

NRC Accessibility Plan 2026–2028



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Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Le Plan sur l'accessibilité du CNRC 2026–2028



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View

Edit

Delete

History

Revisions

Translate

NRC Accessibility Plan 2026–2028

This plan follows the [NRC Accessibility Plan 2023–2025](#)

On this page

Messages from executives

- [Message from the President](#)
- [Message from accessibility and disability inclusion co-champions](#)

General

- [Feedback on the accessibility plan](#)
- [Executive summary](#)

Consultations

The accessibility plan

- [Employment](#)
- [Built environment](#)
- [Information and communication technologies \(ICT\)](#)
- [Communications, other than information and communication technologies](#)
- [Procurement of goods, services and facilities](#)

- Design and delivery of programs and services
- Transportation

Conclusion

Glossary.

Messages from executives

Message from the President

I am pleased to introduce the NRC Accessibility Plan 2026–2028. The plan is an important step for our organization as we deliver research powering innovation for Canada through a workplace and workforce enabling and reflecting inclusion and diversity. Through this plan, we are taking further steps to identify, remove and prevent barriers and embed accessibility into the design of our policies, programs, facilities and services.

In recent years, we have strengthened our focus on diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, recognizing these principles as essential to our work. Through the NRC 2024–2029 Strategic Plan we are committed to ensuring accessibility is reflected in both our research priorities and daily activities, enabling inclusive innovation. The NRC has a long history of contributing to Canada's prosperity to advance research and innovation. Strengthening accessibility is part of that contribution.

I encourage all employees to review the plan and consider how we can each support a barrier-free work environment and public service.

Mitch Davies

President, National Research Council of Canada

Message from accessibility and disability inclusion co-champions

As the NRC's accessibility and disability inclusion co-champions, we are committed to supporting the creation of a barrier-free workplace and a culture of empathy, inclusion and accessibility. This plan reflects the NRC's commitment to identifying and removing barriers across the organization by centring the perspectives and lived experiences of persons with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups from the start.

In the Chief Accessibility Officer's report [Getting to Work: Accessible Employment in Canada 2024](#), the NRC was identified as having established a disability network, which is a positive development. It highlights our commitment to advocating internally for persons with disabilities, supporting grassroot efforts and contributing to broader cultural change toward greater inclusiveness.

We know that creating a more accessible workplace is an ongoing and evolving effort, and we will continue to champion this plan and make ourselves available to support persons with disabilities at the NRC.

Georgette Macdonald

Director General, Metrology Research Centre

John Harder

Director, Special Initiatives

General

The NRC leverages research to position Canada for the challenges of tomorrow. Our organization supports industrial innovation, the advancement of knowledge and technology development.

The NRC collaborates with academia, government and industry to deliver its mandate. Our national network of specialized facilities, scientists and innovation advisors helps small and medium-sized businesses scale up, export and compete on the world stage. Through the NRC's Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), we provide funding and advice to help Canadian firms innovate, grow and increase our economic impact.

At the NRC, we know that diversity enables excellence in research and innovation. We are committed to a diverse and representative workforce, a safe and respectful work environment, and contributing to a more inclusive Canadian innovation system.

Feedback on the accessibility plan

Feedback is essential to developing our future accessibility plans, which will build upon the NRC Accessibility Plan 2026–2028. Comments, recommendations and ideas from our employees and members of the public are a valuable part of this feedback. We commit to documenting and reviewing all feedback and addressing concerns as quickly as possible.

Examples of enquiries and feedback:

- Request a copy of the accessibility plan, progress reports or feedback process
- Request alternate formats such as large text or braille
- Report information about a barrier
- Comment on implementation of the action plan
- Contact the manager of Workplace Programs to provide feedback

To share feedback or submit an inquiry, complete the online [accessibility feedback form](#). You can identify yourself or submit feedback anonymously. We will acknowledge your feedback using the same method by which it was

submitted, unless provided anonymously.

The main contact for the NRC's accessibility plan is the manager of Workplace Programs.

Telephone: 613-993-9101

TTY: 613-949-3042

Toll-free: 1-877-NRC-CNRC or 1-877-672-2672

Email: info@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca

Mailing address:

1200 Montreal Road, Building M-58, W-103
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0R6

Executive summary

The *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) sets the goal to create a barrier-free Canada by 2040. The NRC is committed to doing its part by developing accessible and inclusive systems, spaces and experiences for our employees and clients.

Our new accessibility plan reflects this commitment and marks the next stage in our journey. To drive organizational change and foster a culture of inclusion, the plan incorporates a deepened focus on accessibility by design, where inclusion is built into our work from the earliest stages of planning through implementation.

Guided by ongoing consultation and the principle of "Nothing Without Us," this plan is shaped by the voices of persons with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups. It reflects the importance of intersectionality, recognizing that accessibility must account for the overlapping identities

and experiences of those we serve. It also accounts for the feedback received through the NRC's accessibility feedback form. The plan consists of **7** areas of focus, **10** barriers and **19** actions.

The ACA areas of focus:

- Employment
- Built environment
- Information and communication technologies (ICT)
- Communications, other than ICT
- Procurement of goods, services and facilities
- Design and delivery of programs and services
- Transportation

Creating a barrier-free NRC requires deliberate, sustained and strategic action. This plan outlines our priorities for the next 3 years and commits to regular monitoring, reporting and updates informed by lived experience and feedback.

Consultations

To create this new accessibility plan, we gathered feedback from key parties, including persons with disabilities, to understand the current state and identify the barriers and solutions outlined in this plan. The consultations and actions we undertook include:

- We developed the NRC Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024–2027 in consultation with persons with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups. This plan sets out goals and actions to increase the diversity of the NRC's workforce, such as attracting and hiring more persons with disabilities. In alignment with this new accessibility plan,

the strategy will support our collective effort to create a diverse and inclusive workplace.

- We met with the NRC's Persons with Disabilities Employee Network and they expressed overall positive feedback on the new accessibility plan, welcoming the new commitments and efforts to address systemic barriers. They highlighted appreciation for our effort to embed accessibility within research practices, our advancement of broader organizational understanding of disabilities, and our commitment to applying accessible content, tools and templates consistently across the organization.
- We consulted with the NRC's Committee on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and they shared support for the accessibility plan, noting the progress being made to reduce barriers and improve inclusion. They valued the plan's emphasis on sustained action and recognized it as a meaningful step forward in advancing accessibility and accountability across the NRC.

The accessibility plan

Our plan includes 7 areas of focus identified under the *Accessible Canada Act*. It also includes the primary barriers identified through consultations and assessments to date, and the specific actions to be taken to address each barrier over the course of the next 3 calendar years.

Employment

The NRC is committed to being an accessible and inclusive employer, where persons with disabilities are welcomed, valued and supported. This focus area will ensure our policies, practices and tools enable employees to succeed and contribute fully.

Barrier 1: Persons with disabilities are not recruited and represented at a level relative to the available labour market in Canada.

Action 1.1:

- Implement focused recruitment and retention strategies and track progress against hiring goals in alignment with the NRC's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024–2027 and Employment Equity Action Plan. Share representation and hiring data quarterly to drive accountability.

Completion date: December 2027

Action 1.2:

- Enhance organizational understanding of disabilities to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This can include addressing common misconceptions about disabilities, raising awareness about invisible disabilities and neurodivergence, including Indigenous understandings of disability, providing guidance on the inclusion of service animals in the workplace and informing best practices against ableism.

Completion date: March 2027

Desired outcomes:

- Reduce representation gaps for persons with disabilities relative to labour market availability.
- Increase self-declaration rates of persons with disabilities who apply to the NRC.
- Increase self-identification rates of persons with disabilities among employees.

- In the Public Service Employment Survey (PSES), employees with disabilities consistently report feeling valued at work.

Barrier 2: Common barriers identified through accommodation requests are not systematically addressed.

Action 2.1:

- Review accommodation requests and feedback on the process to identify recurring barriers that can be addressed systemically. This can include modifying and enhancing existing NRC processes to reduce the need for individual accommodation requests.

Completion date: December 2027

Desired outcomes:

- Monitor accommodation requests against established service delivery standards and include them in regular reporting.
- Address systemic and actionable common barriers identified through reporting.
- In the PSES, employees with disabilities consistently report being satisfied with the workplace accommodation measures implemented.

Lead: Human Resources Branch

Enablers: Communications Branch, Chief Information Officer Branch, Client Service Centre, Real Property Planning and Management Branch, Health Safety and Environment Branch, senior management

Built environment

The NRC strives to make its built environment welcoming and accessible for employees, partners and members of the public. Our built environment includes buildings and workspaces.

Barrier 3: NRC buildings, parking facilities and designated drop-off zones are not fully accessible.

Action 3.1:

- Operationalize the NRC's new building accessibility assessment tool to systematically identify, reduce and remove barriers in these areas over time.

Completion date: March 2028

Action 3.2:

- Develop an accessibility scorecard that provides an overview of current accessibility gaps and improvements in all NRC-owned buildings to track progress over time.

Completion date: December 2026

Action 3.3:

- Review and update emergency evacuation plans from an accessibility perspective, in alignment with accessibility building standard CAN-ASC 2.2 Emergency Egress (Exit), prioritizing buildings with individuals having accessibility concerns.

Completion date: March 2028

Desired outcomes:

- Make NRC-owned buildings compliant with positive indicators listed based on the accessibility scorecard.
- Update NRC buildings with evacuation plans compliant with CAN-ASC 2.2 recommendations.
- In the PSES, persons with disabilities consistently report that their physical environment is suitable for their job requirements.

Lead: Real Property Planning and Management Branch

Enablers: Security Branch, Health, Safety and Environment Branch

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

The NRC is committed to ensuring that the technologies we use and develop are accessible by design. This includes digital tools, platforms, documents and communication systems. Our long-term goal is to embed accessibility into the way we develop and deliver all digital services.

Barrier 4: Systems, tools and communications channels on our networks are not fully accessible.

Action 4.1:

- Identify key corporate applications, assess their accessibility gaps and develop a roadmap to guide improvements to the applications.

Completion date: March 2028

Action 4.2:

- Explore options to enable built-in accessibility features on all NRC-issued devices. This can include features such as read aloud, voice-to-text and others. Conduct accessibility checks during the setup of devices to support an accessible-by-design approach.

Completion date: September 2026

Action 4.3:

- Create a process for NRC website and application owners to request accessibility assessments related to existing or new content.

Completion date: December 2026

Desired outcomes:

- Identify key corporate applications requiring improvement, document accessibility gaps and put in place roadmaps to make improvements.
- Monitor the number and types of accessibility assessments or requests for guidance to identify trends and areas requiring proactive support.

Barrier 5: The NRC does not have easily accessible information, tools or resources to support assistive and adaptive technologies.

Action 5.1:

- Support the development of our internal capacity to strengthen knowledge about available assistive and adaptive solutions.

Completion date: December 2026

Action 5.2:

- Update the internal list of software and tools available to enhance accessibility. Create and maintain a list for hardware solutions.

Completion date: June 2026

Desired outcomes:

- Strengthen our internal capacity and understanding of assistive and adaptive solutions.
- Review our internal list of approved software, hardware and tools to enhance accessibility annually.

Lead: Chief Information Officer Branch, application business owners

Enabler: Client Service Centre

Communications, other than ICT

The NRC is committed to equipping and supporting employees to acquire skills to apply accessibility standards and develop compliant communications products. All communications products in print and on digital platforms is accessible and inclusive for all NRC employees and Canadians.

Barrier 6: Content both in print and on digital platforms is not consistently accessible or inclusive.

Action 6.1:

- Review all new online content (internal and external) to confirm compliance with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Standard on web accessibility and Guidelines for making communications products and activities accessible. Update any past content to align with the new standard.

Completion date: March 2028

Action 6.2:

- Raise awareness among employees of accessibility best practices for communications products through internal communications channels.

Update the NRC Style Guide and the internal digital accessibility resources web page. Provide refresher training and support to communications professionals on how to create accessible documents, and on the use of plain and gender-inclusive language.

Completion date: March 2027

Desired outcomes:

- Make 100% of internal and external web pages compliant by March 2028.
- Provide and promote online resources on digital accessibility and plain language to all employees.
- Equip communications professionals with the knowledge and tools to create accessible and inclusive communications products.

Lead: Communications Branch

Enablers: All NRC employees publishing internal and external content

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

Procurement refers to the acquisition of goods and services through purchase orders and contracts. The NRC is committed to considering accessibility in all procurement processes. Accessibility requirements should be embedded from the outset.

Barrier 7: Accessibility considerations are not fully embedded in procurement.

Action 7.1:

- Identify a streamlined method to prioritize the procurement and deployment of assistive or adaptive technology so users have the

necessary tools to excel in their roles.

Completion date: March 2026

Desired outcome:

- Prioritize the procurement of goods and services related to accessibility requests.

Barrier 8: Procurement documentation is not consistently available in accessible formats.

Action 8.1:

- Conduct plain language reviews of all procurement documents to enhance understanding and usability, and align with accessibility best practices.

Completion date: December 2027

Desired outcome:

- Review key procurement documents on a yearly basis to enhance understanding and usability, and align with new accessibility standards.

Lead: Finance and Procurement Services Branch

Enablers: Chief Information Officer Branch, Communications Branch

Design and delivery of programs and services

The NRC is committed to making every program and service it offers accessible. Our work will focus on embedding accessibility across the full program lifecycle, from early design to delivery and evaluation. This

includes an ongoing focus on the NRC Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP), making our support for Canadian businesses inclusive and accessible to all.

Barrier 9: Accessibility is not consistently embedded in the design and delivery of services.

Action 9.1:

- Enhance the accessibility considerations that are included in the Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) application for research and innovation activities, and align them with the NRC's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024–2027. This can include making accommodations available for research participants and team members, and applying the principle of "Nothing Without Us" through meaningful engagement with persons with disabilities.

Completion date: March 2027

Desired outcome:

- Apply an intersectional lens in planning and designing NRC research and innovation programs, projects and initiatives.

Action 9.2:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of documentation to enhance the accessibility of NRC IRAP client-facing information and implement recommendations.

Completion date: March 2027

Action 9.3:

- Enhance the accessibility of the NRC IRAP client intake process to support employees and clients.

Completion date: March 2027

Desired outcomes:

- IRAP processes and materials are accessible.

Lead: Policy Strategy and Performance Branch (action 9.1), NRC IRAP (actions 9.2 and 9.3)

Enablers: Human Resources Branch (action 9.1), Client Service Centre (actions 9.2 and 9.3)

Transportation

The NRC is committed to exploring opportunities to make travel more accessible for employees with disabilities. This includes integrating accessibility considerations into travel policies and procedures, and identifying barriers that may arise during work-related travel.

Barrier 10: Accessibility is not fully reflected in work-related travel practices.

Action 10.1:

- Review NRC travel guidance in alignment with the National Joint Council Travel Directive to support inclusive travel planning.

Completion date: March 2028

Desired outcome:

- Consider accessibility best practices for NRC travel guidance.

Lead: Finance and Procurement Services Branch, Human Resources Branch,

Enablers: Communications Branch

Conclusion

- Accessibility is an integral part of building an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace. This plan outlines the NRC's commitments to removing barriers and creating the conditions for everyone to contribute fully and drive inclusive innovation.
- By embedding accessibility into our design processes and centring our actions around the voices of persons with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups, we strengthen our culture and improve outcomes for everyone. Our progress depends on continued collaboration, learning and inclusion.

Glossary

Ableism: Discrimination, prejudice or bias against individuals with disabilities. Ableism assumes what people can or can't do based solely on their disability(ies) and defines persons with disabilities as inferior to those without.

Barrier: Anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice—that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation (*Accessible Canada Act*).

Disability: Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society (*Accessible Canada Act*).

Invisible disabilities: Invisible disabilities may not be noticeable right away. They are also called hidden or non-visible disabilities. Invisible disabilities can be permanent, temporary or episodic, including:

- Chronic health conditions
- Mental health
- Learning
- Intellectual disabilities

Neurodivergence: A departure from what is considered typical in a person's neurological function or behavioural traits. Neurodivergence can be innate or acquired through alterations in brain functioning caused by trauma or other experiences.

Date modified:

2025-12-22