

# **2025-2027 Accessibility Plan** at Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)



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# Message from the Deputy Ministers

We are pleased to share ECCC's Accessibility Plan for 2025-2027. This update reflects our ongoing efforts to reduce barriers and foster an inclusive workplace. Developed with feedback from employees, it outlines concrete steps to integrate accessibility into our policies, programs, and services.

We are building on the 2022-2024 plan and meeting the requirements of the *Accessible Canada Act*. We will keep working toward better representation of persons with disabilities, and will continue to make accessibility an essential part of how we operate.

Thank you to everyone contributing to this important work.

Mollie Johnson  
Deputy Minister

John Moffet  
Associate Deputy Minister

# Message from the Disability and Accessibility Co-champions

Since the adoption of the *Accessible Canada Act* by Parliament, ECCC has worked to make the Department more accessible. To identify and remove barriers that affect people with disabilities, we collaborate with our Employee Accessibility Network. ECCC also works to prevent the creation of new barriers, facilitating the full participation of persons with disabilities. Through these efforts and collaborations, we were able to target areas of importance and guide the next steps in the update of the ECCC Accessibility Plan.

ECCC is mindful that the work has just begun, and we must maintain the momentum to ensure full accessibility in the workplace. This work will continue to rely on conversations, information sharing, and the provision of tools to embed these new attitudes and ways of working into our daily behaviors. As champions, we are firmly committed to making ECCC accessible and inclusive for all.

It is the responsibility of each of us to ensure that our actions and behaviours contribute to creating a culture of care that is inclusive and accessible for both employees and Canadians.

We hope this Accessibility Plan will challenge you to become an ally in our efforts to increase accessibility for our Department and programs.

Mackenzie Lambe and Geneviève Perron  
Disability and Accessibility Co-champions

# General

## Feedback process

You can provide your feedback on:

- barriers when dealing with our organization; and
- how we are implementing our Accessibility Plan.

Feedback can also be provided on:

- how we can remove the barriers that have been identified;
- this Accessibility Plan; and
- the feedback process itself.

Please send your feedback to the Director, Accessibility, Values and Healthy Workplace, Human Resources Branch.

You can send your feedback by email, phone or mail using the contact information below. You can also send your feedback anonymously. We will acknowledge receipt of your feedback in the same way you sent us your feedback, unless the feedback is provided anonymously.

You can also contact us to ask for a copy of the Accessibility Plan and our feedback process description in these **alternate formats**: print, large print, Braille, audio or an electronic format that is compatible with adaptive technology intended to assist persons with disabilities. We will provide the format you request as soon as possible. Braille and audio formats may take up to 45 days. Print, large print and electronic formats may take up to 15 days.

We will use the feedback we receive to take actions when necessary to remove identified barriers. Feedback received will be part of our statistics and will be used in preparing progress reports and updated accessibility plans. Feedback can be presented to Accessibility Advisory Committee ambassadors and internal stakeholders.

### Contact us

- Email: [RetroactionAccessibilite-FeedbackAccessibility@ec.gc.ca](mailto:RetroactionAccessibilite-FeedbackAccessibility@ec.gc.ca)
- Phone: 1-844-690-8366
- Mail:  
Director, Accessibility, Values and Healthy Workplace, Human Resources Branch  
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## Accessibility Statement

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

If you have any issues with this document, please contact us at [RetroactionAccessibility-FeedbackAccessibility@ec.gc.ca](mailto:RetroactionAccessibility@ec.gc.ca).

## Glossary

**Accessibility:** The combination of aspects that influence a person's ability to function within an environment.

**Accessible:** Referring to a place that is easily reached, an environment that is easily navigated or a program or service that can easily be obtained.

**Accommodation:** The personalized adaptation of a workplace to overcome the barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

**Barrier:** Anything — including 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 physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

**Disability:** Any impairment, including 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.

**Inclusion:** The act of recognizing, valuing, and building on differences in identity, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences, and perspectives while respecting human rights.

## Introduction

### Background

The *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) is part of Canada's vision to be a diverse and inclusive world leader. The goal is to realize a barrier-free Canada by 2040 by identifying actions to take to remove and prevent barriers. The legislation benefits all Canadians, especially persons with disabilities. It is done by proactively identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility in 8 priority areas:

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

- Transportation
- Requirements under the *Broadcasting Act*

In developing ECCC's first plan in 2022, we added a ninth priority area, culture. This honours our standing promise to create a culture of care and a workplace that is inclusive, accessible, and safe for all. In such a culture, we must be attentive to the well-being of others and discuss issues in a respectful manner to resolve them collaboratively.

This legislation acknowledges publicly the value of persons with disabilities. It requires the establishment of standards to measure progress when it comes to providing accessible services, removing existing barriers and preventing new barriers. Standards are built upon the strength of existing legislation such as the:

- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- *Canadian Human Rights Act*
- *Employment Equity Act*
- *Pay Equity Act*
- *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*
- *Official Languages Act*

The Office of the Chief Accessibility Officer (OCAO), housed within Employment and Social Development Canada, leads federal monitoring and reporting. The Canadian Human Rights Commission is responsible for ensuring that organizations are fulfilling their obligations set out in the Act. The Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA) helps the Government of Canada to meet the requirements of the Act.

Accessibility at ECCC follows a specific structure. Disability and Accessibility Co-champions advocate priorities that have an impact on all ECCC employees. There are ambassadors in all branches at a director or senior manager level. The Accessibility Secretariat, housed within the Human Resources Branch, supports the development and implementation of the Accessibility Plan. It coordinates communications, meetings, and events to raise awareness on accessibility. The Employee Accessibility Network is an employee-driven community open to all ECCC employees with disabilities and their allies.

## **ECCC Retrospective of 2022 to 2024**

The Accessibility Secretariat oversees the corporate program on accessibility and works with partners and stakeholders to develop and implement a multi-year departmental Accessibility Plan that meets or surpasses the legislative requirements. A mandate of the Secretariat is to foster an environment of learning and collaboration between stakeholders to achieve a barrier-free workplace. Stakeholders are the Co-champions, branch heads, and employee networks.

The main goal of ECCC's first Accessibility Plan was to establish formal accessibility mechanisms. These include but are not limited to responsibilities, processes, data collection sources, work plan and priorities for each branch. It also includes connections with other programs. ECCC programs use ACA priority areas and tools available through the OPS as a framework.

Another of the goals for the first three-year plan was to raise employee awareness about accessibility and our culture of care. We also ensure all employees understand their responsibilities. We made significant progress by providing information sessions, internal communications, and promoting mandatory and non-mandatory training. We educated the management community on accessibility and the culture of care. We also updated the information available to employees to reflect changes in accessibility tools and information.

We have integrated accessibility considerations into many of our procedures and processes.

We also strengthened our accessibility reporting structure within the Department. Reporting tools and a structured process help in the follow up and reporting on accessibility progress. This structure also increases accountability and has resulted in a better understanding of the integration of accessibility in our Department.

Many building assessments were conducted by the Real Property team. The responsible teams are addressing the findings. This provided insight into the redesign of new office space as well as integrating accessibility standards.

We have made considerable progress in the accessibility of our communications. Significant work was done in reviewing corporate templates. We have developed and shared multiple tools to help draft accessible messages.

We have also developed a centralized accommodation program. This program provides a single point of contact for employees and managers and a centralized budget. It offers personalized support and guidance. It also streamlines interactions between stakeholders during the process and ensures that accommodations are provided timely.

## **Executive Summary**

At ECCC, we recognize that the environment is vital to the identity and well-being of Canadians. We value the contribution of the natural and social sciences in making responsible decisions about the environment. ECCC is committed to demonstrating integrity, trust, and mutual respect in our working relationships. We value the dedication and teamwork of our people and strive to provide high quality service to the public. We act on these values by:

- leading by example, showing environmental responsibility in our own operations;
- encouraging innovation and initiative in our people, and fostering a culture of learning in our Department;
- working collaboratively and respectfully with others, enhancing the efforts of all partners and stakeholders;
- operating in a way that is consistent with public service values and [Environment and Climate Change Canada values](#).

Becoming an inclusive workplace requires the collective and personal responsibilities of each employee and manager. We encourage employees to embrace continuous learning, engage in

open dialogue, and contribute to supportive practices and clear communication. To support this commitment, ECCC has established the following guiding principles:

- *Accessibility is everyone's business:* Worldwide, people with disabilities are the largest minority group. It is the only group that anyone can become a part of at any time. It is not a niche issue. It affects us all.
- *Nothing without us:* Involving persons with disabilities in all stages of the design and implementation of the Accessibility Plan and Progress Reports
- *Enablement:* Creating an enabling workplace that supports employees with accessibility needs (evident or not) to realize their full potential
- *Collaboration:* Working with employees, groups, unions and partners in the public and private sectors to achieve results
- *Sustainability:* Creating a strategy built to last, prioritizing actions that will have an enduring impact
- *Transparency:* Demonstrating transparency in the design and implementation of the ECCC Accessibility Strategy and in reporting on efforts to remove barriers
- *Diversity:* Committing to advancing reconciliation, diversity, inclusion, employment equity, anti-racism, and accessibility. The goal is to create a workplace where everyone feels valued and can fully contribute their talents and expertise. We provide fair and equitable opportunities for under-represented people.

On our journey toward full accessibility, ECCC is committed to maintaining the level of accessibility achieved since 2022. This includes addressing existing barriers and proactively preventing new ones. We will do this by consistently promoting awareness and sharing information on all aspects of accessibility. This will strengthen the allyship of employees who may not experience barriers themselves.

As part of this Plan, we will deepen our review of the accessibility of our programs and services. To implement this Plan effectively, we will collaborate with persons with disabilities, stakeholders, and governance committees. We will also integrate lessons learned, emerging research, and best practices as we move forward.

## Consultations

Consulting persons with disabilities is a key requirement of the Act. Regular consultations have been held with ECCC Employee Accessibility Network and the Accessibility Advisory Committee since the adoption of the Act. These consultations have helped identify barriers and revise the initial draft of this plan. We also consulted the Managers' Network to confirm the identification of existing barriers.

These consultations have also allowed us to better define our actions and priorities to improve accessibility. It has created a sense of collaboration and partnership. For this upcoming cycle we intend to focus on ways to enhance the feedback from the Canadian public who may interact with our Department's programs and services.

## Listening to our employees

ECCC's Employee Accessibility Network (EAN) has close to 200 members. We actively seek their contributions in reviewing previously identified barriers as well as revealing new barriers. Feedback, comments, and concerns are captured and discussed during the quarterly meetings of the Employee Accessibility Network (EAN). They are also discussed in bimonthly sessions of the Accessibility Advisory Committee.

Additionally, we collect employee feedback through exit questionnaires, which provide valuable insights into the experiences of departing staff. This information helps identify potential friction points, enhance employee retention strategies, and improve overall workplace experience. The data also reveals trends and highlights areas for improvement in employee satisfaction and organizational practices.

In preparing the updated Accessibility Plan, we consulted in writing with nine union representatives. We consulted representatives from the following five bargaining agents between August 8 and September 5, 2025:

- Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)
- Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE)
- Association of Canadian Financial Officers (ACFO)
- Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC)
- International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)

## Analysis of survey results

### ECCC Accessibility Survey

ECCC conducts an internal accessibility survey every two years, with the most recent iteration held in the summer of 2025. The survey was online from July 14 to September 5, 2025. The survey is designed to evaluate barriers to accessibility and gauge employees' awareness of accessibility and disability-related issues. It also provides valuable insights into areas for improvement and emerging needs within the Department. The survey also serves in informing accessibility enhancements. The survey is a key tool for monitoring progress toward the goals outlined in the *Accessible Canada Act*. The data collected helps the Department track its progress. The data also identifies opportunities to strengthen its commitment to an inclusive and barrier-free workplace.

The public opinion research team has programmed the survey to be accessible to adaptive technologies.

All ECCC employees were invited to participate. Respondents had the option to self-identify as persons with disabilities.

More information on the survey results will be available in the 2026 progress report.

## **Public Service Employee Survey (PSES)**

This government-wide survey gathers feedback from public servants to assess the workplace experience. It measures employee engagement, satisfaction, and perceptions of leadership, while also evaluating well-being, diversity, and inclusion. The insights gained help demonstrate how employees experience their work environment. The insights also inform the development of improved practices and policies.

Format: Online survey

Dates: October 28, 2024 to December 31, 2024

Questions Asked: See [Public Service Employee Survey](#)

Participants: All employees, including employees with disabilities

Total Number of Respondents: 186,635 respondents for the 2024 edition

Number of Respondents with Disabilities: Approximately 29,385 individuals

Types of Disabilities Represented:

- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Speech or communication disorder
- Mobility impairment
- Flexibility impairment
- Dexterity impairment
- Mental health condition
- Sensory or environmental disability
- Chronic health condition
- Pain-related disability
- Cognitive disorder
- Learning disability
- Memory disorder
- Developmental disability

## **Guarding Minds at Work**

This survey provides a snapshot of employee perceptions, enabling organizations to identify strengths and areas for improvement. It serves as a comprehensive tool for assessing and promoting psychological health and safety in the workplace. The survey addresses accessibility-related components, offering valuable data to support a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

Format: Online survey

Dates: October 3, 2023 to November 10, 2023

Questions Asked: see [Guarding Minds at Work](#)

Participants: All employees, including employees with disabilities

Total Number of Respondents: Over 2,000 respondents

Number of Respondents with Disabilities: [Not specified]

Types of Disabilities Represented: [Not specified]

## **ECCC planned consultations**

Concerning its Accessibility Plan for 2025–2027:

- The Secretariat ran the third edition of ECCC's Accessibility Survey over the summer of 2025
- When necessary, branches can reach out to external stakeholders to gather feedback on the accessibility of programs and services
- Consultations are planned for the two Progress Reports in 2026 and 2027 and the development of the third updated Plan in 2028.

The information collected from the consultations on accessibility, including information to identify, eliminate and prevent barriers, will be shared, and coordinated through ECCC branches.

## **Areas in section 5 of the *Accessible Canada Act***

Moving forward in our journey, ECCC commits to providing accessible services by default to all ECCC employees and the Canadians we serve.

ECCC will achieve these goals by planning and consulting with all stakeholders. ECCC will implement the *Accessible Canada Regulations* 3-year cycles comprising 1 Accessibility Plan and 2 Progress Reports.

For this first update, 2025 to 2027, ECCC worked on creating actions that are more measurable. The first 3-year cycle allowed us to understand better the current state of accessibility in the Department.

We will also use the feedback and data from surveys like the Public Service Employee Survey, Guarding Minds at Work and the ECCC Accessibility Survey. Feedback and data from the Employment Equity Gap Reports will also be used by ECCC. This information will help us adapt plans, including new areas for focus as needed and validate priority actions.

All these elements will help us in measuring progress against our planned actions. These elements will also help in meeting standards, identifying new objectives, and delivering meaningful yearly Progress Reports.

In the following sections, we outline the priority areas, and the barriers associated with each of them. We also describe the steps ECCC will take to address these barriers.

### **Culture**

ECCC's Culture of Care is an approach to creating empathic, compassionate and respectful conversations throughout the organization. ECCC will continue to show accessibility leadership through our actions, planning, caring and support for our employees, clients and partners.

We identified the following barriers:

- Employees with disabilities fear disclosing their disability and asking for support
- Lack of understanding of what a disability may be
- Lack of awareness on accessibility by default

Under the responsibility of the Human Resources Branch, ECCC improves its accessibility awareness. ECCC will be taking steps to remove these existing barriers and prevent new barriers by:

- Engaging employees through committees, networks, and communications
- Promoting accessibility tools and training through various communication products
- Promoting events, testimonials and training to raise awareness about disability issues
- Promoting accessibility by default within the Department
- Analyzing the underlying causes of fear or hesitation to disclose disabilities and ask for support

## Employment

ECCC is committed to building and maintaining a talented and skilled workforce that reflects the diversity of the people it serves. Our goal is to improve recruitment, retention, and development of persons with disabilities (evident or not). This will help safeguard equal opportunities for all employees to do their best work and attain success.

We identified the following barriers:

- Employment documents, tools and resources are not always in an accessible format
- Managers lack general knowledge on disabilities, accommodations, and accessibility
- Reduced opportunities for people with disabilities
- *Lack of accessibility in some online training*
- *Hybrid work directive increases accessibility issues*

Under the responsibility of the Human Resources Branch, ECCC improves the accessibility of its employment. ECCC will be taking steps to remove these existing barriers and prevent new barriers by:

- Continuing efforts in attracting and retaining candidates with disability
- Reducing barriers in hiring assessment process
- Supporting the development of employees with disabilities through training, assignment, and other developmental opportunities. For example, second official language training for equity deserving groups, such as persons with disabilities
- Promoting disability and wellness training, to raise awareness
- Promoting the use of the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport
- Promoting the use of the Centralized Accommodation Program
- Reviewing of internal online courses to increase accessibility

## **Built environment**

ECCC is committed to enhance the accessibility of ECCC facilities.

We identified the following barriers:

- Some buildings are not fully accessible
- Lack of accessibility consideration when designing workspaces
- The unassigned workspace increases accessibility issues and the need to request individual accommodation

Under the responsibility of Corporate Services and Finance Branch, ECCC improves the accessibility of its built environments. ECCC will be taking steps to remove these existing barriers and prevent new barriers by:

- Continuing the assessment of specific sites for accessibility and implementing corrective measures
- Integrating new data on accessibility into the property management strategy
- Identifying and implementing solutions to improve the accessibility of workspaces

## **Information and communication technologies (ICT)**

ECCC is committed to continue to make information and communication technologies usable by all.

We identified the following barriers:

- Audio captioning is not available by default in internal video conferences and meetings
- Difficulties obtaining adaptive technology
- Not all intranet and web platform formats are accessible
- Built-in accessibility features in software are not as effective as other assistive technologies

Under the responsibility of the Digital Services Branch, ECCC improves the accessibility of technologies used. ECCC will be taking steps to remove these existing barriers and prevent new barriers by:

- Activating live captions in MS Teams
- Developing a self-service Duty to Accommodate centralized portal
- Developing a streamlined process for accessible adaptive technology
- Collaborating with Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) from Shared Services on the development of training options and plans for ECCC's IT support technicians
- Ensuring that public facing applications and platforms are accessible by cataloging such applications
- Reviewing all intranet content for accessibility

- Increasing maps accessibility to those with any form of colour blindness or colour vision deficiency
- Continuing to implement additional tables and descriptions to increase the accessibility of elements that are currently exempted from web accessibility standards

## **Communication, other than information and communication technologies**

ECCC is committed to make information and communication accessible to all.

We identified the following barriers:

- Documents are not all in plain language
- The format of documents is not always accessible
- Advanced notice and materials are not always provided for meetings and presentations
- Meetings and events are not fully accessible
- Not all intranet and web content is accessible

Under the responsibility of Public Affairs and Communications Branch, ECCC improves the accessibility of its communications. ECCC will be taking steps to remove these existing barriers and prevent new barriers by:

- Establishing branch resources for document formats and plain language
- Continuing to improve accessibility of written products with templates, checklists, etc.
- Developing best practices for hosting accessible meetings and events
- Promoting accessible communication practices in the planning and delivery of internal events

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

ECCC is committed to ensure goods, services and facilities are accessible by design and by default. ECCC is committed to improve the accessibility of tendering and procurement procedures.

We identified the following barriers:

- Accessibility is not always considered when buying goods and services
- Delays occur when purchasing adaptive technology

Under the responsibility of Corporate Services and Finance Branch, ECCC improves the accessibility of its procurement. ECCC will be taking steps to remove these existing barriers and prevent new barriers by:

- Continuing to look for ways to improve the implementation of accessibility requirements in the procurement process
- Supporting and guiding managers with the consideration of accessibility in their requirements

- Enhancing and promoting training and communications as a means to increase awareness related to accessibility in procurement with managers
- Creating a centralized fund for the procurement of workplace accommodations

## **Design and delivery of programs and services**

ECCC is committed to equip employees to design and deliver accessible programs and services, including policies.

We identified the following barriers:

- Persons with disabilities feel they are not consistently included in the development of services
- Accessibility requirements are not uniformly considered in the development of programs, services, and policies

Under the responsibility of Environmental Protection Branch, ECCC improves the accessibility of its services and programs. ECCC will be taking steps to remove these existing barriers and prevent new barriers by:

- Identifying all public facing programs and services by creating an inventory
- Reviewing some of the major programs and services to identify accessibility improvements
- Adding accessibility considerations to regulatory development consultation guidance
- Support the consideration of gender and diversity, supported by the Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) Centre of expertise
- Exploring the process to increase feedback on accessibility from the Canadian public

## **Transportation**

While ECCC does not offer transportation services to the public, we use various transportation vehicles at various sites.

We identified the following barrier:

- Lack of accessible transportation on or between worksites

Under the responsibility of Corporate Services and Finance Branch, ECCC improves the accessibility of its operational transportation. ECCC will be taking steps to remove this existing barrier and prevent new barriers by:

- Ensuring that we consider accessibility features in the requirements definition process for vehicle procurement, particularly when vehicles are likely to carry persons with disabilities
- Ensuring that when travel between ECCC offices within the same metropolitan area is paid for by the Department, accessible options are available

## Requirements under the *Broadcasting Act*

The Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC) provides weather, ice and other environmental prediction information. It supports Canadian aviation, marine navigation and military operations. MSC manages the delivery of our information using a variety of dissemination mechanisms. It improves the delivery of our services through different channels. Channels are a systematic collection of customer feedback, assessment of client needs and strategic partnerships.

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

No barriers were identified. Under the responsibility of Meteorological Service of Canada, ECCC improves the accessibility of its broadcasting. ECCC will continue to prevent new barriers by monitoring feedback. As well as maintaining the following services:

- Broadcasting weather information to equip Canadians, regardless of their disabilities, to make informed decisions according to the weather
- Providing programming accessible by disabled persons within the Canadian broadcasting system as resources become available for the purpose
- Monitoring and maintaining the broadcasting network. Responding to public feedback about all MSC's dissemination channels, including temporary accessibility issues on the [weather.gc.ca](http://weather.gc.ca) website

## Conclusion

ECCC's Accessibility Plan serves as a guiding framework for all branches within the Department. It establishes the standards we strive to achieve. ECCC's Accessibility Plan reinforces our commitment to removing and preventing barriers for persons with disabilities. Through the implementation of this mandatory Plan, ECCC aims to lead by example in creating a barrier-free workplace by 2040. ECCC thus strives to contribute to a more accessible Canada for all.

Since the release of the initial Accessibility Plan, we have gathered valuable feedback on the barriers initially identified. We have taken the opportunity to reflect on lessons learned over the past few years. Our goal is to raise the bar by enhancing the standardized actions already in place. We also aim to ensure that branches are aligned in working toward meaningful progress. We will monitor progress with an internal data collection tool. This approach allows us to measure our advancement and assess the equity of our practices.

Accessibility is a shared responsibility. At ECCC, we emphasize the importance of understanding the impact of an accessible workplace. With the insights and lived experiences of persons with disabilities, we aim to foster greater awareness and knowledge of current accessibility issues across the Department.