased by 3 pp.
- (Q44) Since 2020, there has been an increase of 18 percentage points (pp) of persons with a disability indicating that they believe they have opportunities for promotion within ECCC given their education, skills, and experience (58%).  
In 2022, results for persons with a disability were lower than results for persons without a disability by 2 pp.  
Since 2019, the results for persons with a disability have increased by 14 pp.
- (Q11) Since 2020, there has been an increase of 7 pp of persons with a disability indicating that they feel valued at work overall (74%).  
In 2022, results for persons with a disability were lower than results for persons without a disability by 5 pp.  
Since 2019, the results for persons with a disability have increased by 7 pp.
- (Q80) In 2022, 67% of persons with a disability would describe their workplace as being psychologically healthy.  
These results were lower than results for persons without a disability by 7 pp.  
Since 2019, the results for persons with a disability have increased by 9 pp.
- (Q47) In 2022, 75% of persons with a disability consider that ECCC implements activities and practices that support a diverse workforce.

## Exit questionnaires

Between April 1, 2020 and September 30, 2023, 1,270 employees completed the exit questionnaire when they left the Department. Out of those, 136 respondents self-identified as a person with a disability.

- Seven out of ten (71%) responded they felt comfortable using formal and informal mechanisms. If they wanted to report a workplace concern, they would, in confidence and without fear of reprisal. Recourses listed include harassment, staffing complaint, grievance, disclosure, or wrongdoing.
- 75% considered that the staffing processes were fair and equitable.
- 70% felt that they were adequately involved in decision-making. Between July 2022 and September 2023, there was a decrease of 10% (65%) in that response in comparison to exit questionnaires from April 2020 to July 2022 (75%).

## Summary of the consultations results

The above consultations results helped ECCC monitor progress.

## Consultations for the Accessibility Plan

Preparing the update of the ECCC Accessibility Plan involves also to prepare consultations with persons with disabilities. We are planning to further consult persons with disabilities to identify, remove and prevent barriers under each area under Section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act*. We will take the time to consult with persons with disabilities to link feedback received to barriers, to the areas under Section 5 and finally to our policies, programs, practices, and services. We will consult as well with persons with disabilities and subject matter experts to learn about best practices and how to improve accessibility.

# Feedback

## Feedback received

From January 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023, ECCC received two requests for alternate format of the ECCC Accessibility Plan. Both from other public service organizations, both requesting the Plan in PDF format.

From January 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023, ECCC received three emails from employees through the Accessibility Feedback Process. One requested grammar and orthograph verification software. In response, the Accessibility Secretariat shared the procedure to acquire adaptive software and referred it to internal support services. The other gave feedback on the redesign of a floor in one building. Their comments and ideas were shared with the regional Facilities team. The third requested support on the implementation of paragraph 36(2) of the *Public Service Employment Act*. Their feedback was transmitted to the Corporate staffing team to obtain guidance on merit criteria formulation and assessment.

From January 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023, the Accessibility at Work single window of services received 110 requests. Most requested information on the accommodation process. Employees met with an accommodation advisor individually or with their supervisor. They learned about describing barriers and solutions using the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport. This is a large increase compared to the 39 requests received in 2022, and the 25 received in 2021. Since the launch of the single window at ECCC, on November 25, 2019, 23% of requests were referred and treated by the Disability Management Program, 15% by facilities, and 11% by the Information and technology Service Desk. Other internal services involved include Procurement, Occupational Health and Safety and different human resources specialties.

The Accessibility Secretariat addresses the feedback received by referring to the proper internal services. Actions planned for the first departmental Accessibility Plan were prioritized according to consideration of feedback received.

## **Feedback gaps**

We have not received any feedback from the public during the past year.

We will work to assess how we could improve the promotion of our Accessibility Plan and Feedback Process. The objective is that the public, including employees, would direct their feedback through our Accessibility Feedback Process.