

# Export Development Canada 3-Year Accessibility Plan (2023-2025)

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# General

## Introduction

Export Development Canada (EDC) is a financial Crown corporation dedicated to helping Canadian companies of all sizes grow and succeed on the world stage. Our vision is to help Canada regain its standing as a leader in international trade by 2030 and to help build a better and stronger economic future for all Canadians.

FinDev Canada, a subsidiary of EDC, is a Canadian development finance institution with the mandate to support inclusive private sector growth and sustainability in developing markets. Visit FinDev Canada's [website](#) to learn more about their accessibility plan.

## Accessibility statement

EDC is committed to creating accessible, inclusive, and equitable experiences for our customers, employees, and Canadians, specifically people with disabilities.

EDC activities are underway to support people with disabilities:

- Working with our partners to identify and remove barriers to accessibility to support the growth and success of Canadian business exporters

- Collaborating across EDC and engaging with people with disabilities to apply an accessibility lens to our programs, services, and products
- Increasing our community engagement to ensure Canadians with disabilities have meaningful opportunities to succeed

Our accessibility plan builds a foundation for accessibility across the organization over the next three years. This foundational plan:

- Describes our actions to identify, prevent, and remove barriers to accessibility for the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA) section 5 areas
- Is guided by consultations with people with disabilities, accessibility and disability partners, customers, and employees
- Contributes to advancing our corporate values, and inclusion, diversity & equity goals

## **Alternate Formats**

You can request alternate formats of our accessibility plan, progress report or description of feedback processes in the following formats:

- Print – 15 days after your request is received
- Large print – 15 days after your request is received
- Braille – 45 days after your request is received
- Audio – 45 days after your request is received

## Feedback Process and Contact Information

EDC welcomes your comments and feedback on this plan, our progress report, feedback process, or any other inquiries you may have. Similarly, we welcome feedback on barriers you may have encountered when visiting our workplaces or website, or during the implementation of our accessibility plan. To submit feedback, request a copy of our progress report or accessibility plan in any of the above-mentioned formats, or for a description of our feedback processes, you can submit a request using any of the communication channels below:

- By email at [Accessible@edc.ca](mailto:Accessible@edc.ca)
- Online, by using the [accessibility feedback form](#).
- By telephone: 1-800-229-0575
- Social media: [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#)
- In person or by mail:

Accessibility Lead

Export Development Canada

150 Slater Street,

Ottawa, ON, K1A 1K3

Canada

Our Accessibility Lead will acknowledge receipt of your feedback and follow up with you directly, unless it was

received anonymously. We may address some feedback right away or use it to develop our accessibility plans.

We hope to hear from you.

## **Areas described under section 5 of the ACA**

We are applying accessibility to our services, programs, and products to remove barriers for people with disabilities and improve our customer and employee experience.

### **Barriers**

Consultations to inform our 3-year accessibility plan identified barriers to accessibility and proposed actions we could take to prevent or remove these barriers. The annex lists accessibility barriers organized by ACA section 5 areas.

### **Actions**

For the 7 ACA section 5 areas, we are meaningfully engaging people with disabilities and taking a collaborative, multi-year approach within teams to deliver accessible, inclusive, and usable services, programs, and products for all.

### **Employment**

We apply an accessibility, inclusion, diversity, and equity lens at all stages of the employment life cycle to attract and retain employees with disabilities and build an inclusive work culture.

## **Actions:**

1. Benchmark against ACA standards for employment.
  - Standard on Accessible Employment is targeted for publication in 2023.
2. Partner with disability employment partners and hiring teams to attract, engage, enable, and retain employees with disabilities.
3. Increase employee awareness of our accommodation program and provide guidance to support employee accessibility requests.
4. Increase employee awareness of wellness and mental health services and provide guidance to leaders and employees to promote access to supports.

## **Built environment**

All our offices are leased spaces. We design our spaces with accessibility in mind to ensure equal access for employees and visitors with disabilities. Our health and safety information provides guidance for people with disabilities, including procedures to follow in case of emergency.

## **Actions:**

1. Benchmark against ACA standards published for built environment.
  - Standard on Accessibility of Outdoor Spaces targeted for publication in 2023.

- Standard on Accessible Emergency Egress and Model Standard on the Built Environment – Accessibility targeted for publication in 2024.
- 2. Complete an audit of our Head Office and develop an action plan to prioritize and implement relevant actions to our spaces as needed.
- 3. Work with our lessors to incorporate accessibility best practices for our leased spaces.
- 4. Increase employee and visitor awareness and adoption of emergency and safety procedures and available support when at EDC spaces, events, or meetings.

## **Information and communication technologies**

We are advancing our technology and digital capabilities to improve our customer and employee experience, and to help Canadian businesses grow and succeed.

### **Actions:**

1. Benchmark against ACA standards for ICT.
  - CAN-ASC-6.1 – Information and Communication Technology, based on the European harmonized standard, EN 301 549, is targeted for adoption in 2023.
2. Create an equal experience for our digital services and products for all users, including people with disabilities.

3. Use our digital platform, EDC.ca, to set the benchmark for accessibility for EDC's web-based experiences.
4. Develop an action plan and timeline to update or replace our technology and telephony that do not meet digital accessibility requirements.
5. Increase employee awareness and use of accessibility features embedded in our technology, platforms, and digital tools.

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

We use creative communications and channels to support our vision and mandate to help Canadian businesses grow and succeed on an international scale, and to inform, inspire, and engage our customers and employees.

### **Actions:**

1. Benchmark against ACA standards for communication.
  - Standard on Plain Language is targeted for publication in 2023.
2. Provide content, brand, and design expertise to embed accessibility into all corporate and internal communications.
3. Provide communications expertise for external and internal website redesign and updates to ensure equal access to information for people with disabilities.
4. Embed accessibility into corporate events and meetings and provide guidance to planners and hosts

for non-corporate events and meetings led by employees or teams.

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

Our Procurement initiatives focus on improving the availability of accessible goods, services and facilities, and the accessibility of Procurement policies, programs, guidelines, and processes.

### **Actions:**

1. Benchmark against ACA standards for procurement.
  - No standards for procurement are currently targeted for publication.
2. Establish accessibility expectations of suppliers in our Supplier Code of Conduct.
3. Incorporate accessibility requirements in our Procurement Policy and Guidelines, including public competitive procurement processes for suppliers.
4. Enhance our Supplier Diversity Program to increase participation of businesses owned by people with disabilities.

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

The Accessibility lead is partnering with the ACA working group, our partners, and representatives across EDC, including people with disabilities, to embed accessibility into daily practices.

## **Actions:**

1. Benchmark against ACA standards for design and delivery of services and programs.
  - No ACA standards for design and delivery of services and programs currently targeted for publication.
2. Establish ad hoc advisory groups to help scale, embed, and sustain accessibility within teams.
3. Build a culture where universal design and the user experience guide the design and delivery of our services, programs, and products.
4. Partner with teams to meaningfully engage people with disabilities at all phases of the design and delivery lifecycle of our services, programs, and products.
5. Use EDC's design system to support digital accessibility goals for the design and delivery of our services, programs, and products.

## **Transportation**

We are committed to creating a barrier-free experience for employees and visitors with disabilities when accessing our spaces or participating in EDC-hosted events or meetings.

## **Actions:**

1. Benchmark against ACA standards for transportation.
  - No ACA standards for transportation are currently targeted for publication.

2. Provide accessible travel information in relevant communications to help people with disabilities plan their trip to EDC-hosted events or meetings.

## **Consultations**

We held internal and external consultations through August and September to gather accessibility plan feedback to inform our 3-year accessibility plan.

- Consultations ranged from an anonymous survey and focus groups to 1-on-1 meetings with program teams, employees, and external suppliers and partners.
- The annex provides a summary of accessibility barriers shared by consultation participants.

## **Internal consultations**

We invited employees to share their feedback via an anonymous online survey and 6 virtual focus groups, including one with the DiversAbility employee resource group, a key partner for accessibility at EDC whose members include employees with disabilities and allies.

- We invited employees to share barriers they experienced or observed and to propose EDC actions to create accessible and inclusive experiences for all.
- We created a safe space to share comments; Employees were not asked, nor expected, to self-identify with a disability. We also reminded participants to respect privacy and confidentiality of information others shared.

- 94 employees took part in these consultation sessions, with over 50% voluntarily identifying as having one or more disabilities.

In addition to the targeted consultations, we met with 123 employees at 52 meetings to discuss accessibility at EDC. During these meetings, teams and individuals leading initiatives provided information on:

- Accessibility barriers people with disabilities experience when interacting with EDC services, programs, or products.
- Actions their teams are taking, or will take, to increase accessibility and inclusion for people with disabilities.
- Challenges their teams meet when applying accessibility to their work, namely, decreased awareness of accessibility best practices to support inclusive experiences for customers and colleagues.

## **External consultations**

We consulted with external partners to inform our 3-year accessibility plan, and to identify best practices and evidence-based resources to support awareness and training goals:

- Suppliers, including Accenture, Microsoft, and Canada Life
- Disability partners, including Adaptability Canada, Inclusive Workplace and Supply Council of Canada, and the Employment Accessibility Resource Network

- Crown Corporation networks for Diversity and Inclusion, Accessibility, Learning, Procurement

## **Other inputs**

In addition to the consultation activities, we are using customer satisfaction surveys, employee engagement surveys, and self-identification information to inform our plan and to prioritize accessibility activities.

## **Awareness and training**

We will collaborate with representatives from Learning, Communications, Wellness and Accommodations, the DiversAbility Employee Resource Group, and employees with disabilities, to design and deliver awareness and training activities to advance accessibility and disability inclusion at EDC.

### **Awareness and training activities will include:**

- Resources, including job aids and checklists, in multiple accessible formats
- Awareness events, information sessions, demonstrations, and drop-in sessions
- General training on various disability inclusion and accessibility topics
- Targeted training to upskill and build internal capacity to apply accessibility in our daily work.

Examples of roles requiring targeted training include content creators and leads, designers and developers, product owners, legal and procurement teams, talent acquisition team, and hiring managers, and customer-facing teams.

## **Budget and resource allocation**

We are committed to making investments to enhance accessibility at EDC. We are allocating budget and resources to support accessibility plan activities in each of the 7 ACA section 5 areas.

Investments include targeted training, partnerships with disability groups, consultations and audits, and accessibility and usability testing.

## **Annex – Accessibility barriers**

Summary of accessibility barriers shared with EDC during consultations organized by ACA section 5 area:

### **Employment**

- Employees and visitors have decreased awareness of the accommodations and support they can access when in EDC spaces or when attending EDC-hosted events or meetings.
- A leader or colleague questions the capabilities of people with disabilities, which can negatively impact hiring decisions, job assignments, or promotions.

- An employee avoids sharing information about their disability or requesting accommodations due to stigma from a leader or colleague.

## **Built environment**

- Office space or meeting room elements such as heavy sliding doors or poorly positioned meeting cameras create unintended barriers for people with disabilities.
- Hybrid office redesign may disadvantage employees who need quiet workspaces, or customized desks to support accommodation requirements.
- Employees and visitors are not aware of our safety and emergency procedures.

## **Information and communication technology**

- Our technology often does not meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities who use assistive technology.
- Technology suppliers may be unaware of federal accessibility requirements or have no immediate plans to update their solution to include accessibility features.
- Our teams may not currently have the knowledge or skillset required to design barrier-free experiences for people who use assistive technology.
- Employees have decreased awareness of accessibility best practices and features to support

inclusive experiences for our customers and colleagues.

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

- Our communications may only be available in one format, or in inaccessible formats.
- Information, from our policies and guidelines to our services and support for customers and employees, is difficult to find, access, and understand.
- Our communications, including terminology, language, and images we use, may not be inclusive of people with disabilities, preventing customers and employees from engaging with us.
- Our content leads are not familiar with how to make their content accessible.
- Meeting planners and hosts may design meeting communications and materials without considering accessibility requirements to support equal participation for all.

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

- Minimal information exists in the market on Accessible Procurement to help guide our work in this area.
- Internal partners may not consider accessibility criteria and features when procuring goods, services, and facilities.

- Procurement policies, programs, guidelines, and processes may create unintended barriers for people with disabilities.

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

- Employees who interact directly with customers may not know how to communicate effectively with people with disabilities and for different disability types.
- Teams may not meaningfully engage people with disabilities in the design and delivery of our services, programs, or products.
- Employees make assumptions or decisions about the accommodations a person may need, rather than asking them directly about their requirements.
- Team activities, including team-building or social events, are often designed for people without disabilities, and may unintentionally exclude participation by peers with disabilities.

## **Transportation**

- We do not always share information on accessible travel with employees or visitors to our spaces or events and meetings we host.
- Our travel and hospitality suppliers may not offer options for employees requiring accessible transportation or accommodations.

## Description of feedback processes

We welcome your feedback to improve the accessibility of our services, programs, and products.

- Use any of the ways EDC communicates with the public to share feedback with our Accessibility lead.
- Include your contact information to receive an acknowledgement of receipt, or to request alternate formats of our plan or description of feedback processes.
- You can also share feedback anonymously.

## Ways to share accessibility feedback

- **Online:** [Accessibility feedback form](#)
- **Email:** [Accessible@edc.ca](mailto:Accessible@edc.ca)
- **In Person or Mail:** 150 Slater Street, Ottawa ON Canada, K1A 1K3
- **Social Media:** [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#)
- **Phone:** 1-800-229-0575

Canadians who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired can register with Canada VRS, a free service, to access and make telephone calls. [Canada VRS](#) callers are connected to a sign language interpreter who provides real time interpretation for the call.

## How we use and safeguard your information

- Accessibility feedback submitted through our communication channels is shared with our Accessibility lead.
- Your feedback may be shared as required with other teams supporting accessibility at EDC to help respond to feedback and to support accessibility activities.
- When feedback includes contact information, we will respond using the same communication method in which feedback was shared.
- Other than anonymous feedback, we will acknowledge receipt of all feedback within five (5) business days.
- Any personal information shared with EDC is used and safeguarded per EDC's [Privacy Notice](#).
- When sharing feedback, avoid sharing sensitive personal information, such as medical information or a social insurance number.
- Accessibility feedback shared with EDC will be summarized in yearly reports and retained per ACA reporting and record keeping requirements.