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Trust and Transparency Annual Report

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Annual Report on the Government of Canada's Trust and Transparency Strategy

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Introduction

In May 2024, the [Government of Canada Trust and Transparency Strategy](#) was released with the following goals:

- enhance public trust in Canada's democratic institutions
- support the social and economic well-being of Canadians
- support a transparent, accountable and participatory government

The strategy sets out core principles, a whole-of-government vision, desired outcomes, strategic objectives and commitments to support federal government institutions in reinforcing public trust.

The objectives of the strategy are to:

1. foster a culture of openness and improve associated principles and practices across federal government institutions
2. modernize the policies and practices that support increased transparency and accountability
3. explore opportunities to enhance public participation in federal government policy and decision-making

The key pillars to implement the strategy are the National Action Plans on Open Government and the Access to Information Modernization Action Plan. In addition to the robust monitoring of activities of these plans, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) is collecting examples of initiatives across the Government of Canada that target greater transparency, accountability and public participation.

The objective of this 2024–25 annual report is to assess and summarize progress made on the strategy’s goal to become more open by design in support of a transparent, accountable and participatory culture of governance.

This report also highlights activities and success stories from across the Government of Canada that align with the three objectives. This “year in review” report reflects on the Government of Canada’s achievements and challenges in 2024–25, as well as assessing what activities will be prioritized in 2025–26.

Summary and overall progress of the National Action Plans on Open Government in 2024–25

► In this section

The Government of Canada has been a member of the international Open Government Partnership (OGP) since 2012. The OGP brings together national and subnational governments from around the world that are committed to advancing transparent, participatory, inclusive and accountable governance.

As a member of the OGP, the Government of Canada must work with civil society and the public to develop and carry out a National Action Plan on Open Government every two to four years. On behalf of the Government of Canada, TBS is responsible for consulting, drafting, implementing and monitoring the National Action Plan.

Conclusion of the 2022–2024 National Action Plan on Open Government

The implementation cycle of the 2022–2024 National Action Plan on Open Government concluded on December 31, 2024.

This plan had five themes, with commitments and milestones for each:

1. **Climate change and sustainable growth**

- Giving people access to the information they need to understand the impacts of climate change

2. **Democracy and civic space**

- Protecting against misinformation and disinformation

- Making sure everyone has the chance to take part in fair democratic processes

3. Fiscal, financial and corporate transparency

- Using a public beneficial ownership registry to hinder money laundering and tax evasion
- Implementing a system to track government spending on software and technology

4. Justice

- Helping people and organizations across the country get what they need to address their legal problems

5. Open data for results

- Making the data people want easy to get, use and understand
- Incorporating open data into everyday government practices

Of the 106 indicators implemented during the past two years, 83 were completed, 15 showed substantial progress, and eight demonstrated limited progress. The final status of these indicators, along with supporting evidence and details on the challenges faced, is available in the [National Action Plan on Open Government Tracker](#).

As part of Canada's membership in the OGP, an Independent Reporting Mechanism is reviewing how these activities are implemented and will publish a results report on the OGP website. The Government of Canada also will release a self-assessment report in which responsible departments and agencies will detail their achievements, challenges encountered and proposed next steps for each indicator.

Development of the 2025–2029 National Action Plan

on Open Government

National Action Plans must be developed through engagement with the private sector, academia, civil society and the public, including Canada's Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Open Government (MSF). The MSF provide its expertise in the development, implementation and assessment of Canada's NAP with input from federal departments and agencies. For the next National Action Plan, the MSF provided TBS with four draft themes and activities.

The engagement process for Canada's next National Action Plan on Open Government began with a 10-week public engagement exercise launched in spring 2024 via an online engagement platform. The platform had two parts:

1. a questionnaire where users could submit ideas and concerns related to open government across four themes
2. voting boards where users could up-vote ideas or concerns that resonated with them

This exercise resulted in over 5,000 site visits, 116 questionnaire submissions, more than 950 ideas posted on the idea boards, and over 200 votes.

From November 2024 until March 2025, the second phase of the NAP co-development process broadened the reach of the engagement through in-person engagement sessions across the country. In total, the TBS Open Government team hosted 15 in-person sessions across Canada, engaging over 230 members of the public, civil society, academia and businesses. Each session followed a similar structure, starting with a brief presentation on open government, its history in Canada and the NAP co-development process, followed by an open discussion where participants shared their perspectives on advancing open government in Canada.

TBS is now working with departments across the Government of Canada to identify draft activities, policy leads and indicators to address the feedback received during the engagement, with a target to return to the public for validation in summer 2025. For more information, visit the [National Action Plan on Open Government](#) web page.

Summary and overall progress on the Access to Information Modernization Action Plan in 2024–25

The Access to Information Modernization Action Plan outlines actions that TBS will undertake between fiscal year 2023–24 and 2025–26 to make operational and administrative improvements to the access to information regime. The MAP identified three strategic goals with supporting activities:

1. Improving services to Canadians

- Improve service delivery to Canadians, including addressing capacity challenges faced by the ATI community that are impacting those services

2. Enhancing trust and transparency

- Focus on the provision of accurate, trustworthy information to Canadians, including proactive disclosure of records that can help counter information pollution

3. Advancing Indigenous reconciliation

- Address the unique access issues faced by Indigenous requesters that rely on the ATIP system for critical purposes such as advancing claims related to historic grievances, Aboriginal title, rights and

treaty rights litigation, and establishing status under the *Indian Act* through genealogical records

With the conclusion of the 2024–25 year, TBS has prepared updates that provide an account of progress made and actions completed over the past 10 months: 16 actions were completed, and important progress was made to advance another eight ongoing actions. Key highlights include progress made in updating the [Access to Information Manual](#), training sessions delivered through the Access to Information and Privacy Communities Development Office, and efforts to enhance Open Data and Indigenous Data Sovereignty. The detailed status of these activities, along with supporting evidence and details on the challenges faced, is available on the public [Access to Information Modernization Action Plan Tracker](#).

Assessing the strategic objectives and supporting commitments

► In this section

The Trust and Transparency Strategy identifies three strategic objectives and supporting commitments intended to guide federal government institutions in strengthening their application of the core principles of this strategy and reinforcing public trust in government and democratic institutions. The following summary of activities is in part developed from the [National Action Plan on Open Government Tracker](#), the upcoming 2022–2024 National Action Plan Self-Assessment Report and the [Access to Information Modernization Action Plan Tracker](#).

Strategic objective 1: Foster a culture of openness and improve associated principles and practices across federal government institutions.

Commitment	Achievements to date
<p>Assess the effectiveness of current open government policies, practices and tools, and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TBS continues to improve the usability and understandability of open information and open data, including the new <u>data visualization of contracts</u> on the Open Government Portal.

Commitment	Achievements to date
<p>Raise awareness and promote the continued adoption of open-by-design approaches, practices and tools in the planning, design, development and implementation of government policies, programs, services and decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the core of this commitment are the <u>National Action Plans on Open Government</u>. In 2024, TBS launched its public consultation for the next NAP. The <u>Let’s Talk Open Government</u> platform was launched to broaden outreach to the public online and gather insights, comments and feedback. In addition, TBS conducted in-person engagement sessions in St. John’s, Charlottetown, Halifax, Fredericton, Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto, Waterloo, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Vancouver, Whitehorse and Yellowknife. The target publication for the 2025–2029 NAP is December 2025. • TBS continues to manage the Government of Canada Open Government Coordinators working group to provide information, lessons learned and direction on open-by-design and open government activities. From May 2024 to May 2025, TBS hosted monthly working groups, with resources, meeting minutes and presentations released onto GCcollab open government web page. • TBS released the <u>AI Strategy for the Federal Public Service 2025–2027</u>, which underscores the importance of transparency in artificial intelligence (AI) adoption, stating that the government must be “upfront and open about the use of AI” to build public trust. This commitment is reflected in the development process of the strategy itself, which involved

Commitment	Achievements to date
	<p>public consultations and stakeholder engagement to ensure that the strategy aligns with democratic values and meets the needs of Canadians. In addition, this strategy promotes an open-by-design approach to governance, embedding core principles of transparency, accountability and public participation in planning, design and delivery. It emphasizes the importance of making government actions and decisions more transparent and accessible to the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Canadian Heritage, the <u>Digital Citizen Contribution Program</u> provides funding to research and citizens-focused activities projects, including countering disinformation. • In response to the trust deficit around HR and Pay, Public Services and Procurement Canada Human Capital Management adopted a transparent-by-design approach. This initiative fosters a culture of openness by sharing updates on HR and Pay operations and transformation efforts, engaging stakeholders through interactive events, publishing progress reports, tracking commitments, and releasing documents on the Open Government Portal.

Commitment	Achievements to date
<p>Equip federal institutions with guidance and tools to advance the core principles of this strategy, including the continuous improvement of open data initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the 2022–2024 NAP, TBS established the Open Data Advisory Group (ODAG), comprising government officials, representatives from civil society organizations, academics and open data experts who collaboratively contribute to advancing open government and open data initiatives. An open data plan for the Government of Canada has been developed, incorporating essential deliverables and activities aimed at advancing Canada’s open data ecosystem. The plan was reviewed, consulted on and formally endorsed by the ODAG in November 2024. The ODAG has met four times since October 2024. • In 2024–25, TBS published standards and guidance for federal institutions to help ensure that government data is coherent, of high quality and capable of becoming open data that is interoperable, discoverable, accessible and reusable for Canadians. The standards and guidance include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <u>GC enterprise data reference standards</u> ◦ <u>Guidance on Assessing Readiness to Manage Data According to the Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR) Principles</u> ◦ <u>Guidance for Employees of the Government of Canada: Information Management Basics</u> • The Canada Revenue Agency has built open-by-design and open data into their internal policy guidance, including the updated Policy

Commitment	Achievements to date
	<p data-bbox="618 163 1463 373">Framework on Managing Information and Data, <i>Directive on Managing Information and Data</i>, and the Enterprise Metadata Standards and supporting instruments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="578 411 1495 905">• The <u>Canada Centre for Mapping and Earth Observation</u> (CCMEO) at Natural Resources Canada has played a key role in supporting open government across the Government of Canada. It provides Canadians with free and open access to national geospatial information and services through several major initiatives. One of these is <u>Geo.ca</u>. Additional initiatives include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="656 947 1252 1041">◦ the Canadian Geospatial Data Infrastructure <li data-bbox="656 1062 862 1094">◦ GeoBase <li data-bbox="656 1115 1471 1209">◦ the Earth Observation Data Management System <li data-bbox="656 1230 1114 1262">◦ the CCMEO Data Cube <li data-bbox="656 1283 1373 1440">◦ GeoConnections, which promotes collaboration across departments to improve data sharing and reuse <li data-bbox="578 1482 1503 1913">• In addition, Natural Resources Canada continues to improve platforms such as <u>Geo.ca</u>, the Atlas of Canada, and the Federal Geospatial Platform to make them more user-friendly. This includes adding a new, intuitive map viewer called GeoView and developing a semantic search engine to provide more accurate and precise search results.

Commitment	Achievements to date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="574 159 1479 600">• The Privy Council Office released <u><i>Countering Disinformation: A Guidebook for Public Servants</i></u> to provide an overview of disinformation, how its increasing threat is impacting our democratic institutions, and how to spot and respond to disinformation as it relates to government information, programs, policies and services. <li data-bbox="574 638 1479 1310">• The <u>Open Science and Technology Repository</u> provides public, web-based access to federally authored scientific publications and information. Its purpose is to collect, preserve and share research output from Natural Resources Canada to reach the broadest possible audience and extend the impact of Canadian science. Between May 2024 and April 2025, there were over 90,000 downloads from the repository, demonstrating greater access and use of scientific publications by the public. <li data-bbox="574 1348 1479 2011">• The <u>Open Science and Data Platform</u> released a major update on December 4, 2024, incorporating improvements based on user feedback gathered through assessments involving 55 participants. Enhancements included a redesigned homepage, a dedicated page for content collections, better search filters, an interactive site map, a new section for frequently asked questions, and a directory of content contributors with direct links. New content featured recent publications from Environment and Climate Change Canada and

Commitment	Achievements to date
	<p>Health Canada, along with a curated Salish Sea collection developed in collaboration with Environment and Climate Change Canada, which includes geospatial datasets, Fisheries and Oceans Canada publications, and related external resources. Between 2022 and 2024, the platform added 30,705 unique content records, including thousands of datasets, publications, monitoring data, development activity records and curated collections, guided by user input and internal content gap analysis.</p>
<p>Continue to consult and collaborate with the <u>Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Open Government</u> to advance government-wide commitments and activities, including through the <u>National Action Plan on Open Government</u>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBS is the secretariat for the Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) on Open Government, which launched in January 2018. There are 12 member positions on the MSF, eight for civil society members and four for Government of Canada members. Over the past year, the MSF has met five times, including an annual in-person retreat in Ottawa in November 2024. The meeting minutes of the MSF for 2024 are available through the Open Government Portal. Finally, on July 9, 2024, President of the Treasury Board met with civil society members of the MSF to discuss approaches to increasing public participation across the Government of Canada.

Strategic objective 2: Modernize the policies and practices that support increased transparency and accountability.

Commitment	Achievements to date
<p>Optimize existing transparency and accountability policies and practices, including approaches for reporting on performance and results, across all government institutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In March 2025, TBS posted a draft version of Chapter 17 – Informal Requests for Information of the <u><i>Access to Information Manual</i></u> to the ATIP Professionals GCcollab group. The chapter provides guidance to government institutions on complementary procedures to maximize the release of information to the public in the spirit of transparency and accountability. The chapter will be published to canada.ca in fiscal year 2025–26. • TBS is working to develop a Compliance Framework for Proactive Publication under Part 2 of the <i>Access to Information Act</i>, which establishes a comprehensive system for monitoring and ensuring institutional compliance with proactive disclosure requirements. The framework emphasizes collaborative approaches between TBS and institutions while maintaining clear accountability measures.

Commitment	Achievements to date
<p>Leverage the cyclical review of the <i>Access to Information Act</i> (ATIA) to improve access to information services and enable equitable, inclusive and timely access to government information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2019, Bill C-58, <i>An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts</i>, received royal assent. Bill C-58 brought forward a new requirement for the President of the Treasury Board to review the ATIA every five years (section 93(1)). In June 2020, the President launched the first review under this new requirement. The review was completed in December 2022 with the tabling of a report to Parliament. • The next review of the ATIA must be launched by June 20, 2025, and will build on the feedback received from key stakeholders and Indigenous partners on opportunities to improve the ATI regime. In preparation for the 2025 review, TBS has been examining key areas of focus raised in previous reports and studies, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the President's 2022 <u><i>Access to Information Review Report to Parliament</i></u> ○ <u><i>The State of Canada's Access to Information System</i></u> by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics ○ <u><i>Access to Information Review Indigenous-Specific What We Heard Report</i></u> ○ <u><i>Observations and Recommendations from the Information Commissioner on the Government of Canada's Review of the Access to Information Regime</i></u>

Commitment	Achievements to date
	TBS anticipates engaging with stakeholders and Indigenous partners later in 2025.

Commitment	Achievements to date
<p>Enhance trust and transparency by ensuring complete, accurate and timely access to government records through proactive publication or when requested – and ensuring that the exceptions to that access are limited and specific – to help counter misinformation and disinformation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <u>Open Government Portal</u> serves as the Government of Canada’s one-stop access to open data, information and proactive publications. ATIP Online is a secure online application that allows ATIP practitioners at federal government institutions, Crown corporations, and their wholly or partly owned subsidiaries to manage and process access to information and privacy (ATIP) requests. • In May 2024, the Government of Canada released the new <u>Policy Guidance on the Disclosure of Historical Records under the Access to Information Act (ATIA)</u>. The policy guidance is intended to promote access to Canada’s history by outlining recommended time thresholds (that is, sunset clauses) to encourage federal institutions to consider the passage of time as a relevant factor when they exercise discretion in determining whether to release historical records under the ATIA. • As part of the HR and Pay transformation efforts, Public Services and Procurement Canada Human Capital Management adopted a transparent-by-design approach. This initiative provides complete, accurate and timely access to information on HR and Pay activities to keep stakeholders informed and counter misinformation. From October 2024

Commitment	Achievements to date
	<p>to March 2025, 279 unique documents were published on the Open Government Portal.</p>
<p>Advance Indigenous reconciliation by addressing unique issues faced by Indigenous requesters.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since March 2023, in collaboration with Indigenous Services Canada and Library and Archives Canada, TBS established the Working Group on Indigenous Data Sovereignty (WGIDS). The working group convenes federal departments and agencies monthly to foster a comprehensive government response to Indigenous data sovereignty in response to Action Plan Measure Shared Priority (APM-SP) 30. There have been 17 meetings to date. TBS and other WGIDS members have been engaging Indigenous governing bodies collaboratively to reduce engagement fatigue for Indigenous communities. TBS provided an overview of its activities and WGIDS to the <i>United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i> (UNDA) Interdepartmental Implementation Workshop in February 2025. TBS also released a policy implementation notice: <u>2024-01: Advancing Indigenous Reconciliation: Waiver of \$5 Application Fee.</u> • The 2025 review of the ATIA will provide an opportunity to examine ways to improve Indigenous access to and protection of information in support of self-determination and, by extension, advancing reconciliation.

Strategic objective 3: Explore opportunities to enhance public participation in federal government policy and decision-making.

Commitment	Achievements to date
<p>Assess the current practices and effectiveness of public participation in federal government policy and decision-making and identify opportunities for improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• TBS, in partnership with Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, conducted consultations and a literature review regarding public participation. These activities included workshops with government representatives, civil society experts and leading public participation practitioners from across Canada. The review assessed challenges and collected best practices when undertaking public participation and assessed the potential for a maturity model. Based on these consultations and literature review, a Public Participation Maturity Model is under development.• TBS worked with a team of students at Simon Fraser University to assess current government approaches to participation and evaluate the potential for the use of citizens’ assemblies.• TBS delivered a presentation on trust and public participation at the 2024 Canadian Political Science Association annual meeting.

Commitment	Achievements to date
Optimize current participatory practices and enabling tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="574 174 1487 443">• The Canada Revenue Agency launched an internal database to streamline reporting about consultations and engagements to ease publication to the Consulting with Canadians public database.

Commitment	Achievements to date
<p>Raise public awareness of opportunities to participate in federal government policy and decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the 2025–2029 National Action Plan on Open Government engagement, TBS launched the Let’s Talk Open Government Platform to broaden outreach and provide more opportunities for the public to provide feedback on the plan development. • The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) launched a series of public engagement initiatives with the goal to develop a <u>transparency policy</u> and a <u>strategic plan to establish a RCMP multi-stakeholder forum</u>. • At the Canada Revenue Agency, a new pilot project was launched for sharing draft tax tips with interested parties to learn more about target audiences from subject matter experts, increase collaboration, build trust and increase openness. The Canada Revenue Agency also invited stakeholders to participate in information sessions about the Goods and Services Tax holiday break, asking questions live on behalf of their members. • At Natural Resources Canada, <u>public consultations and engagements</u> provide insight to aid in the development of policies and programs that reflect Canadians’ priorities by reinforcing public understanding of the development and management of natural resources.

Commitment	Achievements to date
<p>Facilitate access to the data and information resources necessary to support public participation in federal government policy and decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Natural Resources Canada, the Government of Canada is a member of the <u>Canadian Council on Geomatics</u> (CCOG). CCOG is a federal, provincial and territorial government body working toward improving access to, as well as management and use of, government-provided geospatial information. Trusted geospatial information, notably foundational data, is part of Canada’s knowledge infrastructure. It is critical for evidence-based policy and decision-making. Ongoing engagement with external geospatial data producers and users in Canada is done to understand challenges and opportunities for the Canadian Geospatial Data Infrastructure. • As part of the 2022–2024 NAP, the Department of Justice Canada committed to update and maintain the <u>State of the Criminal Justice System Dashboard</u> to better inform the public of the nine high-level outcomes of the Canadian criminal justice system identified through extensive research and feedback from multi-phased consultations with criminal justice system partners, stakeholders, experts and other Canadians. • As part of the 2022–2024 NAP, Environment and Climate Change Canada developed new metrics and added them to annual reports to track open access to climate change science publications, using data from an abstract and citation database. These reports also measure

Commitment	Achievements to date
	<p>progress on open science across science-based departments, with a focus on different types of open access, and will be made publicly available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of January 22, 2024, all business corporations under the <i>Canada Business Corporations Act</i> are required to file beneficial ownership information with Corporations Canada in a <u>public registry</u>.

Next steps to advance the strategy

To better advance the objectives of the strategy, TBS will prioritize the following activities:

1. communicating and integrating the objectives of the strategy into internal and external governance committees, including identifying additional partners in implementation
2. finalizing the public engagement and publication of the 2025–2029 National Action Plan on Open Government with clear links to the objectives of the strategy as part of the activities
3. launching the 2025 legislative review of the *Access to Information Act* and examining related policies, such as those related to information management and security
4. enhancing capacity for reviewing and releasing government information through the integration of automation and AI tools
5. prioritizing the activities of the strategy for which we achieved minimal progress, particularly:

- a. assessing the effectiveness of current open government policies, practices and tools, and identifying opportunities for continuous improvement
- b. optimizing existing transparency and accountability policies and practices, including approaches for reporting on performance and results, across all government institutions
- c. assessing the current practices and effectiveness of public participation in federal government policy and decision-making and identifying opportunities for improvement

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