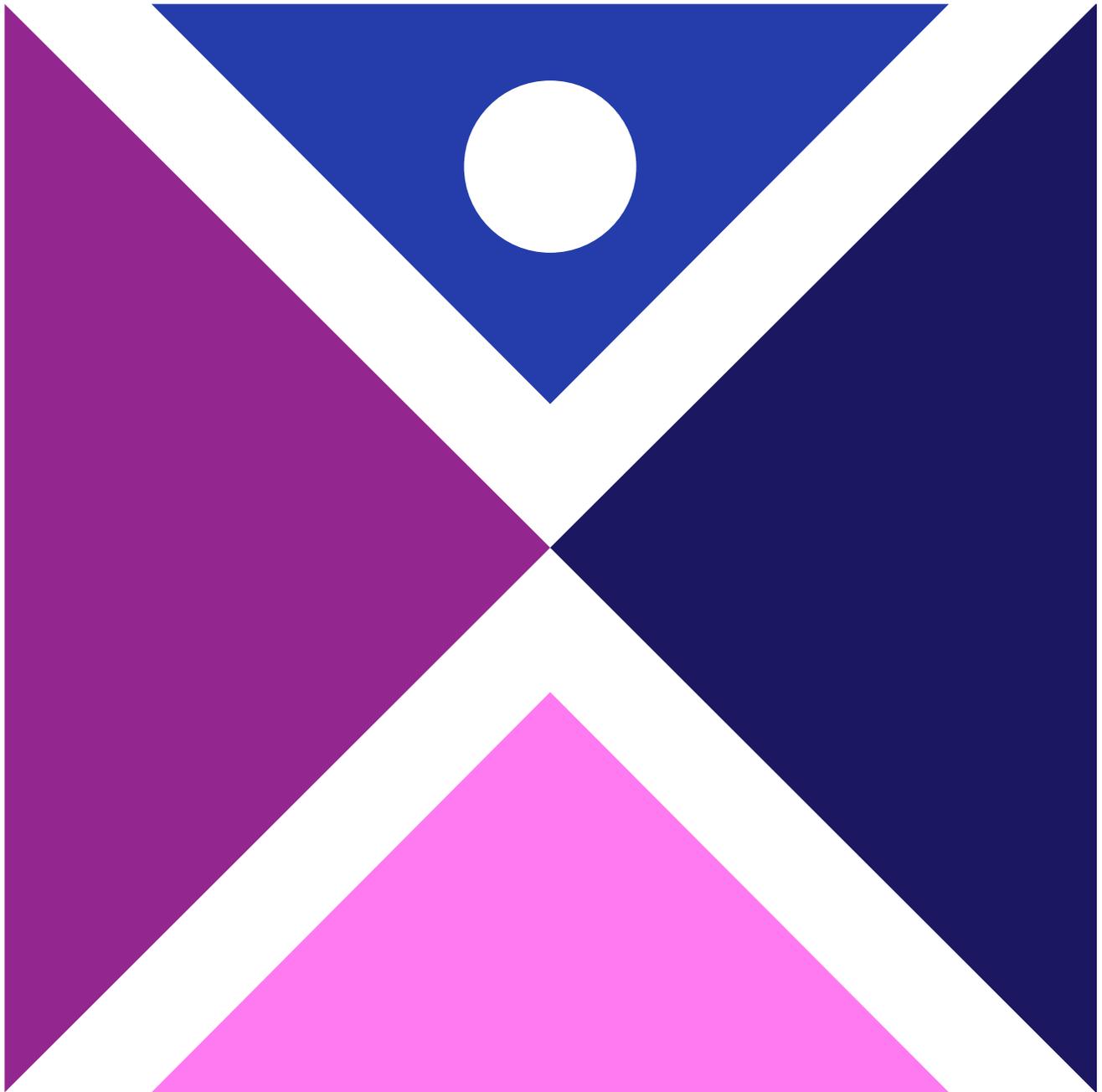




Natural Resources
Canada

Ressources naturelles
Canada

Accessibility Action Plan 2022-2025



Canada[!]

Aussi disponible en français : Plan d'action sur l'accessibilité de Ressources naturelles Canada 2022-2025

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ISSN 2817-0687 Cat.No. M2-25E-PDF

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Message from the Deputy Ministers

We are proud to present the inaugural 2022-2025 Natural Resources Canada Accessibility Action Plan (NAAP), a comprehensive three-year action plan that will guide the department in embedding accessibility into its fabric, better serving all Canadians in the process.

We commend all those who were involved in this milestone work, but we especially want to thank the members of the AccessAbility Network (previously the Persons With disAbilities Network) for their invaluable contributions to the development of the NAAP. This plan, and the change it drives, would not be possible without their time, contributions, initiative, and frank feedback.

The work that went into this report was guided by three principles: collective leadership; inclusivity and accessibility; and employee engagement. Underpinning those principles was the need for those involved, Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) employees, stakeholders, and partners to challenge the status quo, innovate, and take calculated risks. They did. This plan is the result.

For lasting change to take root, we know we must alter not only the way we think about accessibility, but how we act toward it. NRCan's Office for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility has been a leader in changing how we approach inclusivity and how we think about it in, in all aspects of our work.

We recognize that true accessibility and inclusion require action and commitment on an individual level. And, as a science-based department, we know that evidence and data are paramount to the development of good programs and policies. So, it comes as no surprise that the NAAP is the product of continued engagement with NRCan's AccessAbility Network and extensive consultation with subject matter experts across all offices of primary interest. To achieve meaningful results, we must include those who are most affected.





The result is an ambitious three-year roadmap for the department, which integrates recommendations springing from the Employment Systems Review completed externally in 2019 and the latest Public Service Employee Survey data. It also incorporates employee networks' recommendations both through the NRCan Accessibility Action Plan subcommittee and in other formats.

Through the NAAP, we will normalize conversations about accommodation and set up our employees for even greater success, allowing them to bring their best selves to work. This strong foundational initiative prepares the department for the work ahead in each of the nine priority areas the report identifies: Culture Shift; Accommodation; Employment; Built Environment; Information and Communication Technologies; Communication; Design and Delivery of Programs and Services; Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities; and Transportation.

This plan is not the end, but the beginning of realizing meaningful changes to attitudinal, physical, and technological barriers. We have the wind in our sails; employees are energized, motivated and expect change. We are fully committed to this transformation.

We invite you all to join us in adopting and living out the principle of collective leadership by working individually and collectively to create a more accessible NRCan.

The NAAP provides a firm foundation for us to do that - to create a department that is accessible by default, celebrating and valuing contributions of persons with different abilities in the work we all do for Canadians.

John Hannaford and Mollie Johnson

Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Canada

Message from the AccessAbility Network

Change is afoot to transform good intentions into committed points of action that will infuse NRCan with more accessibility confidence. The *Accessible Canada Act* of 2019 and *Nothing Without Us: An Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada* (the strategy) summoned the best in us to honour the task at hand. Together with partners, we are delving into uncomfortable territory to face the existence of ableism rampant in our experiences, work environments and society.

Ableism can manifest subtly as micro-aggressions and neglect or as outright discrimination and harassment. We may recognize this intellectually. In practice, however, we are learning how prolific ableism has become, perhaps unintended or subconscious, in our interpersonal interactions, inherent attitudes and institutional practices. It is the discomfort of these facts that has allowed us to identify barriers to accessibility, check ourselves for signs of ableism and check each other as we learn more.

We are talking
about it now.



In the throes of co-developing this first 2022–2025 Natural Resources Canada Accessibility Action Plan (NAAP), a welcoming space was available for the wide range of subject matter experts (SME) and members of the AccessAbility Network (previously known as the Persons With disAbilities Network).

The more that SMEs and network members engage in the NAAP, the greater our sense of ownership and responsibility. This gathering at the same table is what Nothing Without Us looks like. This is true consultation. This is “accessibility and inclusion by design.” It has lasting power beyond this first iteration of the NAAP as NRCan grows in its accessibility maturity.

The AccessAbility Network looks ahead to sustained collaboration to make the NAAP self-renewing with specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound commitments. We strive for NRCan to position itself as a leader in accessibility. As a department, NRCan can bring the best of its abilities to the accessible services, programs and science it provides for Canadians.

Sam Alpay, Bill Watson and Bonnie Bowick

NRCan co-chairs of the AccessAbility Network



Executive Summary

The 2022-2025 Natural Resources Canada Accessibility Action Plan (NAAP) is in response to the requirements of the *Accessible Canada Act*, which requires all Government of Canada entities to present a three-year accessibility plan to achieve a Canada without barriers on or before January 1, 2040. The plan is a commitment to act and make sustainable progress in the area of accessibility by building a culture of inclusiveness that values diversity, combats discrimination and prevents future barriers in the workplace.

The report is the result of continued engagement with NRCan’s AccessAbility Network – previously known as the Persons With disAbilities Network – and extensive consultation with subject matter experts across all offices of primary interest, fulfilling the obligation of co-development based on the “Nothing Without Us” principle.

It includes key elements from the [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#), complements the 2022-2025 NRCan Employment Equity and Accessibility Action Plan (EEAAP) and responds to recommendations from the most recent Employment Systems Review. The EEAAP summarizes the department’s way forward to achieve equitable representation of the four designated employment equity groups and to create a diverse and inclusive work environment, free of barriers for all employees.

Building on this, the AccessAbility Network and NRCan defined culture shift and accommodation as two additional priority areas specific to the department and its unique needs. This is over and above the seven priority areas outlined in the [Accessible Canada Act](#), bringing the total number of priority areas identified in this report to nine. They are Culture Shift; Accommodation; Employment; Built Environment; Information and Communication Technologies; Communication; Design and Delivery of Programs and Services; Procurement; and Transportation.





The result is an ambitious three-year roadmap for the department, which integrates recommendations springing from the Employment Systems Review completed externally in 2019 and the latest Public Service Employee Survey data. It also incorporates employee networks' recommendations both through the NRCan Accessibility Action Plan subcommittee and in other formats.

The NAAP is an ongoing plan, predicated on the need to remain current and relevant, always able to respond to the changing needs of our employees. This means integrating accessibility into the department's strategic and integrated business planning to ensure rapid resource allocation and alignment with other departmental priorities.

To that end, the next steps following the December 31, 2022, publication of the 2022-2025 Natural Resources Canada Accessibility Action Plan is to develop an implementation strategy with clear timelines, activities, and accountabilities to ensure sectors and stakeholders are held accountable. Central to this will be the continued need to consult with NRCan's AccessAbility Network and stakeholders in the preparation of the legislated annual progress reports going forward.

The high level of engagement with this employee network is an excellent example of how collaboration and co-development lead to meaningful dialogue and significant commitments that meet NRCan's specific needs.

Consultations

To uphold the principle of Nothing Without Us, NRCan consulted extensively with employees with disabilities while developing the NAAP. We recognize that to achieve meaningful results, we must include those who stand to benefit the most from the NAAP and its execution.

To develop SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound) action items, the NRCan Accessibility Advisory Council (NAAC) tasked a subcommittee with developing the NAAP.

A member of the AccessAbility Network and a member of the Human Resources branch (HRB) co-chaired the subcommittee, which included representatives from the Office for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (O-IDEA) and SMEs from affected offices of primary interest. Subcommittee members brought technical knowledge and understanding to the development of NAAP action items and presented ideas and concerns related to successful implementation of those action items.

The subcommittee meetings were also open to all AccessAbility Network members to help the department better understand its employees' experiences. The involvement of AccessAbility Network members was a critical piece in identifying existing barriers and in understanding the unique needs and perspectives of NRCan employees and the population it serves.

Members discussed the existing EEAAP commitments and were encouraged to leverage their experience as expertise and identify key priority areas and critical points in each.

Recognizing that consultation methods are not “one size fits all,” we ensured that our process was inclusive by eliminating barriers for members who wanted to provide their feedback in other formats and at their own pace.





We learned as we went forward and continuously re-evaluated our methods in response to participant feedback to create a trusted and accessible space. In addition, all records of discussions and decisions were anonymous and openly available, to promote the most honest feedback possible.

Where possible, we tied the identified barriers to initiatives underway and addressed recommendations from various studies and exercises, including:

- a stock-taking exercise undertaken by the NAAC in 2020, wherein they identified barriers according to each priority area of the strategy and identified potential areas for action
- Public Service Employee Survey
- the most recent employment systems review

Together with the findings of the subcommittee, this information enabled the department to create a plan that was both more meaningful and better prepared for implementation.

“This transition led many people to see accessibility and accommodation in a new light, showing that accessibility benefits and affects everyone – not just people with disabilities.”

Our 2022–2025 commitments by priority area

The commitments identified in the NAAP came from within the department. They were commitments developed from the consultations with the NRCan AccessAbility Network, through the department’s collaboration and engagement with all employees, which informed every step of the plan’s progression.

Mainstreaming and socializing accessibility and accommodation are key elements in creating an inclusive departmental culture. This shift in thinking is a critical component to the achievement of meaningful results in every aspect of this action plan.

In consultation with the AccessAbility Network, we have identified the two priority areas specific to the department:

- culture shift
- accommodation process

In accordance with the [Accessible Canada Act](#), this plan also includes commitments for seven other priority areas. These barriers were identified through consultation with the AccessAbility Network and offices of primary interest. They are:

- employment
- the built* environment
- information and communication technologies (ICT)
- communications other than ICT
- procurement of goods, services and facilities
- design and delivery of programs and services
- transportation

We recognize that the following commitments are just the start, and this plan is an ongoing commitment.





To that end, the department is committed to continuously monitoring progress through a detailed reporting strategy. We will allow the commitments to evolve as new feedback emerges, as momentum builds and as organizational maturity increases.

This will allow NRCan to:

- strengthen the commitments in the NAAP based on ongoing monitoring and reporting of results
- adapt and respond to feedback received from ongoing engagement
- adjust priorities, initiatives and timelines as capacity grows
- comply with requirements for central agencies such as the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and with legislative requirements

The [Accessible Canada Act](#) uses the term “the built environment.” However, NRCan’s preferred terminology is “**the work environment**,” which includes, but is not limited to, architectural properties.

We recognize that the following commitments are just the start, and this plan is an ongoing commitment.

Priority area: Culture shift

SUMMARY

NRCan recognizes that although employees may want to improve accessibility and become more inclusive of people with different abilities, they lack the information and tools to do so. Furthermore, we recognize that as a society, we do not always recognize the impact of attitudinal barriers on the lives of people with disabilities. As a department, NRCan wants to target this as a standalone priority area. This will allow us to move beyond a culture of minimal compliance and make it possible for all of us to create a culture of accessibility.

CURRENT STATE

Although accessibility is a universal need and benefits all, many perceive it as just an initiative and a mindset that benefits only a small group of people. Consultations revealed the biggest barriers were not specific to any priority area in the [Accessible Canada Act](#).

The barriers include:

- subconscious ableist mindsets
- little awareness of accessibility and its impacts on the workplace
- strained resources within the employee network
- lack of comprehensive and easily accessible representative data

FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

- **Office for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility:** The O-IDEA has been instrumental in leading culture change. Before summer 2022, the O-IDEA did not state that accessibility was one of its four pillars, assuming that to be implicit. But after a proposal from the AccessAbility Network, O-IDEA realized that changing its name to include the word “accessibility” was a critical step in making accessibility one of the cornerstones of its mandate.





- **NRCan First Person:** NRCan’s Champion for people with disabilities hosts and contributes to a regular column called “NRCan First Person” in the internal departmental newsletter – The Source. Inspired by the Globe and Mail column “First Person,” this column is a place for anyone in NRCan to share their experiences related to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. The aim is also to raise awareness and to normalize difficult conversations about different perspectives and abilities.
- **Living Library:** The Living Library is an opportunity to have a one-on-one conversation with a volunteer to learn about their experiences and challenges as a public servant and as a person. But instead of borrowing books, we borrow people’s time. The human “books” are allies, champions (personally or professionally) and individuals who identify as, or with, equity-seeking groups, all with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. It is hosted by NRCan’s Community for Practicing Allyship, as a place for sharing stories, for expanding our minds and for learning about the experiences of others. As we work to incorporate inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility as key principles that inform the work we do, it is important for us to learn about others’ experiences and see things from their perspectives.
- **Human resources dashboards:** NRCan optimized its human resources dashboards. The employment equity dashboards were revised to demonstrate departmental and sector-specific representation gaps, and the Positive Hiring dashboard was revised to show the application of inclusive measures in selection processes.

DESIRED STATE

We want to prioritize accessibility in the department and to have NRCan employees understand:

- that accessibility means more than just accommodation
- why accessibility matters
- how to make the department more accessible and inclusive

We also want employees with disabilities to feel an increased sense of worth, belonging, and purpose.

Therefore, we strive to:

1. Recognize ableism

Culture shift is a collective effort. Executives and employees alike have a shared responsibility to understand and address ableism in their own lives. Recognizing ableism and making accessibility a high priority are key factors in ensuring that progress is not merely performative.

2. Increase awareness

NRCan employees want to improve their understanding of accessibility but are not sure where or how to focus their efforts. A key attitudinal barrier is that accessibility is often an afterthought or perceived as a barrier to productivity. This attitudinal barrier may stop employees with disabilities from participating and contributing fully to their teams.





3. Increase support to the AccessAbility Network

Network membership is growing, and the network’s input on various initiatives is in high demand. By increasing the support to the AccessAbility Network, we can continue to alleviate the administrative burden and allow the network to focus more fully on their own initiatives.

Data about NRCan’s demographics is in high demand across the department. Improving data literacy and building a strong understanding of the existing data, its limits and its uses will help all sectors recognize both their gaps and the opportunities for greater accessibility.

“Words without
action are empty”

Priority area: Accommodation

SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic led to gains in accessibility and greater acceptance of accommodation requests. When the majority of department staff were asked to work remotely, various forms of accommodation for teleworking became the norm for all employees. This situation demonstrated the universality of accessibility and accommodation and strongly demonstrated that flexibility and accommodation are key factors in optimal workplace culture and inclusion.

CURRENT STATE

Several reviews and surveys highlighted that the lack of a centralized departmental, employee-centered accommodation process creates barriers across multiple priority areas. The reviews (including the Employment Systems Review, the 2020 Stock Taking Exercise completed by the NAAC, and the 2019 Public Service Employee Survey) and employee feedback identified the following barriers:

- little awareness of roles and responsibilities in the accommodation process
- little understanding of the accommodation process, which led some people to equate accommodation requests with disciplinary measures
- lack of clarity in the existing accommodation process
- accommodation denials related to local budgets and funding
- insufficient support to employees and managers in navigating accommodation requests
- delays in fulfilling accommodation requests

The listed barriers can lead to strained employee-supervisor relationships, which can cascade into negative effects in other priority areas. Also, these findings are consistent with the key findings in the [Summary Report: May 2019 Survey on Workplace Accommodations in the Federal Public Service](#) from the Office of Public Service Accessibility.





“The literature suggests that an open and proactive approach to providing accommodations has positive outcomes on employee interactions and morale, and that proactive universal design and greater openness to various types of accommodation for all employees (that is, not just disability-related accommodation), in particular, can reduce stigma.” [2020 Validation of Key Findings from the 2019 Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Benchmarking Study of Workplace Accommodations in the Federal Public Service.](#)

FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

- **Accommodation Centre of Expertise:** NRCan has created a stand-alone centralized Accommodation Centre of Expertise (ACE) in collaboration with the NAAC. Although the ACE works closely with partners across different areas of expertise, they work most closely with the Workplace Wellness and Mental Health teams. Together, they pursue a holistic, employee-centered approach and process.
- **Onboarding link to the ACE:** The ACE has also been working with the onboarding team to ensure that managers and new employees have an immediate, direct link to their services to reduce accommodation delays.
- **Coaching:** Accommodation advisors within the ACE have a coaching role that supports managers and employees in having more constructive and respectful conversations about accommodation.

DESIRED STATE

NRCan wants to outline a simplified, flexible and user-centric accommodation process that addresses a wide variety of situations. We hope to pursue creative and flexible solutions and provide timely and adequate accommodation solutions in a safe manner and in an environment free of stigma or fear of repercussion.

Therefore, we undertake the following:

1. Continue establishing the ACE as a neutral third party with specific expertise in accommodation

In clearly differentiating the role of the ACE from that of the Labour Relations team, we ensure that accommodation requests do not immediately lead into disciplinary action. This clarity can avoid unnecessarily escalating a situation that could have an appropriate, creative and simple solution that allows the employee to perform at their best.

2. Increase awareness of the accommodation process

The recent establishment of the ACE presents an opportunity to increase awareness of accommodation measures and to correct misinformation that may be circulating. Improving everyone's knowledge of the roles, responsibilities and expectations will give employees and managers confidence in having conversations about accommodation needs and in navigating the process, regardless of the employee's disability.

3. Examine centralized funding for accommodation

Examining a centralized funding approach is a response to one of the recommendations of the NRCan ESR and is in line with the initiatives from the [Office for Public Service Accessibility](#). A central fund would relieve the pressure on the local manager's budget and would make it less likely to delay or deny accommodation requests or to pursue suboptimal solutions. Optimal accommodation solutions will also lead managers to see the long-term benefits of accommodation relative to cost.





4. Increase support to employees in requesting accommodation and talking with managers.

People with disabilities at NRCan reported that they hesitated to approach managers to request the accommodation they require to be successful, especially if the disability was not visible. They described fear of reprisal, negative perceptions, stigma and concerns about individual privacy. Increasing the support available to employees will increase advocacy to receive the accommodation they need.

5. Reduce delays in processing accommodation requests

After an employee and manager have spoken about accommodation, and the requests are approved, the employee still has to wait for the request to be processed. These delays are not always within the department's control but NRCan commits to reducing the delays.

simplified
flexible
user-centric
accommodation process

Priority area: Employment

SUMMARY

NRCan is committed to being a department that represents and includes the diverse identities, perspectives and experiences that make up Canada. By addressing employment barriers, we will see an influx of new talent, creativity and innovation that people with disabilities bring to their current and prospective positions.

CURRENT STATE

Through consultation with the AccessAbility Network and through the analysis conducted in the ESR and the Public Service Employee Survey, we identified the following key barriers related to recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion:

- delayed or lack of access to flexible language training and testing opportunities and accommodation
- unequal access to development opportunities
- inconsistency in accommodation offerings and provision across various stages of the hiring process
- unfair performance management practices
- difficulty in finding information on programs, services and opportunities early in one's career
- delays in obtaining the necessary equipment, tools and information, both at the start of and throughout their career



FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

Virtual language school: In April 2020, the NRCan Language School changed to virtual delivery because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school has since begun providing training to regional employees through this virtual model. This delivery method presented several opportunities for expansion and an updated service delivery and funding model, which positioned the department to be able to provide equitable, consistent, high quality language training across the country.

Inclusive hiring guide: The department developed a guide to inclusive hiring to help managers in developing inclusive hiring processes, from recruitment to the appointment of a candidate. NRCan delivered training sessions to hiring managers on how to use the guide and apply its principles.

Human resources dashboards: NRCan optimized its human resources dashboards. The employment equity dashboards were revised to demonstrate departmental and sector-specific representation gaps, and the Positive Hiring dashboard was revised to show the application of inclusive measures in selection processes.

Inclusive User Experience Report: In September 2020, the AccessAbility Network published the NRCan Inclusive User Experience Report. The report presented insights on virtual onboarding for students and new employees. In it, employees share their experiences, from a person applying to an NRCan position to an NRCan employee transitioning to another position and/or retirement.

DESIRED STATE

NRCan aims to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that is representative of Canada's population while also supporting the government-wide goal for [recruitment of people with disabilities](#) by 2025. We also aim to support and retain a diverse workforce by promoting talent management and career development of people with disabilities.

Therefore, we commit to the following:

1. Improve access to flexible language training and testing opportunities and accommodation

Official languages training is a key component of talent development and subsequent promotion. A flexible and accessible internal delivery model would allow more employees to access training that suits their needs and their strengths.

2. Provide equitable access to development opportunities

Lack of access to development opportunities contributes to representation gaps between the working and the management and executive levels for people with disabilities. We want opportunities to be inherently accessible. Additionally, we want to facilitate higher promotion rates and improved employee satisfaction and engagement.

3. Adopt tools and practices to improve accessibility and consistency of accommodation in the hiring process and recruitment initiatives

We aim to decrease the number of job applicants screened out of hiring and promotional processes by regularly assessing accessibility barriers. Consistent, timely and appropriate accommodation at every stage of the hiring process can lead to fair and accurate candidate assessment. Additionally, focusing on strategic recruitment activities and improving their accessibility will lead to more hiring actions.

4. Promote accessibility and accommodation resources within current performance management tools and exercises

A strong performance management framework has the potential to decrease unfair practices and increase the employee's productivity and morale. This change has the potential of





closing the gaps in representation of people with disabilities in management and executive positions, ensuring a workforce that closely reflects the Canadian population.

5. Create and improve professional and personal development opportunities for people with disabilities

The path to promotion and growth is not linear, nor is it always straightforward. We can alleviate some of the confusion and create a sense of community by creating opportunities for both peer and traditional career mentorship for people with disabilities. Furthermore, by ensuring that our development programs are accessible, we can facilitate professional development and increase the representation of people with disabilities in upper management positions.

6. Streamline the accommodation process starting with but not limited to the onboarding process

Starting a new position can be daunting and the task of navigating the accommodation processes often falls on the new employee. The same is true for employees who develop disabilities during their careers, require a new accommodation, or decide to request accommodation during their careers. Having the right points of contact and finding the right information quickly can make a big impact on productivity and morale that carries on through the employee's career.

7. Align with other departmental and interdepartmental priorities

We recognize the importance of being proactive and pursuing greater accessibility without waiting for employees to report a barrier. Consequently, we are committing to working alongside other teams and departments to approach all priorities and initiatives, such as the Future of Work, in a unified fashion.

Priority area: Built environment

SUMMARY

NRCan’s work environment is not restricted to the physical buildings and the features themselves. Our employees who have invisible disabilities reminded us that accessibility includes non-structural considerations such as noise, lighting and the use of scented products and that they extend to off-site work locations.

Consequently, NRCan will use the term “the work environment,” even though the strategy and the [Accessible Canada Act](#) commonly use “the built environment.”

CURRENT STATE

NRCan employees identified the following key barriers related to the visible and invisible components of the work environment:

- noxious conditions created by renovations and workspace modifications
- concerns about emergency procedures in a variety of work environments
- lack of knowledge, especially as it pertains to the invisible features of the work environment, such as environmental sensitivities
- buildings, laboratories or features that do not comply with federal codes or seasonal contractors who do not comply with directives for environmental disruptions
- Foundational activities and initiatives underway





- **Accessibility assessments:** NRCan initiated accessibility assessments of all its buildings and laboratories. We expect to complete these assessments in 2023, and we are eager to address the outstanding accessibility requirements of each building.
- **Open use floors:** We are piloting open use floors to inform the new design of the NRCan National Capital Region office. On an open use floor, some areas are designated as quiet zones, collaborative zones or social spaces and have features such as adjustable furniture. The boardrooms have features that address barriers, including increased air filtration for people with environmental sensitivities. NRCan has also engaged with the AccessAbility Network and the Pride Network for the design of accessible and inclusive washrooms.
- **Scents in the workplace:** In 2019, NRCan adopted the departmental Directive on Scents in the Workplace. This important step recognized the impact of scents in the workplace, which reinforced the invisible aspects of workplace accessibility.

DESIRED STATE

NRCan wants to provide accessible and barrier-free work locations wherever we provide amenities, whether virtually, in person or in the field.

Therefore, we commit to the following:

1. Create a work environment that is free of physical and environmental disruptions and barriers wherever possible

Communicating upcoming changes to the environmental conditions will allow employees with environmental sensitivities to make decisions and make alternate arrangements to avoid health incidents. This process also includes increasing the visibility of key directives and processes related to environmental barriers and sensitivities. We commit to informing employees on how to remove environmental barriers and create a work environment that is more accessible.

2. Update security and emergency procedures

We need to update and communicate NRCan's security and emergency procedures. There are two main concerns. The first concern is that the procedures that were in place before the COVID-19 pandemic do not apply to the reality of the 2022 work environment. Employees with disabilities have expressed concerns about their safety as they return to work in the office. The second concern is that when improvements or renovations are undertaken, employees with disabilities are at a higher risk for potential health incidents.

3. Address non-compliance

We need to remember the physical components of the work environment, especially in our laboratories. We will adopt recommendations from the accessibility assessments underway and will ensure that our laboratories are included in renovation and redesign plans. In addition, we will provide additional information to business owners about how to deal with seasonal contractors who do not comply with directives for environmental disruptions.





Priority area: Information and communication technologies

SUMMARY

Accessibility in ICT has benefits for everyone; however, it is vital for many people with disabilities. In a digital age in which every one of us relies on technology in one way or another to complete their work, inaccessible ICT is a significant barrier to inclusion and productivity for people with disabilities.

CURRENT STATE

Through consultation with the AccessAbility Network, we identified the following key barriers related to ICT:

- lengthy procurement process
- difficulty navigating the accommodation processes for ICT, for both managers and employees
- difficult access to internal and external tools, platforms and applications
- lack of monitoring and tracking
- little user support
- difficulty using accessibility tools

FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

- Technology Accessibility Centre: NRCan has an established TAC, which is an internal service that has been helping to reduce or eliminate the barriers presented by standard computer environments. The TAC helps employees so that they can contribute to their full potential in the workplace through expertise in specialized computer technology, adaptive accommodation and ergonomic coaching.

- Microsoft 365 and SharePoint Online: The adoption of Microsoft 365 (M365) tools and the adoption of Microsoft SharePoint Online (SPO) will address the long-standing challenges related to GCdocs. SPO will bring seamless integration of existing M365 and better collaboration across multiple devices. It will also give the department a chance to improve information security and leverage features for records management, which will reduce administrative burden for end-users.
- My GCHR: NRCan has adopted the My GCHR application. My GCHR is a more accessible version of PeopleSoft that will standardize and automate many of the tasks that employees, managers and human resource professionals handle every day. It will provide access to better and more timely information to help us manage our professional lives and to lead our employees and our organization.
- Microsoft templates: NRCan's Creative Services team (within the Communications and Portfolio sector [CPS]), developed Microsoft templates that are accessible by default. The templates were created in collaboration with our Chief Information Officer and the Security branch.
- Engage (PowerPoint): NRCan adopted the Engage add-in for PowerPoint from Markido Inc. to help employees increase the accessibility of their PowerPoint presentations. This adoption is a small step in improving employees' confidence in accessibility while we continue to develop our own internal resources and training.





DESIRED STATE

NRCan wants to increase ICT capacity, improve confidence in requesting and obtaining ICT, and help managers meet their employees' needs, regardless of their disability, work location and career status.

Therefore, we commit to the following:

1. Streamline the procurement of ICT

The procurement process for specialized ICT is long and is often affected by official languages and security requirements. In reviewing the official languages and security requirements and flexibilities, we will be able to move past common logistical roadblocks in the procurement process.

2. Map the ICT accommodation process for both managers and employees

Employees and managers can have difficulty navigating the accommodation process for ICT, from assessment to procurement. We need to map the process to avoid delays, frustration and suboptimal resolution of employee needs.

3. Assess the accessibility of internal platforms and applications

Although we cannot directly change the accessibility of externally controlled applications, we can leverage our Microsoft 365 tools to improve the accessibility of NRCan's internal applications and platforms. We can also assess applications developed and managed in-house, leading to higher productivity.

4. Improve metrics related to ICT accessibility issues

By adding a category for accessibility-related tickets in the Information Technology Help Desk, NRCan will be able to track accessibility issues over time. This capability will better equip the ICT to make data-driven decisions about improving accessibility and improving uniformity and consistency in its service delivery.

5. Increase support for ICT users

Using our existing tools and resources, we will explore innovative ways to support employees who require help with their ICT. This process will ensure that all employees have access to the information they need as the department continues to grow and mature in its capacity to provide specialized technical support.

6. Support employees in using accessibility tools

As our maturity and understanding of accessibility grows, we want to ensure that employees become confident in how to use the accessibility tools, such as the corporate template. Supporting them in their learning reinforces the collective responsibility for greater inclusion in the workplace.



Priority area: Communication



SUMMARY

Accessible communication is an example of how accessibility is a universal concept. Every person in the department will benefit from concise and easy to understand communications. Clear communications both addresses barriers encountered by people with visible and invisible disabilities and increases our effectiveness and productivity.

CURRENT STATE

Through our consultations, the SMEs agreed with their AccessAbility Network colleagues that an attitudinal change is needed in all employees. We need to address the high level of resistance to accessibility standards and requirements. Both groups noted that contributing factors were the difficulty of procuring accessible language services, the difficulty of finding information on the intranet, and the lack of awareness of accessibility initiatives.

FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

- Standards training: Communications officers and content designers in CPS are receiving training on accessibility standards and requirements. This training will ensure a uniform approach in producing and publishing accessible documents and content. It will also ensure a holistic and consistent approach to responding to all employees' requests directed to CPS.
- Accessibility in communications products: CPS is developing tools and support documentation for all employees who want to increase their knowledge of accessibility issues and NRCan's accessibility requirements for all communication products.

DESIRED STATE

NRCan wants to pursue the equality of access to information for employees and to support business owners and employees in increasing compliance with processes.

Therefore, we commit to the following:

1. Increase understanding of accessible communications and their benefits

We will ensure that employees are aware of their responsibilities and consider the accessibility of their documents, applications and tools from the beginning of their project.

2. Centralize information on the intranet

We aim to provide the most relevant information on the intranet, especially about programs and services available to people with disabilities.

3. Add visibility to accessibility initiatives, tools and resources

We will raise awareness of accessibility tools and the initiatives underway to inform employees and thereby help them contribute further to the culture shift within the department.

4. Explore ways of expediting procurement of accessible communication services

Accessible communication services are key to enabling people with disabilities to be included in meetings and consultations. We need to research the availability of services such as ASL/LSQ/CART interpretation. While NRCan cannot control all aspects of procurement, we will examine ways to reduce the delays.



Priority area: Design and delivery of programs and services



SUMMARY

At NRCan, our vision is to embed inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility into the culture of the department. We believe that through collective leadership and engagement, we have the chance to design and deliver internal programs that better meet the needs of our workforce. We also believe that NRCan's unique external programs and services should be inclusive by design, providing equal, barrier-free access to all Canadians interacting with our department.

CURRENT STATE

The SMEs and members of the AccessAbility Network brought their experience as members of various sectors or as individuals who engaged with programs and services housed in different sectors. The feedback received was consistent across sectors, demonstrating a need for collective action from all.

The barriers reported included:

- difficulty finding all the relevant information on a particular program or service
- inaccessible resources within the programs offered

Program designers and owners themselves also reported having little awareness of accessibility issues and struggled to understand and apply demographic data to the design and delivery of their programs.

FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

- **Self-identification efforts:** The department increased its self-identification efforts to gain a more comprehensive dataset. To try to increase the response rate, the department is acting on its commitments. It is committed to understanding the needs

of our employees and to making important changes to our programs and services. The changes will help us build a more diverse and inclusive department that respects and embraces the backgrounds and experiences of everyone. NRCan has optimized its human resources dashboards, including the employment equity dashboards to demonstrate departmental and sector-specific representation gaps. The dashboards also demonstrate mobility (promotions, recruitment and departures) for people who self-identify as part of an Employment Equity group.

- **Inclusive User Experience Guide:** At NRCan, the AccessAbility Network has led the drive to inclusive by design methods since 2018 and developed standards for the NRCan Inclusive User Experience Standards Chart to help the department improve processes, guides and documents. This guide contains eight inclusive user experience standards that enable employees to design programs and processes that meet the needs of both our employees and all other Canadians.
- **IDEA analysis toolkit:** A critical part of NRCan's IDEA transformation is embedding IDEA into our programs and policies. To help program owners and designers develop and review policy and programs according to IDEA principles, we created the Inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility analysis toolkit. The toolkit leads program owners and designers through key considerations for policy and program design, including building an evidence base, co-creating with stakeholders, testing, and implementation. The toolkit also includes an audit process for reviewing existing policies.





DESIRED STATE

NRCan wants to deliver workplace and external programs and practices that are accessible and inclusive by design – fostering a healthy, safe, fair work and service delivery environment.

Therefore, we commit to the following:

1. Streamline information on programs and services

After we centralize our information, clarify our processes, and embed feedback into our programs and services, employees and Canadians will be able to quickly find information about programs and services, especially those pertaining to people with disabilities. This effort also demonstrates our commitment to responding to feedback on how we can improve.

2. Improve accessibility of supporting documents and resources

We want to remain current and responsive to the needs of the people who use our programs and service, both internally and externally. Each sector has a responsibility to make their programs and services accessible and will, therefore, be a part of the department's pursuit of greater accessibility.

3. Increase program designers' and owners' knowledge

When the program owners and designers have more information, they will better understand how to design and improve their programs and services. As a result, programs and services will be more accessible, efficiency will be improved, and service delivery will be more effective.

4. Facilitate data literacy

Better data literacy will enable the designers and owners of the programs and services to better understand the demographics of the population they service. This improvement will lead them to design and deliver their programs and services in a way that considers a variety of needs and abilities in their service delivery models.

Priority area: Procurement of goods, services and facilities

SUMMARY

Procurement is a key area in the fulfillment of our commitments in other priority areas. NRCan recognizes that, although factors such as market availability limit us, there are opportunities for improvement internally.

CURRENT STATE

Considering the barriers noted previously, we asked SMEs from the Finance and Procurement branch to add to the information we had already received by providing an overview of their perceived challenges to implementation. With this information, we can complement actions in previous priority areas and create a more comprehensive approach to fulfilling our commitments.

The current barriers to accessible procurement include:

- lack of knowledge about the obligations and options for purchasing products and services
- dismissal of the negative impacts of inaccessible products on employees and productivity
- insufficient criteria in the statement of work that allow accessibility to be ignored

FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

- **Identify accessibility requirements:** The Finance Management branch updated the electronic procurement (eProcurement) forms. Now, the business owners must identify, at the time of submission, what the accessibility requirements are or attest that none exist.
- **Training for procurement officers:** NRCan delivers mandatory training for procurement officers that specifically references the [Accessible Canada Act](#). We also offer this training to functional specialists (also known as PGs) who have transactional authority.





- **Maintain procurement templates:** We keep the procurement templates up to date to ensure reference to the [Accessible Canada Act](#) is included in all documents.
- **Verification audits:** We conduct post procurement quality assurance verification audits. The audits identify if the buyer incorporated accessibility requirements and considerations into the procurement file and if the buyer needs education about accessibility.

DESIRED STATE

NRCan wants to facilitate and streamline procurement of accessible products and services, while challenging, supporting and educating business owners in their responsibility for accessible procurement.

Therefore, we commit to the following:

1. Increase understanding of accessible procurement obligations

In educating our procurement officers, we can educate our business owners about their options and obligations when purchasing products or services. This practice will improve accessibility and also ensure that the department remains in good standing and compliant with its obligations to accessible procurement.

2. Increase awareness of the impacts of accessible procurement

In educating our business owners and providing them with tools and resources, we will empower them to contribute to creating a barrier-free workplace and working conditions.

3. Strengthen the statement of work criteria

We will provide business owners with tools and information for drafting strong and enforceable statements of work. Also, by providing training on vendor performance to NRCan contracting authorities, we are supporting our work environment commitments.

Priority area: Transportation

SUMMARY

Because so many of our employees work in remote regions to conduct their research, it is important for NRCan to consider transportation. It is also important for us to consider how we may use transportation as a means of achieving our commitments in other areas such as employment and culture shift.

CURRENT STATE

Even though some fieldwork situations are inherently inaccessible and constitute a bona fide occupational requirement, there are occasions for people with disabilities to participate in fieldwork safely. Consequently, we must ensure that we include people with disabilities in various scientific positions.

We want to highlight the barriers identified through our consultations:

- inaccessible and biased fieldwork assessments
- outdated operating assessments
- lack of consideration given to the implications of off-site team gatherings
- lack of consideration to barriers related to off-site training

FOUNDATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES UNDERWAY

- **Transportation:** The department has a small fleet of vehicles for fieldwork use. Sectors are responsible for purchasing vehicles according to the needs of their staff. Procurement officers challenge the buyers to consider purchasing modifications to make the vehicle more universally accessible for current and future staff. Sector leaders can request modifications such as pedal extenders as needed after the initial purchase. If a specialized vehicle is required for one user, the sector lead can purchase a particular vehicle to meet the needs of the user.





DESIRED STATE

NRCan wants to maintain a fleet of vehicles that are widely accessible, including watercraft, all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles for field research. We need to ensure that all employees can participate in fieldwork or trips safely and efficiently.

Therefore, we commit to the following:

1. Examine current fieldwork assessments

Local management conducts fieldwork assessment and approval. There is an opportunity to review the content of the assessments to ensure they are not exclusionary or biased. This review will also help managers understand the accommodation related to the fieldwork and will improve the accessibility of employment opportunities for scientists and field party members with disabilities.

2. Review fleet documentation and requirements

Individuals must complete an operating assessment before they can operate a fleet vehicle. We will review the assessment for ableist language or imprecise criteria to ensure that we are not needlessly excluding people with disabilities.

3. Facilitate accessible off-site training opportunities

Many training and development opportunities require travel. We want to support managers and employees in choosing and prioritizing accessible learning opportunities. This practice will strongly support ensuring that people with disabilities do not face further challenges to full participation, promotion and talent development.

4. Additional commitments

We recognize the importance of being proactive and approaching all departmental initiatives and directives in a unified fashion. Consequently, we are committing to continue implementing the accessibility standards from the Treasury Board of Canada and Shared Services Canada regarding the purchase of fleet vehicles

Implementation

NRCan will take a phased approach to implementing the stated commitments. This will allow the department to continue working on the ongoing initiatives that have a strong foundation, while simultaneously building capacity in emergent priority areas.

Three key deliverables will affect the entire NAAP and each of its priority areas:

- continued development of the departmental ACE
- development of key performance indicators as part of an action plan, including baseline metrics that will inform clear deliverables and accountabilities associated with each priority area
- integration into business planning to support rapid resource reallocation and alignment with related departmental priorities, including Future of Work planning

NRCan has based its commitments and their associated activities on foundational elements and initiatives underway. While we are taking a phased approach, many activities are underway or are activities that already have the required capacity.

We have four stages of readiness:

- **In progress:** Consultation and activities are underway.
- **Ready:** Activities that build on a previously completed initiative
- **Planned:** New initiatives that tie into existing operational plans
- **New:** Initiatives and activities requiring planning and integration into current priorities

As stated, the NAAP requires collective leadership. Progress will depend on each sector's acceptance of their respective areas of leadership and their willingness to collaborate with one another for the good of the department and the achievement of meaningful results.





Monitoring and reporting

NRCan will monitor and evaluate progress throughout the year. The NAAC will convene regularly to review progress and review the feedback. As required, it will recommend adding new actions to the implementation plan and shifting priorities.

Progress reports on the NAAP will be prepared collaboratively. These reports will both present an honest and transparent description of obstacles encountered in implementation and celebrate the progress made as we pursue greater accessibility across the department.

Conclusion

For too long, people with disabilities have had to focus on amplifying their voices and fighting to see the change that would allow them to be equal participants and contributors in their workplace.

The NAAP is but a starting point in creating a workplace in which people with disabilities are increasingly respected and considered and where they can flourish further. We cannot lose sight of the lessons learned about the universality of accessibility and accommodation, nor can we forget or dismiss the continued challenges and experiences of people with disabilities.

We recognize that true accessibility and inclusion require action and commitment on an individual level, and we look forward to creating a department that is accessible by default, celebrating and valuing the contributions of people with different abilities in the work we do for Canadians.

General

We invite members of the public who interact with our department and our employees to provide feedback on accessibility barriers. This includes feedback on either the:

- manner in which we are implementing the 2022–2025 Natural Resources Canada NRCan Accessibility Action Plan (NAAP)
- barriers encountered by our employees or people who interact with NRCan

We can also provide the NAAP in alternate formats, including print, large print, Braille, audio and electronic. Use the following contact information to request an alternate format. We will respond to these requests within the timelines outlined by the *Accessible Canada Act*.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- For telephone feedback: 1-855-525-9293 (toll-free in Canada) or 343-292-6096
- For electronic feedback: email ee-diversity-diversite-ee@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca, or use the [online electronic form](#). If you are submitting feedback using the electronic form, select the 'Other/Departmental' option from the drop-down menu.

NRCAN EMPLOYEES

- For telephone feedback: 1-866-943-4141 (toll-free) or 613-943-4141
- For electronic feedback: email ee-diversity-diversite-ee@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca, or use the [online electronic form](#). If you are submitting feedback using the electronic form, select the 'Other/Departmental' option from the drop-down menu.





FEEDBACK BY MAIL

Natural Resources Canada

Human Resources Branch; Employment Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Team

580 Booth Street

Ottawa ON K1A 0E4

We invite NRCan employees to use internal mail delivery, as described in their Internal Mail procedures.

Members of the media may use the standard NRCan [contact information for Media Relations](#).

FEEDBACK PROCESSES

We aim to acknowledge receipt of all identified feedback within three to five business days. We will send this acknowledgement by the same means used to send the feedback.

Note that all feedback will be considered equally. Both anonymous and identified feedback will be included in progress reports and in regular updates for internal discussion. However, we will not respond directly to anonymous feedback.

For more information on how feedback will be used, consult the Monitoring and Reporting section of the NAAP.

DESIGNATED PERSON

Shannon Mezzetta

Manager, Employment Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility team

Human Resources Branch, Corporate Management Services Sector

Glossary

ableism: discrimination or social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. It can manifest as an attitude, stereotype or offensive comments or behaviour.

ACE: Accommodation Centre of Expertise – an internal NRCan service to managers and employees of that serves as a one-stop-shop for all accommodation questions

ASL: American Sign Language

barrier: anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of people with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. This includes anything physical, environmental, architectural, technological or attitudinal that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice.

business owner: a person who is responsible for the NRCan business or program area for which the project, procurement or programme is established. The business owner is responsible for:

- Defining the required capabilities, intended business outcomes and benefits of a project, procurement or program at its outset
 - Achieving the business outcomes and benefits following implementation
-

CART: Communication Access Real-time Translation – a speech-to-text interpretation service
contracting agent: a person who has delegated contracting authority to enter into a contract or contractual arrangement on behalf of a department or agency

disability: any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation – whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society

duty to accommodate: Duty to accommodate is the obligation to take steps to eliminate disadvantages to employees and prospective employees. The duty applies to disadvantages that





result from a directive, rule, practice or physical barrier that has or may have an adverse impact on certain individuals or groups. The relevant individuals or groups are those protected under the Canadian Human Rights Act and identified as a designated group under the Employment Equity Act.

ESR: Employment Systems Review – An employment systems review is a comprehensive review of an organization’s policies and practices to identify systemic and attitudinal barriers to employment opportunities for designated group members.

Future of Work: Future of Work planning is a departmental priority that considers how the workforce is undergoing transformative changes that are different from our past and present.

GC Accessibility passport: A voluntary tool that facilitates accommodation by placing the employee at the centre of the accommodation process and promotes dialogue and collaboration between employees and managers. It is a flagship initiative under the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada.

LSQ: Langues des signes québécoise

NAAC: NRCan Accessibility Advisory Council – Through co-development and collaboration, the NAAC recommends strategies to improve accessibility across the department. The NAAC supports the Human Resources branch in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the 2022–2025 Natural Resources Canada Accessibility Action Plan.

NAAP: 2022–2025 Natural Resources Canada Accessibility Action Plan

NRCan: Natural Resources Canada

O-IDEA: Office for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility – Its primary objective is to bring together representatives from all sectors and employee networks to work collaboratively on projects and programs and to identify areas.

PSES: Public Service Employee Survey – an anonymous government-wide annual survey that assesses various areas of work life

TAC: Technology Accessibility Centre – an internal NRCan resource centre that provides workstation assessments for employees

Annex

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Collective leadership – The management and success of the NAAP will depend primarily on the individual and group leadership exercised throughout the department. We encourage all of NRCan and its stakeholders and partners to challenge the status quo, innovate and take calculated risks, which can have meaningful impacts.
- Inclusive and accessible by design – We need to integrate user experience in the design and implementation of policies, programs and practices.
- Employee engagement – We need to engage with employees with disabilities, regardless of network membership (affiliation), through co-development, collaboration and consultation on policies, programs, practices and service delivery. This engagement policy is in line with the strategy’s principle of Nothing Without Us.

NRCAN AT A GLANCE

The inaugural NAAP is an opportunity for the department to take stock of successes, identify areas of improvement in collaboration with people with disabilities, and align with the various emerging public service priorities.

NRCan is a science-based department of approximately 4,800 full-time employees. The scientific and technical areas are the largest occupational group in NRCan at the time of publication.

We are committed to improving the quality of life of Canadians by ensuring we develop the country’s abundant natural resources sustainably, competitively and inclusively. Because of our mandate, much of NRCan’s workforce is dispersed regionally. Approximately half our employees work outside of the National Capital Region, and many work in remote locations such as the Arctic to conduct their research.





In recent years, NRCan has seen its workforce grow substantially. As with any organization, rapid growth comes with unique challenges, such as streamlined information and effective knowledge transfer. Additionally, although the COVID-19 pandemic created many new flexible employment opportunities, it also revealed many opportunities for improvement, such as the need for intentional inclusion and appropriate accommodation.

From a people management perspective, the largest impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was the acceleration of the movement toward flexibility in work locations.

Since March 2020, the federal public service has learned how to work productively from outside of the office. This change required investing in the technology infrastructure to enable large-scale remote work and resulted in a better understanding of the benefits and risks that flexibility in work location can create. In keeping with NRCan goals of connecting, collaborating, creating and growing our culture, we continue to promote flexibility by default as we navigate the Future of Work at NRCan.

According to the most recent PSES results, supervisors and colleagues are the most common sources of harassment across the federal public service. We recognize that this finding applies to NRCan as well. Employees with disabilities report a higher rate of harassment from those in a position of authority.

This point may be exacerbated by the fact that the most reported disabilities in NRCan's self-identification survey are those termed "invisible," such as learning disabilities and mental health concerns. These invisible disabilities are typically steeped in stigma and misunderstanding, which highlights the need for collective leadership and responsibility across all levels of the department in addressing these attitudinal barriers.

GOVERNANCE

Words without action are empty. NRCan wants to move beyond a culture of minimal compliance – of meeting just the minimum legislative requirements – so that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as their colleagues to thrive in their careers. To see meaningful change, we need to support each other and keep each other accountable for the roles and responsibilities presented in the following sections.

LEADERSHIP

AccessAbility Network

The NAAP would not be possible without the work and leadership of the NRCan AccessAbility Network. This employee network represents the voices and interests of people with disabilities within the department and emphasizes the “abilities” that their members bring, rather than emphasizing the “dis”abilities that some may use to define them.

The AccessAbility Network objectives are to:

- address issues of culture shift and accommodation
- create a workplace that fosters safe space, dignity and self-worth
- help people with disabilities realize their full potential as individuals, thrive in their careers and fully contribute to the objectives of NRCan
- advocate for meaningful realization of the NAAP to ensure it remains relevant to the experience of people with disabilities





Champion and Executive Allies

In early 2022, NRCan proudly introduced its Accessibility Champion and two Executive Allies, who are senior executives who act as a bridge between the AccessAbility Network and the rest of NRCan.

The Accessibility Champion and Executive Allies listen and learn about the needs of people with disabilities in the department, and they facilitate and normalize conversations around inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

The positions share a crucial role in leading this transformation at the executive and senior management level. These leaders know that NRCan's commitment to accessibility and the inclusion of people with different abilities is about making real, visible change through demonstrable actions.

Consequently, they actively:

- Advance accessibility issues and actively support the needs of people with disabilities at decision-making tables
- Make accessibility programs and initiatives visible
- Mobilize the department around accessibility-related topics
- Uphold the principles of collaborative development and being accessible by design

Office for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility

The Office for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (O-IDEA) is another key partner in our pursuit of accessibility.

Its establishment has allowed the department to have a more coordinated approach to matters concerning accessibility, specifically as it intersects with other initiatives for inclusion, diversity and equity. The previous name was the Office for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

O-IDEA initiated a departmental IDEA- advisory committee structure to bring sectors, pillar leads and employee networks together to make recommendations, exchange information and share best practices. The O-IDEA also coordinates information sharing about lessons learned and innovations in accessibility and works with sectors to advance their IDEA goals.

NRCan Accessibility Advisory Council

In addition, the department established the NAAC, which is the result of collaboration between the AccessAbility Network, the HRB and the Champion for Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

In the spirit of Nothing Without Us, the NAAC considers the experiences of people with disabilities as foundational in transforming workplaces to achieve accessibility. Members advise and support the oversight of NRCan's implementation of the strategy and build awareness to promote the adoption of accessibility best practices and standards within NRCan.

KEY PARTNERS

We need collective leadership and action to see greater accessibility, and this will, therefore, involve many stakeholders. We will call on various stakeholders and key partners to contribute to the NAAP commitments that affect their respective business lines.

One of the key partners for implementing the commitments across all priority areas is the Accommodation Centre of Expertise (ACE), which holds the following responsibilities:

- Provide guidance, tools, training and best practices to help and advise management on ways to work with employees and other stakeholders to resolve accommodation requests, particularly in complex situations
- Provide coaching for employees on how to have constructive conversations with their managers to resolve accommodation requests, particularly in complex situations
- Ensure that management applies a consistent approach in responding to duty to accommodate requests from employees





- Lead the business mapping exercises to develop a user-centric accommodation process with all partners and stakeholders
- Lead the voluntary adoption of the GC Accessibility passport
- The ACE has a distinctive role that fills a previously identified gap. It will be relieving other partners of the advisory and mediation roles they have taken on that do not relate directly to their respective mandates. These other partners will maintain their mandates and will collaborate with other partners and stakeholders in their pursuit of accessibility in their respective areas of expertise.
- The other partners include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Technology Accessibility Centre (TAC)
 - Occupational Health and Safety team
 - Workplace Wellness team
 - other NRCan employee networks