CSIS
Accessibility
Plan

2023 Progress Report

Canadian Security
Intelligence Service

Service canadien du
renseignement de sécurité

Canada

CSIS
Accessibility
Plan

2023
Progress Report

Foreword

I am pleased to present the first Progress Report on the CSIS 2023 to 2025 Accessibility Plan.

Accessibility is about creating communities, workplaces and services that enable everyone to participate fully without barriers. Making the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) more accessible is key to the future of our work. In order to deliver on our mandate, we continue to move towards building a diverse and inclusive workforce that better represents all Canadians.

At the heart of the CSIS 2023 to 2025 Accessibility Plan is a duty to ensure a barrier-free environment that is accessible and inclusive for every employee. We must create the kind of enabling work environment that supports diverse employees with disabilities as they carry out their roles and responsibilities in service to our country. Accessibility and inclusion facilitates the full participation of our workforce and supports all employees to thrive professionally.

CSIS is committed to putting its people first. We have embraced the Government of Canada's guiding principle of "*Nothing Without Us*" in the development and implementation of our Accessibility Plan. The direct participation of our diverse employees with disabilities is not only their right, but also helps us ensure that decision-making is informed. As we move forward on our journey to becoming a barrier-free work place, we reaffirm our commitment to maintain an open channel so that our accessibility initiatives are not just compliant, but genuinely responsive to the needs of all employees.

Transforming our workplace and country to become barrier-free requires collective and mutually reinforcing efforts. Our Accessibility Committee, with its multiple stakeholders and diverse members, is engaging actively, making it a valuable source of cross-institutional guidance. Other strategies and initiatives, such as the CSIS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy reinforce and enrich implementation of the Accessibility Plan. As Gender-based Analysis Plus is used more robustly to inform decision-making across the organization, the greater our capacity becomes to normalize accessibility and inclusion across all business areas.

Canadian Security
Intelligence Service

Service canadien du
renseignement de sécurité

Canada

This past year we have rolled out the Accessibility Plan and the kick off of implementation. It is encouraging that 83 of the 102 activities committed to in our 3 year plan have advanced in some way. Twenty of the activities have already been completed. Noteworthy accomplishments include the continual updating of approved adaptive devices and accessibility software, and the streamlining of approval processes.

We acknowledge the challenges that remain in meeting all 102 commitments in the committed timeframe while ensuring quality and successful changes. Fiscal restraint is one major challenge, along with securing the resources needed to make our built environment accessible. This is particularly important given that our unique mandate requires most of our employees to work in a high security office environment. Another challenge is overcoming the generalized stigma that persists around disabilities that may dissuade employees with disabilities to self-identify and/or ask for the support they require. We will sustain and strengthen our efforts to normalize accessibility as the right that it is, by normalizing our responsibility to make CSIS accessible by default.

Strengthening our workplace is a collective effort, and we firmly believe that everyone has a role to play in creating a diverse, inclusive and accessible CSIS, Public Service and country. On behalf of CSIS, and as a person with a disability myself, I share our ongoing commitment to strengthening, sustaining, and evolving our transformative efforts.

Renée de Bellefeuille, CPHR (she/her/elle/la)

Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources, CSIS

Table of Contents

General

Canadian Security Intelligence Service

P.O Box 9732 STN T

Ottawa, ON

K1G 4G4

Telephone: 613-993-9620

Facsimile: 613-231-0612

TTY and or TDD: 613-991-9228

Email: accessibility-accessibilité@smtp.gc.ca

Contact: Advisor – Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Introduction

The *Accessible Canada Act* outlines nine priority areas for identifying, removing and preventing barriers in federal jurisdictions. The CSIS 2023-2025 Accessibility Plan, published in 2022, outlined 102 specific activities related to 8 of the priority areas, in our commitment to a barrier-free workplace. Given the nature of our organization's mandate, the ninth priority area (Transportation) is not applicable to CSIS and thus is not included in our Accessibility Plan or reports.

Of the 102 specific activities committed to, an ambitious 37 activities were considered short-term, with an aspiration of completion within the first year. There are 36 activities that are considered medium–term (to be completed within a 1 to 2 year time frame), 23 considered long–term (to be completed within 2 to 3 years or more), with the rest of the activities ongoing in nature.

At the time of preparing this Progress Report and with less than one year of implementation, we are pleased to report that 20 activities have been completed. Overall, 83 of 102 activities have progressed in some way, including all 37 short-term activities. The 19 activities that are not initiated yet are due to be completed in 2024 (medium-term) or thereafter (long-term).

While we acknowledge the challenges that remain in meeting all the commitments in the Accessibility Plan, we recognize that our journey toward accessibility requires the sustained and evolving efforts of multiple stakeholders. We remain dedicated to pushing forward, addressing and removing barriers, and ensuring that CSIS continuously learns and evolves as an inclusive and accessible workplace. As we reflect on the challenges and accomplishments of 2023, we also look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead.

Priority 1: Culture, Education and Awareness

The focus of the Culture, Education and Awareness priority is on increasing accessibility knowledge, raising awareness of accessibility concerns, and fostering an inclusive and accessible workplace and culture. This Priority area includes 4 objectives with 16 activities, 7 of which are short-term. At the time of writing this report, 3 of the short-term activities are completed and the other 4 are in progress or ongoing in nature.

The status of these **16 activities** at the time of drafting this Progress Report is as follows:

- 3 are **Completed** (all short-term)
- 4 are **Ongoing**
- 2 are **In Progress**
- 1 is **Initiated** and
- 6 are **Not Initiated** yet

1. Ensure all CSIS employees have the knowledge and tools to become accessibility confident.

Progress status

A dedicated Accessibility collaborative workspace was created internally. The policies and procedures related to duty to accommodate and accessibility are in the process of being updated and will be posted to the Accessibility site shortly. Bilingual resources related to Planning Inclusive and Accessible Events have already been shared on the site.

Short-term:

- Develop an Accessibility site as a single source for tools and information. **Completed**
- Post all policies and procedures related to duty to accommodate and accessibility, as they become available. **In Progress**
- Continue to expand resources and tools in the existing managers' tool kit. **Ongoing**
- Provide clear guidelines and practical tools for managers on their roles and responsibilities in supporting employees with disabilities. **In Progress**

Long-term:

- Provide a "library" of tools that are vetted by the organization. (Example: microphone for speech to text, software, tips & tricks, such as how to make your phone screen brighter, ring tone louder, etc.). **Not Initiated**

Canada

2. Strengthen understanding of accessibility, empathy and respect for employees with disabilities.

Progress status

CSIS has seized several communication opportunities to raise awareness of the Accessibility Plan during the first year of implementation. These ranged from announcing and widely disseminating the Accessibility Plan, to undertaking specific communication activities in the plan. For example, an internal communication campaign highlighting environmental sensitivities was launched during National AccessAbility Awareness Week (NAAW). The campaign, titled "No scents is good sense" included an article written by an employee, print and digital flyers and awareness raising TV slides. The campaign was a success and will be repeated on a rotational basis. Other internal events focused on communicating about neurodiversity.

Resources on creating Accessible digital and print documents (including digital flyers and dynamic TV slides) were made available on our intranet site and are increasingly being used by employees to ensure their products meet accessibility standards.

The Accessibility Committee, which includes stakeholders, employees with disabilities and allies, met regularly this year with increasing levels of engagement by participants. Progress updates on the Accessibility Plan are made by and to Committee members and other stakeholders. The Accessibility Committee is also collaborating with an employee-led initiative for a Neurodiversity Network.

Short-term:

- Enhance current programming for National AccessAbility Awareness Week. `Completed`
- Educate managers and employees about invisible disabilities. `Ongoing`

Medium-term:

- Communicate quarterly on accessibility matters. `Not Initiated`
- Disseminate information and articles on accessibility-related topics. `Ongoing`
- Provide progress updates on Accessibility Plan. `Ongoing`
- Communicate new accessibility initiatives to employees/managers. `Not Initiated`
- Assist in launch of an employee-led Persons with Disabilities Network and/or Neurodiversity Network to create a safe space for employees with disabilities to connect, build community and raise issues related to accessibility. `Initiated`
- Increase communication throughout the organization about the Ability portion of cognitive disabilities. `Not Initiated`

3. Ensure events and meetings are accessible to all employees and external stakeholders.

Progress status

Short-term:

- Prepare, promote, and disseminate guidelines on how to hold accessible in-person and virtual events/meetings. **Completed**

4. Pilot "accessibility ambassadors" within branches and regions, who will be points of contact for knowledge, training and awareness.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Assess and develop options for accessibility ambassadors, especially in the broader context of diversity and inclusion, and implement as appropriate to provide expertise and a voice on accessibility issues. **Not Initiated**

Long-term:

- Measure impact of accessibility ambassadors on branch and regional accessibility. **Not Initiated**

Priority 2: Employment

The Employment priority in the CSIS Accessibility Plan is focused on improving recruitment, retention, and promotion of persons with disabilities, and ensuring that diverse employees with disabilities have access to barrier-free employment opportunities that facilitate their contributions, participation, and career advancement.

Several of the objectives and activities in this Employment priority are reinforced in the CSIS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy and other initiatives aimed at employing, retaining and promoting diverse Canadians with disabilities and other Employment Equity seeking groups.

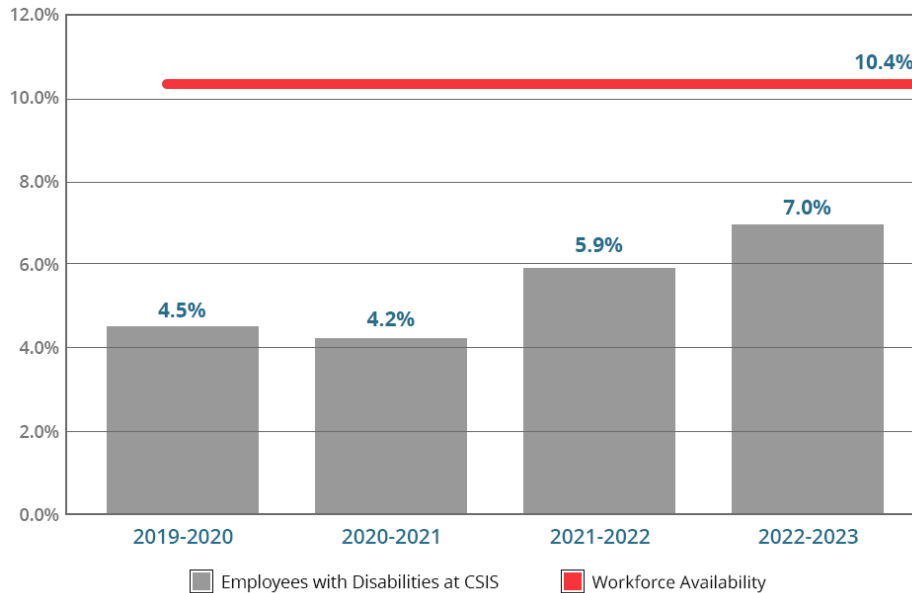**Employee Representation vs Workforce Availability**

Figure 1: Employee Representation vs Workforce Availability Graph
WA: Workforce availability based on data collected from Statistics Canada and in the 2017 Survey on Disability.

The above data comparisons are made against Workforce Availability (WA) based on the 2016 Census data and the 2017 Survey on Disability. Although the 7% representation of Persons with Disabilities is lower than the WA of 10.4%, the last 3 years have continued to trend positively. CSIS is maintaining and reinforcing integrated efforts to sustain this positive trend to meet or exceed our 2026/2027 target of 8.9% of employees being Persons with Disabilities. These positive trends are also evident in recruitment and promotion data for the fiscal year ending March 2023. For example:

- Persons with Disabilities represented 7% of new recruits, versus 5% the previous fiscal year.
- Persons with Disabilities represented 7% of promotions, versus 5% the previous fiscal year.

Notwithstanding the increase in overall representation, Persons with Disabilities represented 5% of those who left the organization during the same period which was an increase from 3% the previous year. Most of these terminations[1] (86%) were due to transfers to other Government of Canada Departments or resignations.

The Employment priority in the CSIS Accessibility Plan includes 6 objectives and 14 activities, 6 of which are short-term. While only 2 of the short-term activities had been completed at the time of writing this report, the remaining 4 are either initiated or ongoing in nature.

The status of these **14 activities** is as follows:

- 3 are **Completed** (2 of which are short-term)

---

[1] Terminations can include death, dismissal, end of term, layoff, medical release, medical retirement, rejection on probation, resignation, transfer to another government department, retirement and workforce adjustment.

- 4 are **Ongoing** (1 of which is short-term)
- 3 are **In Progress** (1 of which is short-term)
- 2 are **Initiated** (all of which are short-term)
- 2 are **Not Initiated**

1. Conduct analysis and benchmarking of hiring, promotion and retention rates for employees with disabilities.

Progress status

Employment Equity data on our workforce does not fluctuate significantly per quarter and is posted internally twice a year. Updated census results will be posted when available and we plan to include more detail about intersectional characteristics such as gender.

Short-term:

- Expand the dissemination of this information to hiring managers and all employees. **Completed**

Ongoing:

- Continue quarterly analysis of employment equity data of our workforce to identify underrepresented occupational groups. **Completed**

2. Enhance recruitment, retention and promotion opportunities for employees and potential employees with disabilities.

Progress status

An indeterminate Diversity Recruiter role was established and has been staffed since April 2023. Training sessions for managers were held on staffing options to allow them to better address underrepresentation. Additional sessions were held for Human Resources employees, particularly Recruitment and Staffing employees, and employees across CSIS. The Talent Acquisition team attended the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) Canadian Congress on Disability career fair in May 2023. This type of recruitment fair participation is recurring and will be maintained.

External recruitment marketing materials were reviewed through a Gender-based Analysis Plus lens. This has resulted in modifications to reflect more diversity, including persons with disabilities.

Short term:

- Clarify staffing options to allow managers to address underrepresentation. **Completed**
- Continue student recruitment campaigns using the Public Service Commission's Students with Disabilities Inventories and requesting information from candidates who self-identify as a person with a disability in the Federal Student Work Employment Program. **Ongoing**

Canada

- Include disability representation in marketing material, mention of Public Service Healthcare Plan, accessibility accommodations and health and disability benefits in recruitment and hiring materials to recruit persons with disabilities. **In Progress**

Medium-term:

- Establish a recruiter role with a dedicated responsibility for the persons with disabilities portfolio. **In Progress**
- Continue to hold targeted events to recruit persons with disabilities in order to help deliver on the commitment of the broader public service to recruit 5,000 people with disabilities by 2025/2026. **Ongoing**
- Continue collaborating with post-secondary institutions, communities and employment placement agencies/organizations, for persons with disabilities, such as Live Work Play, to recruit qualified candidates. **Ongoing**

3. Make accessibility considerations part of the onboarding process.

Progress status

Short-term:

- Include a segment on duty to accommodate and the accommodation process (rights and obligations) during onboarding for new employees. **Initiated**

Medium-term:

- Establish a process to reach out to new employees who have self-identified as having a disability at 1-month, 3-months and 6-months post-hire to ensure the workplace has been adapted to suit their needs and they have the tools they require. Should the employee not have the tools they require, managers will be contacted. **Not Initiated**

4. Promote the importance of self-identification to employees.

Progress status

Self-identification campaigns remain ongoing, and these are being strengthened through improvements to internal human resources software that is more user-friendly, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) compliant, and facilitate more detailed self-identification by employees. The new questionnaire has been broadened to include more details regarding disabilities using straightforward questions and Statistics Canada definitions to facilitate the self-identification process. The software is in process of being finalized and expected to be launched early in 2024.

Ongoing:

- Continue annual self-identification campaigns and other initiatives to improve information about diverse groups, including employees with disabilities. In Progress

5. Adopt a "yes by default" approach to accommodations throughout the hiring or competitive process.

Progress status

Although the provision of specific training for HR professionals has not yet been completed, certain learning resources have been identified. Guidelines and recommendations for HR professionals are being collected and consulted on and these resources will be shared on the Accessibility site. Recruitment and staffing advisors continue to ask candidates and employees if they require accommodations at multiple stages throughout the hiring process, and ask at the beginning of the process.

Short-term:

- Provide training to all HR professionals about approaches to accommodate candidates and employees with disabilities throughout selection processes (e.g., provide additional time, read questions aloud during written exams, and have an option to provide answers to a written exam orally). Initiated

Ongoing:

- Continue asking candidates/employees to identify required accommodations at various stages throughout the competitive hiring process. Ongoing

6. Include mandatory discussion of employee rights associated with duty to accommodate in performance assessments.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Managers to be held accountable for discussing performance criteria at the beginning of the performance assessment period, mid-term and at the end of the performance assessment period and that duty to accommodate be appropriately integrated into all discussions. This accountability will be considered in performance assessment of executives. Not Initiated

Canada

Priority 3: Built Environment

Ensuring that CSIS work locations are barrier-free and accessible to everyone enables full participation of diverse employees with disabilities. This includes ensuring that every build meets all accessibility codes from the outset. Furthermore, as our built environment is continually assessed, new barriers are discovered that require action to ensure that all facilities are compliant.

The spirit of our commitment to making CSIS accessible, however, is more than compliance oriented. Given the nature of our work, very few roles can be performed while working from home. This makes it that much more important that our physical spaces ensure inclusivity for everyone.

The Built Environment priority in the CSIS Accessibility Plan includes 18 objectives and 28 activities, 9 of which are short-term. Although only 5 of the short-term activities had been completed at the time of writing this report, the remaining 4 short-term objectives are either in progress or ongoing in nature.

The status of these **28 activities** at the time of drafting this Progress Report is as follows:

- 9 are **Completed** (5 of which are short-term)
- 5 are **Ongoing** (1 of which is short-term)
- 12 are **In Progress** (3 of which are short-term)
- 2 are **Initiated**

1. Conduct an assessment to determine feasibility of installing additional automatic doors at National Headquarters (NHQ).

Progress status

The assessment to determine the feasibility of installing additional automatic doors at NHQ is in progress. Perimeter pedestrian security gates are also being assessed for automatic door operators.

Short-term:

- Add automatic door to the theatre. **In Progress**
- Add automatic doors to all washrooms, to the extent possible. **In Progress**

Medium-term:

- Examine adding automatic doors, or removing all doors to lunchrooms. **In Progress**

Canada

2. Conduct an assessment to determine feasibility of installing additional automatic doors in regional offices.

Progress status

All regional offices have been surveyed and at this time none have identified an immediate need for accommodation. These locations are also confirmed to have access to one or more accessible washrooms.

Short-term:

- Confirm/inquire if any locations have concerns that may fall under immediate duty to accommodate needs, and add automatic doors to washrooms, if required. **Completed**

Medium-term:

- Complete plan-based review to identify existing conditions where automatic doors would be beneficial and configurable with existing washroom layouts. **In Progress**

Long-term:

- Obtain building standards direction from Public Services and Procurement Canada in accordance with Bill C-81, and add automatic doors to washrooms in regional locations, where required. **Completed**

3. Examine the possibility of installing automatic doors on security doors in NHQ and Regional buildings.

Progress status

Long-term:

- Explore options to have automatic doors installed on the heavy security doors in NHQ and Regional buildings. **Initiated**

4. Conduct an assessment to determine feasibility of creating an accessible boardroom for employees with hearing disabilities.

Progress status

A new corporate boardroom is currently under construction that will have strip vinyl flooring instead of carpeting.

Medium-term (NHQ) and Long-term (Regions): **In Progress**

- Explore removing the carpet, which can muffle the sound of someone speaking, in one boardroom at each CSIS building.
  - Advertise this new accommodating feature to the entire workforce.

- o List the feature ("Accessible for hearing disabilities") in the room description in the CSIS calendar.

5. Increase the number of accessible parking spaces in NHQ.

Progress status

NHQ currently has 34 standard size accessible parking spaces. This is 4 times the number required by legislated standards (i.e. only 8 spaces would be required according to the requirement that 1% of all parking spaces be accessible). If an employee requires an accessible parking space, they are accommodated. Any future parking development plans will include the addition of more accessible parking spaces.

Short-term:

- Create additional accessible parking spaces at NHQ to meet the demand. **Completed**
  - o Explore assigning standard size parking spaces as accessible spaces (for example not requiring wide/wheelchair accessible spaces).
- Review procedure to manage accessible parking requests on a case-by-case basis. **Completed**

6. Update parking policies and protocols.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Review parking policies and protocols to ensure we meet obligations for employees and visitors. **In Progress**

7. Examine the need to enlarge regional fleet parking spaces.

Progress status

Regional fleet parking spaces are rented based on standard measurements but if larger parking spots are required to accommodate, the rentable space and/or number of parking spots will be renegotiated as needed.

Long-term:

- Ensure that fleet parking spaces have ample space for individuals to enter and exit their fleet cars, and complies with regulations. **Ongoing**

8. Make cellphone area at NHQ accessible.

Progress status

The raised platforms in the NHQ cellphone area were removed, thereby eliminating the requirement for ramps.

Short-term:

- Add ramps to ensure raised platforms are wheelchair accessible. `Completed`

Medium-term:

- Add indoor seating for employees with mobility issues. `Completed`

Long-term:

- Run a feasibility study on long-term solutions for a room dedicated to accessing personal electronic devices. `In Progress`

9. Make space near elevators more accessible at all CSIS offices.

Progress status

Medium-term (NHQ) and Long-term (Regions): `Completed`

- Add seating near elevators for employees with mobility issues.

10. Provide sit-stand workstations on request.

Progress status

Long-term:

- Make sit-stand workstations available to all employees requesting one, without requiring medical certificates. `In Progress`

11. Create quiet rooms in all CSIS office locations.

Progress status

NHQ has dedicated 3 rooms to be used as quiet rooms, and these have been made available to employees. The status of this activity is listed as *In Progress* given that further consultation is required to ensure that the spaces and their locations are suitable for multiple uses.

The process of identifying quiet rooms in the Regions has initiated, with most having multi-purpose rooms which have been identified as suitable for use as quiet rooms.

Short-term (NHQ) In Progress **and Medium-term (Regions):** Initiated

- Create or identify small break rooms where employees can be alone, decompress/disconnect from work-related stress. These spaces can also be used as prayer rooms, to pump breast milk, make personal phone calls, etc.

12. Allocate enough space or private offices so that quieter work areas are available for a variety of disabilities.

Progress status

At present, most Regions have multi-purpose rooms that have been identified as suitable to use as quiet work rooms when needed.

Long-term:

- Create a "calm", furnished, internet and phone equipped space to work – low traffic, low level lights, little sound, soothing paint colours for employees requiring calm and consistency. In Progress

13. Explore the need to widen doors to accommodate different sized mobility devices.

Progress status

For regional offices, this is being considered on a case-by-case basis. An initial study indicates that significant investment is involved as many doors and walls have high security features. Although a fulsome accessibility study will be conducted, currently the door sizes are suitable for wheelchair users.

Medium-term:

- Conduct an accessibility study for door size for larger wheelchairs at NHQ and in Regions. Ongoing

14. Ensure adjustable lighting in Workspace 2.0.

Progress status

At NHQ, there is a test pilot underway. In regional offices, accommodations to install lighting controls are occurring on a case-by-case basis.

Short-term:

- Allow for adjustable lighting for employees whose illness or disability is affected or mitigated by lighting levels. In Progress

15. Implement accessibility signage throughout Toronto Region Office.

Progress status

Short-term:

- Conduct accessibility signage study and installations throughout this building. **Ongoing**

16. Promote best practices for a scent-free work environment.

Progress status

A campaign was launched during National AccessAbility Week 2023 and it will continue as a recurring campaign.

Short-term:

- Educate and promote the importance of being scent-free. **Completed**

17. Continue to update the exterior campuses of all CSIS buildings to meet or exceed minimum standards.

Progress status

Ongoing:

- Review and identify areas in need of improvement, in consultation with persons with disabilities, where building areas are not accessible (e.g., curbs, change in elevation, accessible parking options, etc.). **Ongoing**

18. Continue to update the Interior Design Standard to meet or exceed minimum standards and reflect accessibility requirements for both visible and invisible disabilities.

Progress status

Ongoing:

- Engage and consult employees with disabilities on new installations and any retrofits to ensure they are barrier-free. Ensure design consultants adhere to accessibility requirements. **Ongoing**

Canada

Priority 4: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are the digital equivalent to the physical built environment. Whether in relation to disabilities, injuries, or ergonomic requirements, it is essential that programs, systems, computers, and computer resources are accessible to all and optimally support individual needs and situations. When ICT is informed by intersectional analysis to support employees with disabilities, it facilitates their work, supports their participation in the organization and contributes to fulfillment of our mission.

Although a wide range of technology and software is in use globally by persons with disabilities, the unique nature of our work in a high security setting requires greater diligence in the review and approval of the technologies and software made available to employees. Nonetheless, CSIS continues to widen the range of technology available to diverse employees with disabilities in order to increase access to barrier-free technology.

The ICT priority in the CSIS Accessibility Plan includes 15 objectives and 16 activities, 3 of which are short-term. While only 1 of the short-term activities had been completed at the time of writing this report, the other 2 are either initiated or in progress.

The status of these **16 activities** is as follows:

- 2 are **Completed** (1 of which is short-term)
- 2 are **Ongoing**
- 1 is **In Progress** (short-term)
- 6 are **Initiated** (1 of which is short-term)
- 5 are **Not Initiated**

1. Ensure new systems, including internally developed or procured hardware and software, meet modern accessibility standards and are supported by internal security/accreditation standards. Integrate accessibility into the Enterprise Architecture Review process.

Progress status

Long-term:

- Continue to have technicians, webmasters, application developers and project managers attend the following training at the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program of Shared Services Canada:
  - Sessions that provide information on accessibility, job accommodations and adaptive computer technology accessibility testing, such as product evaluations application accessibility evaluations website and web content accessibility evaluations;
  - Training courses, such as hands-on training for technicians on supporting adaptive computer technology; and
  - Accessibility boot camps for application developers.
- **Not Initiated**

2. Ensure accessible fonts are the default in our corporate applications.

Progress status

Sans Serif fonts are available to all users, and OpenDyslexic font is scheduled to be deployed by March 2024. The current default size of 11 is being reviewed given the AAACT (Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology) recommendation that the default size be 12.

Short-term:

- Make accessible fonts the defaults in all applications widely used in the work environment. **In Progress**
- Add the OpenDyslexic font to applications widely used in the work environment. **Initiated**

3. Make software accessible.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Ensure purchased or developed software is always compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) and works with assistive technologies. **Initiated**

4. Update existing software for accessibility.

Progress status

Medium-term (to review) and long-term (to implement):

- Review existing stock of user-facing technologies for accessibility gaps and take into consideration lack of accessibility features when prioritising updating or replacing software. **Ongoing**

5. Incorporate user requirements from the start in research related to software development.

Progress status

Long-term:

- Incorporate modern development practices, which place researching user requirements, ergonomics and accessibility – using empirical practices – at the beginning of an initiative. **Initiated**

Canada

6. Create a shared pool of technologies and tools to aid with note taking by procuring accessibility aids in advance and providing them to employees upon request.

Progress status

Long-term:

- Explore options to help employees with dexterity and cognitive disabilities to have the tools needed to take notes effectively during meetings and presentations. Purchase a number of shared tools so that they are available upon request. **Initiated**

7. Provide better quality audio and/or closed caption capabilities for video teleconference.

Progress status

Long-term:

- Explore solutions to ensure meetings, corporate messaging and interviews conducted by video teleconference are equipped with higher quality audio capabilities and closed-caption. **Initiated**

8. Explore making speech-to text software available to all employees.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Assess the option of having speech to text available at every desk. **Completed**

9. Ensure that accessibility features are available by default and allow for opt-in.

Progress status

Although some features involving a microphone are necessarily disabled for Security reasons, other Desktop Ease of Use features are available to all users.

Short-term:

- The Desktop "Ease of Access" features will be part of the on-going upgrades of the desktop. Update the desktop to its highest capacity possible and ensure that users who require these features can opt-in without requiring a request. **Completed**

10. Accessible-by-default intranet and web spaces.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Ensure that the organization's intranet tools, web platforms and content management systems (CMS) platforms generate content that is WCAG2.0 compliant by default. **Not Initiated**

11. Conduct a review using standardized scoring of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) User Interfaces across the organization.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Conduct a review of User Interfaces (UI) using standardized scoring of functional accessibility features, and identify commonly found issues and priority systems in need of remediation. **Not Initiated**

12. Hire more User Interface/User Experience (UI/UX) professionals and incorporate expertise at the beginning of projects.

Progress status

Long-term:

- Development teams require expertise and skillsets in accessible UI/UX design. Hire more UI/UX professionals and empower them to direct design and development of accessible systems. **Not Initiated**

13. Develop accessible UI/UX standards and enterprise-wide design systems, which incorporate accessibility.

Progress status

Long-term:

- Establish enterprise-wide UI/UX design standards and design systems which empower developers to incorporate accessibility by default. **Not Initiated**

14. Liaise with, and re-use accessibility standards from other partner organizations.

Progress status

Liaison has been initiated with the Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program at Shared Services Canada.

Ongoing:

- Continue to identify best practices, re-use and incorporate accessible design systems and standards from other partner organizations in the intelligence community. **Ongoing**

15. Formally incorporate accessible UI/UX when reviewing ICT procurement, software deployment and architecture.

Progress status

Long-term:

- Accessible UI/UX design and capabilities should be formally incorporated into design, software procurement/deployment and architecture reviews when determining best ICT solutions. **Initiated**

Priority 5: Communication, other than information and communication technologies

Accessible and inclusive communication that is straightforward, clear, direct, and easy to understand benefits all audiences and contributes to ensuring that diverse employees work in an environment that is barrier-free. Communication, other than information and communication technologies, includes communication methods not limited to computers or online usage. People communicate in different ways, including through speech, writing, sign language, pictures, body language and communication assistants. This includes the way people give, receive and understand information.

The priority for Communication (other than information and communication technologies) in the CSIS Accessibility Plan includes 6 objectives and 9 activities, 4 of which are short-term. While only 1 of the short-term activities had been completed at the time of writing this report, the remaining activities are either initiated or in progress.

The status of these **9 activities** is as follows:

- 1 is **Completed** (a short-term activity)
- 2 are **Ongoing**
- 3 are **In Progress** (1 short-term)
- 2 are **Initiated** (2 short-term)
- 1 is **Not Initiated**

1. Apply plain-language principles to communications.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Launch an awareness campaign about the use of plain-language. **In Progress**

2. All internal and external communication is accessible by default where applicable.

Progress status

CSIS intranet sites are Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 compliant. We strive to provide an accessible experience on the intranet within the limitations of our existing platform (e.g., use of colour contrast analysis; alternative text; long descriptions; standard formatting styles; transcriptions; and closed-captioning where possible). A colour checker software has been made available to all employees at every desktop that can be used when creating visual content to analyze accessible colour contrast. Templates (e.g. briefing notes; presentations; meeting agendas; etc.) have been made accessible within existing technological limitations; this is still a work in progress.

Although consultation and discussions have been initiated regarding onboarding for new employees, this short-term activity requires greater attention in the coming period.

Short-term:

- Create a segment during onboarding on accessible documents, highlighting every employee's responsibility to ensure the documents produced are accessible. **Initiated**
- Improve templates to ensure accessible briefing notes, presentations, meeting agendas and other documents as required. **In Progress**

Medium-term:

- Promote accessible and inclusive internal and external communications practices in compliance with the latest WCAG 2.0 and provide training and support on the creation of accessible content, documents, and communications. **Ongoing**
- Provide current employees with training, tools, checklists, and guidance required to create accessible internal and external documents. **Not Initiated**

3. Informing employees of accessibility initiatives at CSIS.

Progress status

Accessibility initiatives and tools were advertised in the Spring and Fall 2023 issues of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Newsletter. These are also shared with the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Committee. This practice will continue.

Canada

Short-term:

- Advertise initiatives and tools in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Newsletter on a bi-annual basis. **Completed**

4. Ensure employees and candidates receive accessible communications.

Progress status

Letters of offer are now being made available in an accessible digital format (rather than physical letters which was the previous practice). This change enables new hires the option of using their adaptive solutions to access their letter of offer.

Medium-term:

- Make letters of offer and other documents related to staffing accessible. **Ongoing**

5. Ensure the Business Continuity Planning Program and emergency plans include physical accessibility considerations.

Progress status

Short-term:

- Communicate with stakeholders responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the Business Continuity Planning Program and emergency management exercises that physical accessibility considerations are included. **Initiated**

6. Barrier-free intranet and internet sites.

Progress status

Despite the confines of our existing platform, CSIS continues to strive to provide an increasingly accessible experience on the intranet. Improvements have included the use of colour contrast analysis, alternative text, long descriptions, standard formatting styles, transcriptions and closed captioning where possible.

Long-term:

- Ensure all information posted to CSIS intranet and internet sites are accessible. **In Progress**

Priority 6: Procurement of goods, services and facilities

The commitment of CSIS to accessibility by default includes using intersectional analysis to inform decision-making throughout the procurement process, beginning from the design stage. When inclusive and accessible procurement is prioritized from the start, it facilitates the identification and removal of barriers in the statement of requirements for the goods and services being procured. This in turn ensures that what is ultimately delivered is accessible and/or has accessibility features that meet the needs of diverse employees with disabilities. Including accessibility considerations by default in procurement means that diverse employees will have barrier-free products and services in as timely a manner, which fosters an inclusive workplace and normalizes inclusion. It is also more effective when one considers employee productivity and the additional resources that would be needed to adapt, modify or replace a product or service for accommodation purposes after the fact.

The priority for Procurement of goods, services and facilities in the CSIS Accessibility Plan includes 2 objectives and 3 activities, all of which are short-term. Although none of these short-term activities had been completed at the time of writing this report, they are all ongoing.

The status of all **3 activities** at the time of drafting this Progress Report is Ongoing.

1. Ensure effective consideration of accessibility needs at the initiation of procurement processes.

Progress status

All acquisitions officers have completed the training required by PSPC that includes accessibility requirements within contracts. All new employees with procurement functions will be required to do the training as well.

Short-term:

- Establish mandatory training for procurement officers to ensure accessibility is considered at the early stages of the procurement process. Ongoing
- Promote awareness and understanding about the requirements for accessible procurement and ensure access to resources and tools available to support procurement officers, for example, the identification of requirements, related provisions and accepted goods and services to meet contract requirements. Ongoing

2. Ensure that the selection and purchase of goods and services are accessible to all employees.

Progress status

Furniture standards now include consultation with the Accessibility Committee when it comes to furniture selection for common spaces. All Requests for Proposals (RFP) include clauses related to accessibility (based on PSPC's requirements for RFP and contracts).

Short-term:

- Assess furniture available through procurement options to ensure the selection is accessible for common spaces and consult with persons with disabilities prior to product selection. **Ongoing**

Priority 7: Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

CSIS recognizes that when diverse employees with disabilities are supported with a wide variety of physical and digital tools and other accommodations, they are better able to engage in the workplace as well as participate and contribute fully. CSIS will increasingly use intersectional analysis to make new and existing policies and practices more inclusive by design for a barrier-free workplace for all our diverse employees.

The priority for Design and delivery of programs and services in the CSIS Accessibility Plan includes 8 objectives and 11 activities, 4 of which are short-term. Two of the short-term activities had been completed at the time of writing this report, the third activity is progress, and the fourth activity is ongoing.

The status of these **11 activities** is as follows:

- 2 are **Completed** (all short-term)
- 3 are **Ongoing** (1 of which is short-term)
- 3 are **In Progress** (1 of which is short-term)
- 3 are **Not Initiated**

1. Review all policies related to duty to accommodate and accommodations in consultation with persons with disabilities.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Update the Accommodation Workplace Policy to reflect all grounds in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the definition of disability in the *Accessible Canada Act.* **In Progress**

2. Establish a clearer procedure for accommodations requests.

Progress status

Medium-term: **In Progress**

- Develop and communicate a clear, simple procedure for requesting accommodations:
  - Publish on Accessibility site; and
  - Publish on the intranet.

3. Implement a sponsorship and/or mentoring program for employees with disabilities.

Progress status

Short-term:

- Extend the mentoring program to include employees with disabilities. **Completed**

4. Develop and launch a CSIS-tailored version of the Accessibility Passport.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Implement the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport as a communications tool for employees and managers to exchange accommodations-related information with managers when they change jobs. **Ongoing**

5. Remove the cost of accommodations from branch budgets.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Explore the possibility of subsidizing accessible parking in the regions. **Not Initiated**

Long-term:

- Establish a centralized fund for all accommodation requests. **Not Initiated**
- Explore possibility of paying for additional medical equipment employees need to purchase due to our secure environment (e.g., hearing aids without blue tooth, diabetic receivers). **Not Initiated**

6. Simplify routine requests for accommodations.

Progress status

Employees requiring accommodation with their workstation can have an ergonomic assessment or submit a previous assessment from a previous employer if no changes are needed.

Consultations with internal security are progressing to review the medical device policy and streamline employee requests.

Canada

Short-term:

- Review existing processes related to more routine requests for job supports for all employees with disabilities, streamline processes and related requirements (e.g., medical notes and other documentation) to promptly handle more routine requests.
  - Continue to move away from requiring medical notes for accommodations and move to a "yes by default" approach with a focus on removing the barrier. **In Progress**

7. Ensure programs and services are reviewed through an accessibility lens.

Progress status

Gender-based Analysis Plus tools and guidelines that include accessibility are available to all on the intranet, as is training (on-line, virtual, and increasingly in-person). Additionally, there has been an increase in the frequency of consultations across a wider variety of policies and programs as they are being written or modified. This has presented opportunities to analyse and inform decision-making through an accessibility lens that better considers diverse persons with visible and invisible disabilities.

Short-term:

- Consult persons with disabilities through the Accessibility Committee prior to developing programs and services, when required. **Ongoing**

Medium-term:

- Commit to the use of the Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA PLUS) tool when considering the specific needs and circumstances of persons with disabilities who may be impacted by CSIS policies, programs and decisions. **Ongoing**

8. Support medical exclusions for official languages requirements.

Progress status

Short-term:

- Monitor and assess newly implemented process for medical exclusions for official language requirements and adjust accordingly. **Completed**

Priority 8: Training

Training and awareness are critical for a barrier-free and inclusive environment, and for the normalization of accessibility. Training and awareness also support the empowerment of diverse employees with disabilities as well as allies as agents of change and champions of accessibility. In this regard, the organization is committed to creating a safe space for diverse employees to self-identify as having a disability and to ensuring they are accommodated and receive the support needed to be successful.

Any training that is offered must also be accessible to everyone and take into consideration accommodations for visual, auditory, cognitive, and physical disabilities. Furthermore, tools must be available to diverse employees to support them in becoming accessibility confident.

The priority for Training in the CSIS Accessibility Plan includes 4 objectives and 5 activities, 1 of which is short-term. Given that none of the activities have been completed, and that short-term activity has only just initiated by the time this report was being drafted, the Training priority and activities will need greater attention in the coming period.

The status of these **5 activities** at the time of drafting this Progress Report is as follows:

- 1 is **Ongoing**
- 2 are **Initiated** (1 of which is a short-term activity)
- 2 are **Not Initiated**

1. Implement training to facilitate an accessibility-confident organization.

Progress status

The executive level learning paths are currently being evaluated. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Gender-based Analysis Plus Learning Paths for employees are currently being developed and have incorporated accessibility training. The Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) Accessibility Learning Path is available and recommended for all.

Long-term:

- Provide mandatory training to all team leaders, supervisors, managers, executives, members of selection boards and human resources professionals at all levels on unconscious bias training, accessibility, barriers and inclusion. **Ongoing**

2. Find and promote accessibility training to build awareness and practical skills to reduce attitudinal barriers.

Progress status

Neurodiversity awareness materials were shared during Gender-based Analysis Plus Awareness Week and in internal network meetings. Articles, media, and books on neurodiversity are also available to employees on our intranet sites.

Long-term:

- Provide education, awareness and training to managers to assist in their understanding of neurodiversity. **Initiated**

3. Provide training and pertinent information to managers of employees with visible and invisible disabilities.

Progress status

The Canada School of Public Service's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (CSPS EDI) Learning Path for executives is recommended in CSIS's Employee Development Journey (EDJ) resource. This site centralizes resources and initiatives to assist employees on their development journey and during their career at CSIS.

Short-term:

- Continue to educate and provide support to managers on employees' performance evaluations (how to avoid confusing work objectives and performance issues). **Initiated**

Medium-term:

- Provide access to information, resources and training to build managers' knowledge, skills and confidence on accessibility issues (e.g., invisible disabilities, soft skills such as building trust, the value that employees with disabilities bring to their teams and how to build inclusive teams). **Not Initiated**

4. Make training available to all employees with the aim of making the work environment better for persons with a hearing disability.

Progress status

Medium-term:

- Communication, as a priority area of the *Act*, recognizes American Sign Language (ASL), Quebec Sign Language (QSL) and Indigenous sign languages as the primary languages of Deaf people in Canada. Pilot Sign language training (ASL and SLQ) to employees. **Not Initiated**

Priority 9: Transportation

Given the nature of our organization' mandate, this priority area under the *Act* is not applicable to CSIS.

Consultations

Consultations offer an important opportunity to listen, learn, and discuss. The drafting of this Accessibility Plan Progress Report was consultative in nature in that all stakeholders were invited to share progress with Accessibility Committee members in meetings where they could receive input and feedback.

Our consultation process is guided by the principle of *Nothing Without Us* and our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. The Accessibility Committee is comprised of key stakeholders, employees with disabilities and disability allies at all levels. Consultations took place in a hybrid environment (in-person and virtual) to accommodate engagement from participants including at our National Headquarters and in our regional offices.

Feedback

How CSIS is Implementing its Accessibility Plan

Our Accessibility Plan is being implemented by stakeholder co-leads that were identified during the creation of the Accessibility Plan. Follow-up and support is provided to these stakeholders by an advisor who is a subject matter expert in a broader team responsible for Accessibility, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Gender-based Analysis Plus. Each stakeholder is responsible for implementing the Accessibility Plan and providing updates on progress and challenges in its implementation to their management and to other members of the Accessibility Committee.

Encountered barriers identified by persons who deal with CSIS

Employees with disabilities are increasingly open about the challenges they face and we are grateful when they share feedback about the barriers they encounter. For example, the additional physical barriers some encounter during temporary maintenance activities highlights the need for mainstreaming an accessibility focused lens even in routine undertakings. Employees have also expressed concern about long wait times for office accommodations and the need to be timelier with accommodations generally speaking.

The general public has also shared valuable feedback about the need to improve our hiring process, especially in terms of accessibility. Feedback includes the long wait times between some steps in the process and a need for improved communication throughout. Our unique security clearance requirement adds to the length of our recruitment process; on average, the selection and security process can take up to 10-12 months. While these issues are not unique to diverse candidates with disabilities, they contribute to the barriers candidates may experience and could be a factor in the gap for representation of employees with disabilities.

We acknowledge that our minimal public-facing presence may limit the opportunity for frequent feedback from the public. We want to emphasize, however, that our commitment to transparency and accountability remains strong. We maintain our email, telephone, and TTY lines open to receive feedback.

How CSIS has taken this feedback into consideration

Feedback and continuous input and suggestions from our employees with disabilities as well as the public are crucial for the effective implementation of the CSIS Accessibility Plan. Furthermore, our commitment to addressing the challenges we encounter on our path to becoming barrier-free is not restricted to the Accessibility Plan activities. Instead, feedback is encouraged to stretch ourselves further in order to respond to and even anticipate the needs of our diverse employees.

Employees are encouraged to self-identify and to ask for the accommodations and support. We are prioritizing and actively working to streamline internal accommodation processes to reduce implementation waiting times. When there are delays, these are escalated through management channels to see what can be done to accelerate action.

This Progress Report will also be shared with all employees and discussed further in the Accessibility Committee as well as in other internal committees to gather feedback.

Lessons Learned

Physical and digital workspaces affect employees with disabilities differently. In this regard, accessibility considerations need to be continuously prioritized and assessed at all stages. Furthermore, we need to be more proactive in the digital space to seek out those digital accessibility tools that have already been developed and which can be pre-vetted for possible use by CSIS users within the limitations of our secure environment.

Although physical changes in the built environment were perceived as most urgent, these have proven to be the most challenging given financial constraints. We are learning how, within these constraints, to better prioritize accommodation needs.

We have also increased our appreciation for the need for timely and accessible consultations and communication with key stakeholders and the Accessibility Committee before changes are made, and when they are announced in order to maximize positive impact. For example, quiet rooms were implemented at our NHQ as part of Priority 3: Built environment. The small rooms were proposed to be used as a space where employees can be alone, decompress/disconnect from work-related stress, and to possibly also be used as prayer rooms or to pump breastmilk. The location and use of these rooms is being reconsidered after feedback was received. Feedback provides the opportunity for further consultation and reconsiderations that help us better understand the needs of our diverse employees. CSIS is committed to fostering an inclusive culture and putting people first by listening to diverse employees with disabilities, seeking to understand their lived experiences and addressing any gaps on our journey to becoming a barrier-free workplace.

Additionally, time needed to complete some of the short-term activities was underestimated. The implementation of these activities is a collective undertaking with multiple stakeholders and, most important of all, requires the participation and engagement of our diverse employees with disabilities. As a result, we will make appropriate adjustments to our plan going forward, while we continue to be nimble in implementing longer-term objectives earlier than planned wherever we are able to do so.

At CSIS, we remain committed to moving forward, overcoming challenges and implementing our Accessibility Plan in order to make our organization barrier-free and inclusive.

Glossary

Ableism

Ableism is a belief system, analogous to racism, sexism, or ageism, that sees persons with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, and of less inherent value than others. Ableism may be conscious or unconscious and may be embedded in institutions, systems or the broader culture of a society.

Accessibility

Accessibility is the combination of aspects that influence a person's ability to function within an environment.

Accessible

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

Accommodation

Accommodation is the personalized adaptation of a workplace to overcome the barriers faced by persons with disabilities. For example, an accommodation could be providing an employee with an assistive item, such as an ergonomic keyboard or mouse, or adjusting an employee's weekly targets to align with their abilities.

Barrier

Barrier means 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 a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation.

Disability

Disability means 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.

Seeing disabilities affect vision, including total blindness, partial sight and visual distortion.

Hearing disabilities affect ability to hear, including being hard of hearing, deafness or acoustic distortion.

Mobility issues affect ability to move your body, including the required use of a wheelchair or a cane, or other issues impacting your mobility. Issues with flexibility or dexterity affects ability to move joints or perform motor tasks, especially with your hands.

Mental health issues affect psychology or behaviour, such as anxiety, depression or social/compulsive disorder or phobia or psychiatric illness.

Sensory/environmental disabilities affect sensitivity to light, sounds or other distractions, as well as allergens and other environmental sensitivities.

Cognitive disabilities affect ability to carry out tasks involving executive functioning, such as planning and organization, learning information, communication and memory, including autism attention deficit disorder, and learning disabilities.

Intellectual disabilities affect your ability to learn and to adapt behaviour to different situations.

Chronic health conditions or pain affect ability to function on a regular or episodic basis due to migraines, Crohn's disease, colitis, and other disabilities or health conditions.

Discrimination

Discrimination means treating someone differently or unfairly because of a personal characteristic or distinction, which, whether intentional or not, has an effect that imposes disadvantages not imposed on others or that withholds or limits access that is given to others.

Inclusion

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

Nothing Without Us

Nothing Without Us is a guiding principle used across the Government of Canada to communicate the message that no policy should be decided by a representative without the full and direct participation of the members of the group affected by that policy.

Systemic barrier

A systemic barrier is a pattern of behaviour inherent in the policies and practices of an organization, which creates or perpetuates disadvantage for persons with disabilities.