



National
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2024 Defence Team Accessibility Plan Progress Report

December 2024

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Foreword

The enclosed 2024 Defence Team Accessibility Plan Progress Report summarizes the progress made following the implementation of the 2022 Defence Team Corrective Accessibility Plan. The 2022 Corrective Accessibility Plan was published in September 2024 following feedback and guidance received by the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) on the Defence Team's initial plan published in December 2022. A subsequent 2025-2027 Defence Team Accessibility Plan will be developed and implemented in an iterative process that will be based on the results of the 2024 Defence Team Accessibility Plan Progress Report.

The development of the enclosed progress report provides an opportunity to assess the Defence Team's progress and commitment to creating a more accessible and disability inclusive organization. The Defence team acknowledges that there is still much work to be done in creating a barrier-free workplace and culture that is fully inclusive and accessible. The Defence Team, through this progress report, signals its ongoing commitment to accessibility and the rights of persons with disabilities that will require continued concrete, measurable and sustainable action from all areas of the Defence Team in the years to come.

General

Feedback Process Description

Designated person to receive feedback

The Director Inclusion, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) is designated to receive accessibility-related feedback from the public, employees of DND, and members of the CAF on behalf of the Defence Team and is the Executive responsible for the Defence Team accessibility program.

Feedback you can submit

Feedback on this accessibility plan or any barriers experienced when interacting with Defence Team services, programs, policies, practices, websites, plans and reports, or offices can be submitted through the feedback process.

How we will use your feedback

Your feedback will be used to improve accessibility at DND and the CAF. Feedback may be addressed right away or be used to advance future accessibility plans and improve overall accessibility for the Defence Team.

All feedback will be taken seriously and treated in a way that respects the privacy and confidentiality of individuals who submit feedback. Feedback received will be reflected in future accessibility plans and progress reports and will not be associated with an

individual's name. Any personal information associated with the feedback will only be shared with Defence Team employees directly involved in improving accessibility at DND and the CAF. If you wish to remain anonymous, you do not have to include your name when submitting your feedback.

How to submit feedback

There are various ways to submit feedback. Feedback can be submitted either with an identified contact or anonymously. Feedback received will be acknowledged in the same way it was received unless the feedback is received anonymously.

- **Online:** through the online [Defence Team Accessibility Feedback and Request Form](#)
- **By email:** at [DND Accessibility-Accessibilité MDN@forces.gc.ca](mailto:MDN@forces.gc.ca)
- [Video Relay Service](#) available in American Sign Language (ASL) or langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ)
- **By mail:**
Attn: Defence Team Accessibility Office – Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
National Defence Headquarters (Carling Campus)
60 Moodie Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K2

Alternate formats

To request a copy of the Defence Team Accessibility Plan or Feedback Process in an alternate format, please contact the Defence Team using the contact information listed above.

The following formats are available on demand.

- Large print (larger, clearer font).
- Braille (a system of raised dots that blind or visually impaired people can read with their fingers).
- Audio format (recording of someone reading the text aloud).
- Electronic formats compatible with adapted technology.

The Defence Team: Who We Are & What We Do

DND supports the CAF who serve on the sea, on land, and in the air with the Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command to defend Canadians' interests at home and abroad.

DND and the CAF have complementary roles to play in providing advice and support to the Minister of National Defence. Together, this integrated civilian-military Defence Team works together to fulfill the Government of Canada's mission to defend Canadian interest and values and contribute to international peace and security.

Addressing accessibility in the DND/CAF context presents certain challenges due to the nature of the Defence Team, as it blends the public service with a military environment, which is governed under the Defence act and administered by a unique set of rules.

More information on the [Defence Team and its mandate](#) is available online.

The Accessible Canada Act

The [Accessible Canada Act](#) (ACA) came into force July 11, 2019 with the purpose of achieving a barrier-free Canada by January 1, 2040. The Act applies to all organizations under federal responsibility, including the CAF, and mandates a proactive and systemic approach to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities in seven specific priority areas:

- employment;
- built environment;
- information and communication technologies;
- communication;
- the procurement of goods, services and facilities;
- the design and delivery of programs and services; and
- transportation.

The ACA is to be implemented in recognition of, and in accordance with, the following principles:

- Everyone must be treated with dignity.
- Everyone must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the life they are able and wish to have.
- Everyone must be able to participate fully and equally in society.
- Everyone must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire.
- Laws, policies, programs, services, and structures must consider the ways that different kinds of barriers and discrimination intersect.
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services, and structures.
- Accessibility standards and regulations must be made with the goal of achieving the highest level of accessibility.

The ACA requires that all federal departments and agencies:

- **Prepare and publish an accessibility plan every three years:**

- Develop accessibility plans to identify, remove and prevent barriers in the priority areas in their policies, programs, practices, and services.
- Update plans every 3 years.
- Consult with people with disabilities when creating and updating plans.
- **Establish and publish a feedback process:**
 - Establish a feedback process to receive and address feedback on plans and accessibility barriers.
- **Prepare and publish annual progress reports on plan implementation:**
 - Develop regular progress reports in the years between our updated accessibility plans that describe the actions the organization has taken to implement their accessibility plans.
 - Include information on feedback received and how the organization took the feedback into consideration.
 - Consult with people with disabilities when preparing their reports.

A [summary of the Accessible Canada Act](#) is available online.

Accessible Canada Act Definitions

accessibility

The degree to which a product, service, program or environment can be accessed or used by all.

accommodation

Any change in the work environment that allows a person with functional limitations to do their job. Accommodations can be temporary, periodic or long-term.

barrier

Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological, attitudinal or based on information or communications. They can also be the result of a policy or practice.

disability

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

Universality of Service

The principle of Universality of Service (U of S) mandates CAF members to perform any required function “at all times and under any circumstances.” Those members who incur

injuries or develop illnesses that permanently preclude them from doing so are released from the CAF under this principle. The U of S principle is an important enabler for the CAF allowing it to meet its operational obligations and is expressly recognized in the [Canadian Human Rights Act](#) (CHRA) and the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA). It has also been recognized by the courts. It is fundamental in enabling the CAF to also meet Canada's Defence Policy objectives and the CAF's operational requirements while simultaneously respecting Canada's laws.

At its core, the U of S principle holds that all CAF members possess the same baseline level of capability, regardless of environmental service, rank, or occupation to perform general military duties and common defence and security duties, not just the duties of their military occupation or occupation specification. Its related minimum operational standards ([DAOD 5023 series](#)) support this.

While the ACA applies to both DND and the CAF, given the unique nature of its operations, the CAF will take into account the operational requirements of the institution in determining the limits of any accommodation. This overlap in direction creates complexities in the application of the ACA within the Defence Team. Moving forward, the CAF is committed to reviewing and modernizing its internal policies, including but not limited to U of S policy and standards, to continue striving for better alignment between the DND and the CAF and response to the evolution of the CAF's roles and operations and to consider developments in Canadian Human Rights law (i.e., the ACA, CHRA, [Employment Equity Act](#), etc.) while balancing considerations for operational impacts.

Consultations

The Defence Team recognizes that addressing barriers in a meaningful, impactful, and lasting way involves ongoing and committed consultation with persons with disabilities. To ensure this is possible, the Defence Team is currently reviewing its approach to consultations to build on its current consultative activities. Examples of considerations include the following:

- How future engagements can incorporate more of an intersectional lens; and
- How balance of engaging early in the process as well as throughout the process can be realized without placing additional burden on persons with disabilities due to over consultation.

Taking the time to reflect on these considerations will help ensure that the Defence Team remains agile in its efforts to remove barriers while also ensuring that planned activities and those underway remain relevant.

The barrier sections listed under each of the priority areas of the plan are informed by the following consultation mechanisms.

Annual Defence Team 2024 Accessibility Survey

In January 2024, the Defence Team launched the first version of its annual accessibility survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback on barriers to accessibility at DND and the CAF. The survey also provided an opportunity for the Defence Team to better understand the experiences of persons with disabilities in the workplace to make it more accessible and inclusive.

The survey was open to all employees of DND and members of the CAF, regardless of whether they self-identified as a person with a disability or not. Participants were encouraged to respond to any or all questions they felt comfortable answering.

Survey participation at a glance:

- ✓ 461 total participants.
- ✓ 71% of participants identified as a civilian DND employee while 29% identified as a CAF member.
- ✓ 43% of participants identified as a person with a disability or disabilities while 6% preferred not to specify.

Barriers identified from the survey results were shared with the L3 Accessibility Working Group to help inform the identification of necessary activities and commitments to address the barriers.

As this was the first iteration of the Defence Team Accessibility Survey, various areas of improvement were identified and will be considered for future iterations. Due to the timing of the survey launch and the timelines of the development of the enclosed corrective plan, the survey was only open for two weeks, which affected uptake in survey participation. Future iterations of the survey will be open for longer to provide additional time for participants to complete the survey. In addition, supplementary survey methods in addition to the online form will be explored moving forward to ensure greater opportunity of participation for CAF members whose work environment may not be suitable for participation in online surveys. The next iteration of the Defence Team Accessibility Survey will inform the development of the 2025-2027 Defence Team Accessibility Plan.

Defence Advisory Groups

Defence Advisory Groups (DAGs) are employment equity advisory groups comprised of volunteer serving CAF members and DND public service employees. DAGs provide advice and recommendations to Defence Team leadership and play a role in identifying systemic employment equity barriers.

The National and Local co-chairs of the Defence Advisory Group for Persons with Disabilities (DAGPWD) were consulted on the barriers identified through the 2024 Defence Team Accessibility Survey. The consultation took place in person during the DAGPWD annual National Executive Meeting in March 2024.

Top themes of barriers that emerged from the DAGPWD consultation:

- ✓ Attitudes
- ✓ Accommodations
- ✓ Self-identification
- ✓ Hiring and retention
- ✓ Accessible office environments and Bases and Wings

A separate and subsequent consultation was held with the DAGPWD in November 2024 to ensure that barriers and solutions to remove the barriers aligned with feedback that was received during the initial consultation period. Feedback received influenced the enclosed progress report and serves as a basis for the development of the 2025-2027 Accessibility Plan.

To ensure that an intersectional perspective was included, consultation with co-chairs of the other Defence Advisory Groups (DAGs) – the Defence Indigenous Advisory Group, the Defence Visible Minority Advisory Group, the Defence Women’s Advisory Organization, and the Defence Team Pride Advisory Organization – was also undertaken as part of the development of the 2022 Corrective Accessibility Plan.

Defence Team L3 Accessibility Working Group

To support a further coordinated and integrated approach to accessibility within the Defence Team, a director-level (L3) accessibility working group was established in January 2024. The working group brings together key stakeholders from across the Defence Team and provides a forum to discuss matters of mutual interest as they relate to and intersect with accessibility. The working group also provides an opportunity for accessibility stakeholders to coordinate and leverage efforts across the Defence Team and, where possible, to ensure alignment.

The working group plays a key role in ensuring sustained attention to the requirements and implementation of the ACA in the Defence Team. The 2024 working group met bi-weekly between January 2024 and April 2024 on the following objectives:

- Discussing and identifying known and potential barriers to accessibility and corresponding actions.
- Discussing supporting activities to remove barriers to accessibility.
- Discussing an approach to an Accessibility performance measurement strategy
- Raising known accessibility concerns and communicating linkages with other discussions and/or initiatives related to accessibility.

The barriers that were identified through consultation on the 2023 Progress report, the 2024 Defence Team Accessibility Survey and the 2024 consultation with the DAGPWD were presented to the working group. From that information, each priority area lead was tasked to identify proposed actions that would address the barriers in their respective lines of efforts as well as identify performance indicators, which they worked on implementing from April 2024 onwards.

Government of Canada Best Practices in Accessibility

As part of its commitment to accessibility and continuous learning, the Defence Team Accessibility Office in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture and functional authority of the accessibility program, has leveraged advice from experts and leaders across the Government of Canada in the accessibility space.

Consulted organizations include, but are not limited to, the Office for Public Service Accessibility (OPSA), the Interdepartmental Accessibility Community of Practice co-chaired by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), the Office of the Deputy Minister Champion for Persons with Disabilities, the Accessibility Directorate at EDSC, and the Accessible Procurement Resource Centre at PSPC.

Each engagement with these organizations provided an opportunity for the Defence Team to share and acquire best practices and lessons learned, supporting a shared vision of a barrier-free and accessible workplace.

Our plan: priority areas, desired results, and activities

The 2024 Defence Team Accessibility Plan Progress Report communicates the Defence Teams' commitments and activities in support of removing accessibility barriers identified through consultations with persons with disabilities. This progress report follows the publication of the 2022 Corrective Accessibility Plan in September 2024 which allowed for a relatively short snapshot of the Defence Team's progress.

Despite the short reporting period, the Defence Team's efforts are focused on reporting progress on commitments and activities that address multiple barriers or barriers that have been identified as priorities. Please refer to Annex A for a complete list of barriers by priority area.

The 2024 Accessibility Plan Progress Report at a Glance:

- ✓ **8 priority areas**
- ✓ **18 desired results**
- ✓ **27 activities that will help achieve the desired results**
- ✓ **30 indicators**

Please refer to Annex B for a complete list of activities and their status updates for 2024.

1. Culture

The Culture priority area is led by the Defence Team Accessibility Office in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC). The focus of efforts in this area is on changing the workplace culture at the Defence Team to address the attitudinal barriers that exist and that prevent the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

The work undertaken to shift the current culture of accessibility will be foundational to the Defence Team being successful not only in the culture space moving forward, but as well as with efforts under other priority areas. Culture transformation will allow the Defence Team to embrace and understand the importance of prioritizing and working towards a barrier-free workplace.

As a first step towards culture transformation, the activities identified in the 2022 Corrective Defence Team Accessibility Plan that are outlined below focus on awareness and learning about accessibility and disability inclusion. These activities were established with the goal to help build and enable people to adopt a “yes by default” approach to accessibility, while proactively and systematically building accessibility into processes from the start.

In addition to the activities outlined below, and in advance of the more complex work that remains to be done in the overarching barrier removal space, the Defence Team will continue to implement and leverage the Defence Team Culture Evolution Strategy. The strategy aims to align, inform, coordinate, and enable culture evolution efforts across the organization, providing an opportunity to ensure that accessibility needs and considerations are fully and proactively integrated into all levels of the organization.

Barriers identified through consultation

- Experiences of stigma, exclusion, bullying and intimidation.
- Negative beliefs, assumptions and comments about neurodivergent people.
- Derogatory terms used to refer to people with disabilities.
- Negative attitudes towards and treatment of people with disabilities in the CAF.
- Experiences of stigma and exclusion of CAF members with disabilities, especially those with cognitive and learning disabilities, and being seen as unfit to serve.
- CAF Members with disabilities are harassed for being non-deployable.
- A shift back to social activities and team building being exclusively in-person without a digital alternative.

Newly identified barriers in 2024

- Town halls are being held exclusively in-person without hybrid alternatives or recordings made available to participants.
- There is an under socialization of accessibility, especially outside of the National Capital Region (NCR).
- The inconsistent policy application of allowing service dogs and service dogs in training on Bases and Wings was raised as a barrier.
- Uncertainty as to how the *Accessible Canada Act* applies to the Canadian Armed Forces.
- Uncertainty as to how the *Accessible Canada Act* applies to the Canadian Armed Forces in the context of housing for military members and their families living on bases.

Desired result:

Greater awareness of and learning opportunities about persons with disabilities, accessibility, and barriers.

Activities

Activity 1.1.

Develop and deliver annual programming and communications for National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support:** Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Programming is delivered (yes/no)
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative Dataset

Performance Indicator Result:

The Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO), with support from Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs (ADM(PA)), successfully delivered programming and communications for National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) and International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

Activity Status Update:

The programming launched for NAAW included the publishing of an events calendar. The calendar spotlighted events taking place across the federal public service, highlighted various workplaces resources related to accessibility and supporting persons with disabilities in the workplace, featured daily challenges for individuals and teams, and recommended accessibility-related content in the media (including content that was appropriate for all ages to support continued learning outside the workplace). An article recognizing NAAW and its importance was also distributed to all Defence Team members, which encouraged Defence Team members to get involved in activities throughout the week.

IDPD was recognized with special events under the theme of “Debunking myths – highlighting systemic and attitudinal barriers in the Defence Team”. Events, which included a panel discussion and virtual kiosk fair, were designed to break down barriers, challenge assumptions and attitudes, and encourage Defence Team members to take action in creating a more disability inclusive and accessible workplace. The communications in support of IDPD also included a website, a promotional campaign on Bases and Wings to reach Defence Team members occupying non-traditional office jobs, and a joint message from the Co-Champions for Persons with Disabilities.

Additional Defence Team Efforts:

In addition to activities led by the pillar lead, Level 1 (L1) organizations, including Assistant Deputy Minister Policy (ADM(Pol)), organized communications and educational opportunities in recognition of IDPD. Activities including communications to all ADM(Pol) members to amplify and highlight the importance of IDPD and promote the importance of accessibility in the workplace. L1 specific learning session led by the ADM(Pol) Intersectional Advisor with the aim to better understanding disabilities and promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities within the workplace were also held.

Activity 1.2.

Develop and implement a communications strategy for the Defence Team Accessibility Plan, as well as products to raise awareness of accessibility and disability inclusion.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support:** Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Accessibility Communications Plan is developed
- ✓ **Data Source:** Completed yes or no

Performance Indicator Result:

The Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO), with support from Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs (ADM(PA)), developed and implemented an accessibility communications strategy for the Defence Team to raise awareness of accessibility and disability inclusion.

Activity Status Update:

The communication strategy included Defence Team-wide articles that were distributed via email and published in the weekly Defence Teams News as well as adjacent programming. Implementation of the strategy involved delivering communications and programming on topics such as but not limited to: Autism Awareness Month, the Defence Team feedback process and survey for barrier identification, National AccessAbility Week, launch of the Corrective 2022 Defence Team Accessibility Plan, Public Service Neurodiversity Week (PSNW) 2024, and International Day for Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) 2024. A public Defence Team accessibility webpage on Canada.ca was also developed. Implementation of the webpage is marked for 2025.

Additional Defence Team Efforts:

Accessibility was also made a primary focus on Assistant Deputy Minister Policy (ADM(Pol)) Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Multi-Year Strategy to

ensure that disability inclusion is a key priority within the Level 1 organization. Accessibility was built into ADM(Pol)'s comprehensive EDIA as an effort to create a more inclusive environment and foster a culture of awareness around disability and the importance of accessible practices.

Activity 1.3.

Develop and implement an accessibility awareness campaign.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support:** Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of awareness campaign presentations and products
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

Performance Indicator Result:

The Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO), with support from Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs (ADM(PA)), developed and implemented an accessibility awareness campaign. The awareness campaign included a total of 31 presentations with individualized briefing products.

Activity Status Update:

The Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO) and the Director Inclusion (DI) led various accessibility awareness sessions throughout 2024. Sessions targeted various groups and levels of the Defence Team, including but not limited to senior leadership tables, Defence Team-wide and Level 1 organization townhalls, CAF members on Bases and Wings, internal accessibility communities, as well as manager communities. Session topics included systemic accessibility barriers, attitudinal barriers, culture, the accessibility feedback process, Return to Office (RTO) in the context of accessibility, accommodations, and accessibility at the Defence Team more broadly.

In addition to internal sessions, the DTAO and DI were approached by external agencies and departments to speak to accessibility and the vision for accessibility in the Defence Team context.

Due to the high demand of sessions, the awareness campaign was more untargeted than initially envisioned. Due to this, gaps were identified in the outreach that was done. The requests for sessions across the Defence Team and externally demonstrated and the engagement with the topics during the session validated the need for and enthusiasm for this type of outreach. As such, the DTAO will be taking this as a learning opportunity moving forward and will be planning a new and targeted campaign in the coming year.

2. Employment

The Employment priority area is co-led by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources-Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ) for public service employees and Chief Military Personnel (CMP) for CAF members. An additional supporting organization is the CAF Employment Equity team within Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) who works closely with CMP on matters related to CAF employment.

In alignment with the evolution of the CAF's roles, operations, and culture, the 2022 Corrective Defence Team Accessibility Plan marked the first occasion that CAF employment accessibility barriers and commitments were defined through the reporting process. Thus, this is the first annual report on the progress of identified CAF-specific employment barriers. This shift recognizes the Universality of Service as a foundational principle of the CAF while responding to the Defence Team's prior commitments to review and clarify points of overlap with Universality of Service and the *Accessible Canada Act* to ensure a balanced and consistent application.

Focus on the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers in the employment space is fundamental to the experiences of persons with disabilities, who remain underrepresented in the public service workforce and CAF. The commitments and activities outlined below will help ensure that employees and CAF members have access to safe, respectful, supportive, and nondiscriminatory workplaces and work opportunities.

Workforce: Department of National Defence (DND) Public Service Workforce

The Department of National Defence (DND) remains committed to investing in and supporting its workforce, a commitment underscored through [Canada's Defence Policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged \(SSE\)](#).

Based on 2023 self-identification representation data, the DND Public Service Workforce is just over 30,000 strong, employed at Ottawa Headquarters and on Bases and Wings across Canada in each province and territory, with the exception for Nunavut, and overseas. Public Service employees are employed in diverse environments from kitchens to cubicles to shop floors.

- DND Public Service Workforce: 30 996
- 41% work in the National Capital Region, while 59% work in the regions.
- Workforce Representation:
 - Women: 43%
 - Members of Visible Minorities: 11%
 - Persons with Disabilities: 5%
 - Indigenous Peoples: 3%
- Top Classification Groups:
 - Administrative Services (AS): 20%
 - Clerical and Regulatory (CR): 10%
 - Information Technology (IT): 8%

- General Labour and Trades (GL): 8%
- General Services (GS): 7%

Barriers identified through consultation

- Stigma and exclusion identified in career advancement and promotion opportunities.
- Self-identifying as a person with a disability in hiring pools and losing out on employment opportunities.
- No proactive technical assistance was offered or provided during the onboarding process to employees who self-identify with a disability and requiring additional assistance.
- Gap in considerations for the intersection of disability and recruitment of Indigenous applicants.
- The accommodations process was identified as a barrier.
- Managers not being approachable regarding accommodation requests or discussions about accessibility, especially pertaining to discussions about mental health.
- The spirit and intent of the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport is not honoured in accommodations processes.
- Government of Canada Accessibility Passport solutions are not supported, despite it being followed by previous employers.
- Long wait times to receive response and support from the Office of Disability Management (ODM).
- The return to the office presents barriers for many persons with disabilities.

Newly identified barriers in 2024

- Inefficient allocation of time and funds being put towards language training causes stress, overtime, and insufficient time for learning for some persons with disabilities.
- Second language training, as it related to the services rendered by external organizations and the lack of accommodation available, is a barrier for some persons with disabilities.
- Barriers to participation in training provided through the Defence Learning Network (DLN) were identified, including the lack of closed captioning.
- Medical proof of disabilities continues to be requested in support of accommodation requests, despite the implementation of the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport.
- Official travel policies and processes are not fully accessible and do not always prioritize the need for accommodations.

Desired results (DND Public Service Workforce)

Human resources' practices for civilians are accessible and inclusive so that persons with disabilities are supported.

There is an increase in the recruitment, retention, and promotion of persons with disabilities.

Employees have timely access to workplace accommodation.

Activities (DND Public Service Workforce)

Activity 2.1.

Set and report on annual hiring, inclusion, and promotion goals for EE groups, including persons with disabilities.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources – Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief Professional Conduct and Culture, All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Fiscal Year 2025-26, ongoing thereafter
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** Hiring and promotion rates
- ✓ **Data Source 1:** National staffing dataset
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** Inclusion rating
- ✓ **Data Source 2:** CPCC inclusion dataset

Performance Indicator Results:

Due to the timeline for completion of this activity, indicator results are not available for the 2024 progress reporting period. Additional contextualizing information is provided in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

In alignment with the Government of Canada's implementation of the ["Nothing Without Us": An Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service](#), the Department of National Defence (DND) is committed to improving workforce representation of persons with disabilities. Goals for the hiring and promotion of persons with disabilities will be set and included in the proposed 2024-2027 Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) Plan for the Public Service workforce. ADM(HR-Civ) is also supporting L1s in meeting their hiring goals by proactively launching targeted staffing processes for employment equity groups. Additionally, ADM(HR-Civ) is leading a working group to develop and propose inclusion goals for the public service workforce.

It is now a mandatory requirement that all Statement of Merit Criteria (SOMC) for DND include the following statement under the Organization Needs section: "In support of achieving a diversified workforce, consideration may be given to candidates self-identifying as belonging to one of the following Employment Equity groups: Indigenous peoples, Persons with a Disability, Visible Minorities, and Women."

Additional Defence Team Efforts:

There are additional supportive employment practices in Level 1 (L1) organizations across the Defence Team in support of the hiring of persons with disabilities. For example, numerous L1 organizations reported that: statements of merit criteria (SOMC) proactively include wording that support a diverse Defence Team workforce and emphasis on giving consideration to persons with disabilities and candidates from other employment equity deserving groups; the use of targeted recruitment pools for persons with disability; the development and implementation of L1 organization-specific Employment Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) action plans with an emphasis on increasing representation of persons with disabilities within their L1 organization.

Specific examples in the hiring space include a partnership between Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) and ADM(HR-Civ) in September 2024 that saw the launch of a hiring process specifically for persons with disabilities. The intent was to create a pool of Defence Scientific Services (DS)-03 candidates and to hire 10 persons with disabilities.

Activity 2.2.

Conduct Intersectional and accessibility reviews of key employment systems to identify, eliminate, mitigate barriers (target areas: accommodations, grievances, official languages training, orientation, performance & talent management).

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources – Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** 2024-27
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** Completion of ADM (HR-Civ) Implementation Plan
- ✓ **Data Source 1:** Reporting to the Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) Subcommittee within ADM(HR-CIV)
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** Public Service Employee Survey (PSES) results for related questions (disaggregated by L1/EE group)
- ✓ **Data Source 2:** PSES

Performance Indicator Results:

Due to the timeline for completion of this activity, indicator results are not available for the 2024 progress reporting period. Additional contextualizing information is provided in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

ADM(HR-Civ) has begun work on the Employment Systems Review for the public service workforce, which is expected to be complete in 2026. The development of the 2024-2027 Employment Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) Implementation Plan is also currently underway. Results from the 2024 Public Service Employee Survey

(PSES), which is open until December 31, 2024, will be reviewed once information becomes available.

Activity 2.3.

Lead the implementation of the Accessibility Passport.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources – Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** FY 2024-25, sustainment thereafter
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Volume of passport-related questions to ADM(HR-Civ)
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

Performance Indicator Result:

The indicator result is not available for the 2024 progress reporting period since the volume of passport-related questions to ADM(HR-Civ) were not tracked. The timing of the publishing of the Corrective 2022 Defence Team Accessibility Plan in September 2024 and 2024 Progress Report created a complex reporting period. Additional contextualizing information is provided in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

The Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport was successfully implemented in Spring 2024. Timely execution of the implementation was ensured by Director, Workforce Programs and Services-Operations (DWPS-Ops), with subsequent operationalization led by the Office of Disability Management (ODM). To support the transition and sustainment thereafter, a dedicated resource from DWPS-Ops is working alongside ODM.

To support implementation of the Workplace Accessibility Passport, ADM(HR-Civ) collaborated and consulted with the Defence Advisory Group for Persons with Disabilities (DAGPWD) on the implementation of the plan to ensure an inclusive approach. ADM(HR-Civ) developed and implemented a thorough communications and engagement plan that included a dedicated information session for managers. Approximately 200 managers participated in the information session. While the department does not track the use of the Workplace Accessibility Passport, the ODM has promoted and supported the use of the passport as part of disability management practices and anecdotally reports some usage by clients.

Additional Defence Team Efforts:

In support of the implementation of the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport, Level 1 (L1) organizations across the Defence Team reported amplifying the announcement of and socializing the Accessibility Passport and encouraged employees and managers to attend information sessions.

Workforce: Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)

The CAF takes extraordinary measures to retain and develop its valued members wherever possible. The CAF continuously reviews its military personnel policies and programs to retain an operational, diverse, dedicated CAF membership, imbued with an ethical Profession of Arms culture. The CAF is committed to giving all members time and support to continue to fully contribute to the CAF and realize a productive and satisfying career of military service.

Barriers identified through consultation

- There is no CAF-specific solution to the GOC Accessibility Passport.
- Ableism creates stigma around and discrimination against CAF members with disabilities.
- CAF members with disabilities are harassed at times for non-deployment.
- Negative attitudes towards and treatment of people with disabilities in the CAF.
- Differences between CAF and civilian public service privacy of personal information policies are not well understood.
- No DAOD that outlines the operational requirements of the institution in determining the limits of any accommodation.

Note: The barriers identified under Employment priority area for the CAF are not attributable to one single CAF environment (i.e., Royal Canadian Navy, Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Air Force, and the Canada Special Operations Forces Command) and may not be representative across all environments.

Desired results (CAF)

Military Personnel practices for the Canadian Armed Forces are accessible and inclusive so that CAF members are supported and can contribute to the organization.

The operational requirements of the institution in determining the limits of any accommodation are better outlined and aligned with the evolution of the CAF's roles and operations and consider developments in Canadian Human Rights laws and policies.

Activities (CAF)

Activity 2.4.

Chief Professional Conduct and Culture will enable self-identification in order to set and report on representation for EE designated groups, including persons with disabilities.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** CAF Employment Equity, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)

- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2025
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Goals established for persons with disabilities EE designated group and reported alongside other EE designated groups.
- ✓ **Data Source:** Canadian Forces Employment Equity Database

Performance Indicator Result:

Due to the timeline for completion of this activity, the indicator result is not available for the 2024 progress reporting period. Additional contextualizing information is provided in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

The CAF is committed to employment equity with the goal of having a representative workforce and to achieve equitable participation by eliminating any disadvantage in employment experienced by employment equity designated groups. Self-identification is foundational to the CAF being able to set and report on representation for EE designated groups, including persons with disabilities, moving forward. Participation in self-identification is also the only way that information on representation in the CAF can be collected in a complete and accurate manner.

In 2024, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Employment Equity (EE) team, under Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC), commenced work in support of further enabling self-identification for the CAF. Although self-identification information is currently being collected in the CAF, ensuring the means of its collection, treatment, and storage and how it is treated with the highest degree of confidentiality and privacy was explored. As a first measure, an updated Information Technology (IT) solution system and tool that would help ensure that the collection of EE data could be done in a safe, secure, and digital way was discussed. This was a foundational step since ensuring that the solution and tool are separate from the current system and that CAF member privacy and their information is protected and used only for the intended collected purposes will support greater member confidence in the process and, as a result, participation in self-identification moving forward.

Work on the identification of an IT solution and tool will continue in 2025 along with establishing goals for persons with disabilities as an EE group and reporting results alongside other EE designated groups.

Activity 2.5.

Conduct reviews of new CAF policies, programs, and systems to ensure removal of accessibility barriers, as possible, per the *Accessible Canada Act*.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** CAF Employment Equity, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing – will be reported annually
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Completion of accessibility checklist

✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

Performance Indicator Result:

Due to the timeline for completion of this activity, the indicator result is not available for the 2024 progress reporting period. Additional contextualizing information is provided in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

The Defence Team accessibility checklist has been developed by the Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO) in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) and has been socialized with various groups and committees. The full and formal implementation of the checklist will take place at the start of 2025.

Once fully implemented, Chief of Military Personnel (CMP) is committed to applying the checklist when conducting reviews of new CAF policies, programs, and systems to ensure removal of accessibility barriers, as possible, per the *Accessible Canada Act*.

Currently, the endorsement of CMP policies, programs, and systems are required to undergo a Gender Based Analysis (GBA) Plus. The GBA Plus template that is used includes components directly related to ensuring that the policy accounts for accessibility, including identifying barriers for members, consulting with the Defence Advisory Group for Persons with Disabilities (DAGPWD), and ensuring that the policy itself and relating documents are accessible. In addition to the GBA Plus, CMP members are encouraged to reach out to their L1 representatives such as the Accommodations representative, Workplace Health and Safety representative, or Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion representatives for support in reviewing policies, programs, and systems or if they have identified accessibility barriers in their workplace.

CMP will continue to work with the DTAO and Director Inclusion in CPCC to leverage the accessibility checklist for CAF employment programs, policies and systems. Use of the accessibility checklist, in addition to GBA Plus reviews, will provide an opportunity for a more in-depth review of accessibility needs, as well as barrier identification, removal, and prevention.

Activity 2.6.

Conduct reviews of the Universality of Service (U of S) policy and standards to better align and respond to the evolution of the CAF's roles and operations, while considering developments in Canadian Human Rights law (i.e., the *Accessible Canada Act*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Employment Equity Act*, etc.)

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** A critical path and review schedule of U of S principle is established and agreed to by October 2024

✓ **Data Source:** Administrative Dataset

Performance Indicator Result:

Due to the timeline for completion of this activity, the indicator result is not available for the 2024 progress reporting period. Additional contextualizing information is provided in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

A review of minimum operational standards related to U of S with a view to ensuring the CAF's operational effectiveness was completed this past year. Major modifications to the Defence Advisory Order and Directive (DAOD) 5023 series, Universality of Service (U of S), is on track for publishing and implementation for April 1, 2025. CMP will work the Defence Team Accessibility Office and Director Inclusion in CPCC to discuss timelines associated with reviewing the U of S policy and standards to ensure that they better align and respond to the evolution of the CAF's roles and operations, while considering developments in Canadian Human Rights law (i.e., the *Accessible Canada Act*, the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Employment Equity Act*, etc.)

Activity 2.7.

Continued review of aptitude test to better align operational requirements and the limits of accommodation with the *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)* and *Employment Equity Act*.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Environmental Commands
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing – will be reported annually
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of additional applicants processed past the aptitude test
- ✓ **Data Source:** Canadian Forces Recruiting Information Management System (CFRIMS)

Performance Indicator Result:

The indicator result for Activity 2.7 is not available for the 2024 progress reporting period. The number of additional applicants processed past the aptitude test is unavailable for the 2024 progress reporting period due to changes to the Interim Suitability Testing Override Protocol (ISTOP). Additional contextualizing information is provided in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

Chief Military Personnel (CMP) continued its ongoing review of the aptitude test to better align operational requirements and the limits of accommodation with the

Accessible Canada Act (ACA) and *Employment Equity Act*. Specifically, the examination of pass rates on the aptitude test and the establishment of new norms for the aptitude test were completed.

As part of the ongoing test maintenance program, pass rates on the aptitude test over the past several years, with particular focus on comparing pre- and post-pandemic pass rates, were examined. Findings suggested a decline in pass rates post-pandemic, especially around the non-commissioned member (NCM) and officer percentile cutoffs, thereby increasing the number of applicants who would meet the minimum NCM and Officer cutoffs. Based on these findings, in April 2024, new norms were established and implemented.

The potential influence of the new norms on operational requirements to increase applicant intake could not be examined due to the Interim Suitability Testing Override Protocol which was put in place in December 2023. In addition, the complete removal of the aptitude test from the recruiting process, effective October 2024, will impede the continued review of the aptitude moving forward. As such, a new activity and indicator will be considered for the 2025 accessibility planning and reporting period.

3. Built Environment

The Built Environment priority area is led by the Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure and Environment – ADM(IE). Feedback from persons with disabilities has underscored the need to continue to focus efforts in this priority area since the built environment of Defence Team buildings, offices, facilities and workplaces poses day-to-day barriers that limit the full participation at work. In response, the Defence Team commits to continuing to proactively consider and address accessibility requirements to ensure that the Defence Team's built environment is proactively accessible by design.

Barriers as identified through consultation

- Buildings lack clear and accessible labelling and signage.
- The inaccessibility of stairs is compounded by a lack of elevators, ramps, and stairs lacking railings.
- Having to navigate long corridors, navigate confusing spaces and not being able to access parts of buildings.
- Non-automated doors were noted as a barrier to mobility.
- Insufficient or a complete lack of accessible washrooms was identified as a barrier.
- Lighting and, specifically, the inability to control lighting was identified as a barrier.
- Ergonomic issues, including uncomfortable furniture that increases pain and discomfort levels and does not allow participants to sit comfortably at their desk or in flex spaces was identified as a barrier.
- Recreational spaces, including break rooms, gyms, and pools were identified as not being accessible.

- The built environment of Bases and Wings is not accessible by design.
- Assistive technology, such as elevators, are often disabled on Bases and Wings.
- Common spaces on Bases and Wings are not designed with accessibility needs in mind.
- The number of accessible housing units on Bases and Wings is limited.
- The cost of accessible housing for members is greater.

Desired result

The Defence Team's built environment is enhanced, and employees, members, clients and visitors have access to barrier-free federally owned and leased buildings, offices, facilities and workplaces, including military Bases and Wings.

Activities

Activity 3.1.

Assess and improve the accessibility of the built environment within DND/CAF by conducting accessibility audits and assessing the results.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure and Environment – ADM(IE)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Timelines for specific studies and projects will be identified during assessment phase.
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of buildings audited
- ✓ **Data Source:** Consultant reports, IE Reporting and Integration System (IERIS)

Performance Indicator Result:

The indicator result for Activity 3.1 is not available for the 2024 progress reporting period. The activity relies on completion of Activity 3.2, which is in progress.

Activity Status Update:

As the Built Environment priority area, Assistant Deputy Minister Infrastructure and Environment (ADM(IE)) remains committed to assessing and improving the accessibility of the built environment within the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces. In 2024, no accessibility audits were undertaken due to the work needing to be sequenced with Activity 3.2, which is in progress. A planned timeline for the activity will be discussed and identified as part of 2025 accessibility planning and reporting activities.

Activity 3.2.

Continue to improve and develop documents related to accessibility in the built environment by:

- **(1) Continuing to ensure any new contracts involving the built environment have considered requirements for accessibility; and**
- **(2) Transitioning the current policy instruments related to accessibility to the new format (CETO, policy, directive, standard, guidelines).**
- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure and Environment – ADM(IE)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** The new Standard on Accessible and Inclusive Design (SAID) is forecasted to be published by Q2 2024.
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** Number of reported or recorded cases contract have not considered accessibility requirements, without cause or an approved minor variance.
- ✓ **Data Source 1:** Project information, administrative dataset
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** The Construction Engineering Technical Orders (CETO) is converted into a Directorate of Architecture and Engineering Services (DAES) Standard on Accessible and Inclusive Design. The DAES Standard is issued for use or not.
- ✓ **Data Source 2:** ES Policy Instrument Suite and published technical bulletins.

Performance Indicator Results:

Performance Indicator 1: ADM(IE) indicated that 0 reported or recorded cases have not considered accessibility requirements, either without cause or for reasons of an approved minor variance.

Performance Indicator 2: ADM(IE) reported that the Construction Engineering Technical Orders (CETO) is converted into a Directorate of Architecture and Engineering Services (DAES) Standard on Accessible and Inclusive Design, however, the work remains ongoing.

Activity Status Update:

The new Standard on Accessible and Inclusive Design (SAID) is not yet published. However, the content is mature enough for the architecture team to advise on the content of new projects regarding the improvements required. In the meantime, the former accessibility standards continue to be used.

ADM(IE) has also conducted in-depth consultations with various key stakeholders including the Defence Advisory Groups and internal infrastructure and environment players on the SAID. Although the consultations have taken longer than planned, the feedback received has enhanced the quality of the product. The release of the new standard is planned for the end of January 2025.

4. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services priority area is led by the Defence Team Accessibility Office in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC).

Through consultation with persons with disabilities, it has been emphasized that many of the current programs, services, policies, and processes place the burden on individuals with disabilities to identify solutions rather than a proactive application of accessibility considerations by service providers. Key to removing this barrier and creating a barrier-free Defence Team will be ensuring that, moving forward, all programs, services, policies, and processes are accessible by design and considered from the start. In addition, the feedback process will be critical to provide ways for barriers to be identified so that service providers can implement lasting solutions that remove and prevent further barriers.

Barriers identified through consultation

- Many of the current policies place the burden on individuals with disabilities to identify solutions rather than a proactive application of accessibility considerations by service providers.
- CAF medical services and gatekeeping in terms of testing of ADHD, neurodivergence, and mental illness identified as a barrier.
- Official language requirements and expectations for employees with disabilities is not accessible.

Desired results

The Defence Team is equipped to design and deliver programs, services, policies, and processes that are accessible to all, including persons with disabilities.

Accessibility is proactively and systematically built into programs, services, policies, and processes from the start.

Activities

Activity 4.1.

Make it easier for persons with disabilities to provide accessibility-related feedback on programs and services without having to submit a formal complaint.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Implementation of Formal Feedback Process
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

Performance Indicator Result:

The Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO) implemented a formal feedback process in September 2024.

Activity Status Update:

The Defence Team published its first iteration of its formal Accessibility Feedback Process in September 2024 through the publication of the Corrective 2022 Defence Team Accessibility Plan and subsequently through the enclosed progress report.

Key to the Defence Team Accessibility Feedback Process is the implementation of the [Defence Team Accessibility Feedback and Request Form](#), which was developed to submit and receive accessibility-related feedback and request accessible formats of documents and/or products, as well as support locating accessibility-related resources.

The Accessibility Feedback and Request Form is a public-facing web form that can be used by all Defence Team members, including employees of the Department of National Defence (DND) and members of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), CAF family members, contractors, visitors, and any individuals of the Canadian public. Feedback can be submitted anonymously or with personal contact information for additional follow-up on the feedback.

Feedback is welcomed on accessibility plans, progress reports, or any barriers experienced when interacting with DND and CAF services, programs, policies, practices, offices, Bases and Wings, or events. All feedback that is received is and will be used to improve accessibility at DND and the CAF. Through the implementation of the formal feedback process, the Defence Team can track barriers, proactively identify solutions, and help ensure that all Defence Team programs, services, policies, and processes are accessible by design.

Activity 4.2.

Strengthen the role of the Defence Team Accessibility Office for Accessible Client Service. This team will offer guidance on making services more accessible.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of consultations
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

Performance Indicator Result:

The Defence Team Accessibility Office led and participated in approximately ... consultations in 2024.

Activity Status Update:

The Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO) led and participated in numerous consultations, offering guidance on making services, programs, and policies more accessible at the Defence Team. Topics of consultations included but were not limited to built environment design, accommodations, return to office (RTO), inclusion goals, and Universality of Service.

Although the DTAO's input and support was highly sought, the office lacked sufficient resources to be able to respond to all requests for support. The DTAO was staffed to its initial complement in October 2024 and has been in a position to be able to respond to request for support and guidance.

Activity 4.3.

Add an accessibility and intersectional checklist to the suite of tools used to perform analysis. This will ensure the lived experiences and needs of persons with disabilities are considered in policy and program development.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Chief of Military Personnel (CMP), All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Completion of Accessibility Checklist
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

Performance Indicator Result:

The Defence Team Accessibility Checklist was developed in February 2024.

Activity Status Results:

The Defence Team accessibility checklist has been developed by the Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO) in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) in February 2024, following consultation with other Government of Canada Departments/Agencies.

The intent of the checklist is to be used as a guide to applying an accessibility lens to the review of departmental policies, guidelines, programs and services and have established a checklist. The use of a standardized checklist ensures that there is consistent consideration for accessibility and justification for inclusion or non-inclusion is on file for all policies, guidelines, services, and programs.

The accessibility checklist has been socialized with various groups and committees. The full and formal implementation of the checklist will take place at the start of 2025.

5. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) priority area is led by the DSG (Digital Services Group) (formerly named the Chief Information Office Group (CIOG)).

ICT refers to the available software and hardware that support accessibility goals and enables employees with disabilities to perform at their best. This priority area plays a crucial role in addressing the members' ICT accommodation requests. The activities outlined below focus on setting the foundation to providing reliable and timely services by establishing visibility of services with the aim to also develop service standards to ensure timely delivery.

Moving forward, the Digital Services Group plans to also focus and prioritize proactive accessibility measures in the design, maintenance, and evolution of ICT. Examples include improving legacy systems to introduce the standard accessibility features; introducing new enterprise applications with accessibility features activated, where possible; and including common accessibility features in new project statement requirements.

Barriers identified through consultation

- Inconsistent approval of requests to use certain information communication technologies.
- Long wait times to obtain information communication technologies.
- Not recognizing valid ergonomic reports from previous departments and having to redo assessments for DND causing further delays.
- Computer paraphernalia to support accessibility not proactively provided (e.g., headset, keyboard, monitors)
- Ergonomic needs are not proactively considered resulting in multiple ergonomic requests by persons with disabilities.
- Lack of ergonomic equipment for working in a hybrid environment (having to choose which setup to be ergonomic and/or forces to travel with ergonomic devices).
- The Bluetooth ban on the DWAN impacts many assistive technologies.
- Requests for items such as external mics rejected when entered into Assyst even when there are accommodations rationale provided.
- DLN has numerous outdated courses where the text is difficult to read with dyslexia, the problems carried over from DLN 2.0
- MS Teams closed captioning is not reliable and only works in one official language at a time.
- Applications are not accessible by design (for example, Power BI and Adobe Acrobat).

Newly identified barriers in 2024

- Potential biases in artificial intelligence tools (AI) based on the materials they are trained with and who they are trained by.
- The standard headphones provided to DND employees are not compatible with hearing aids.
- There is often a lack of appropriate sound equipment during town halls creating a barrier in hearing and understanding speakers.
- Supply management issues in procuring specialized hardware as part of accommodation requests were noted.
- There is no centralized Information Technology (IT) service support across Bases and Wings, which leads to inconsistent support provided.
- Closed captioning is not being consistently enabled in meetings.

Desired result

Employees and CAF members with disabilities have barrier-free and timely access to tools and technologies to help them succeed in their work.

Existing and new information and communication technologies (ICT) products, services and content are accessible for all users.

Activities

Activity 5.1.

Develop a tracking process using the Enterprise Information Technology Service Management (EITSM) tool for all user ICT accommodation demands.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** The Digital Services Group (DSG), (formerly named Chief Information Office Group (CIOG))
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Whether process has been developed, documented, approved by DGUIT and is ready to be implemented in EITSM (yes/no).
- ✓ **Data Source:** EISTM

Performance Indicator Result:

The development of the tracking process using the Enterprise Information Technology Service Management (EITSM) tool for all user ICT accommodation requests continues.

Activity Status Update:

The Digital Services Group (DSG) initiated an Information Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility Improvement Project in the Spring of 2024. The project aims to implement internal governance and processes required to meet all DSG commitments outlined in the Defence Team Corrective 2022 Accessibility Plan. This project is still ongoing; progress was stalled due to resource shortage. However, work has resumed with anticipated completion by the end of January 2025, conditional on DSG receiving the additional resources they have sought funding for.

Activity 5.2.

Track all user ICT accommodation demands through EITSM and provide monthly report.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** The Digital Services Group (DSG), (formerly named Chief Information Office Group (CIOG))
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** March 2025
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Whether the process has been implemented within EITSM and demands are tracked (yes/no).

✓ **Data Source:** EITSM

Performance Indicator Result:

A tracking process using the Enterprise Information Technology Service Management (EITSM) tool for all user ICT accommodation requests has not been implemented. Additional contextualizing information is outlined in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

Progress on Activity 5.2 is currently delayed since it is directly related to Activity 5.1, which is currently still in progress.

As reported for Activity 5.1, the Digital Services Group (DSG) initiated an Information Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility Improvement Project in the Spring of 2024. The project is still ongoing with progress having been delayed due to a resource shortage. Work has resumed, and the March 2025 timeline for completion remains feasible. There is a low probability of delay, provided that Activity 5.1 is funded and completed.

In the interim, the tracking of all user ICT accommodation requests through the Enterprise Information Technology Service Management (EITSM) tool can be fulfilled with slight enhancements to the existing EITSM PowerBI dashboards.

Activity 5.3.

Establish and maintain an online catalogue of already approved and pertinent hardware and software solutions.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** The Digital Services Group (DSG), (formerly named Chief Information Office Group (CIOG))
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian)
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Whether process is documented, has been approved by DGUIT, is established and maintained as well as being available via EITSM and the Defence Intranet (yes/no).
- ✓ **Data Source:** EITSM and Defence Intranet

Performance Indicator Result:

An online catalogue of already approved and pertinent hardware and software solutions has not been published. Additional contextualizing information is outlined in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

Progress against this activity was stalled due to resource shortage. However, work has resumed with the aim of completing a draft framework by the end of January 2025. The online catalogue of already approved and pertinent hardware and software solutions is

aligned to the existing catalogue developed by the Treasury Board Secretariat as part of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport. The completion and implementation of the Defence Team online catalogue depends on additional resources for which the Digital Services Group (DSG) has sought funding.

Activity 5.4.

Adopt a Common and Standardized Approach. Develop and implement a common and standard approach to deliver AAAC services to the DT members:

- **Leverage procuring solution in conjunction with Shared Services AAAC programme.**
 - **Establish and maintain an on-line catalogue of approved and pertinent software and hardware solutions to speed demand fulfillment via a reuse strategy.**
 - **When a member, who has an approved accommodation solution, is deployed, from another Department or Agency to DND-CAF, consider reusing solution(s) as it was implemented in their former organization.**
- ✓ **L1 Lead:** The Digital Services Group (DSG), (formerly named Chief Information Office Group (CIOG))
 - ✓ **L1 Support(s):** Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian)
 - ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
 - ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Whether process is documented with DGUIT sign-off (yes/no).
 - ✓ **Data Source:** EITSM, DAOD, Defence Intranet

Performance Indicator Result:

A common and standardized approach to delivering Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAAC) services to Defence Team members has not been approved.

Activity Status Update:

The Digital Services Group (DSG) initiated an ICT Accessibility Improvement Project in the Spring 2024 that aims to implement internal governance and processes established required to meet all DSG commitments in the Defence Team Corrective 2022 Accessibility Plan. The project was stalled due to resource shortage. Work has resumed, with planned completion by the end of March 2025, conditional on DSG receiving the additional resources they have sought funding for.

The project of delivering a common and standardized approach to delivering Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAAC) services is still ongoing. This project involves a joint communications plan with Assistant Deputy Minister Human Resources-Civilian (ADM(HR-Civ)), which is being developed to ensure

that once catalogue is developed it is widely communicated to stakeholder groups, including through the Office of Disability Management.

6. Communication (other than ICT)

The Communication priority area is led by Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA). Barrier-free communications and content are fundamental to creating an accessible-confident Defence Team as they are at the center of our day-to-day experiences in the workplace.

The development and distribution of accessible communications is the responsibility of all employees and CAF members. To ensure that individuals are equipped to respond to this need, the activities below are focused on providing clear and consistent direction on the development and application of barrier-free communication products and activities.

Barriers identified through consultation

- Products are often not written in plain language.
- Formatting of military documents inherently inaccessible (for example, use of all caps in CANFORGENS) and do not follow GC accessible guidelines.
- Consistent use and reliance on jargon and acronyms.
- Lack of availability of documentation in alternative formats (digital or hardcopy, for example).
- Often only single channels of communications are made available with no alternatives (for example, email-only or telephone-only communication).

Newly identified barriers in 2024

- A lack of ASL/QSL interpretation during townhalls, meetings, and events.
- A lack of advance circulation of materials at townhalls, meetings and events.
- A lack of information on the intranet about the Defence Team Accessibility Office, the Director, Human Rights and Diversity, and related resources.
- The mechanisms to report barriers and request feedback are not well known.

Desired results

Communications are accessible and written in plain language.

Employees, CAF members and clients have barrier-free access to all communication products.

Employees and CAF members are knowledgeable of accessibility considerations as they relate to communication products.

Activities

Activity 6.1.

Provide accessible content produced and disseminated by ADM(PA) to the Defence Team.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of accessibility complaints related to accessible content
- ✓ **Data Source:** Accessibility Feedback Form and process

Performance Indicator Result:

No complaints have been received related to Defence Team publications by Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs (ADM(PA)).

Activity Status Update:

All content produced and disseminated by ADM(PA) team meets legislated accessibility requirements. ADM(PA) has ensured that they produce and disseminate accessible content to the Defence Team.

Corporate Internal Communications's internal compliance process ensures accessibility is prioritized before publishing, with any disputes escalated to the Director level for resolution.

Activity 6.2.

Ensure external communications produced and disseminated by ADM(PA) are compliant with regulated accessibility requirements.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of accessibility complaints related to accessible content
- ✓ **Data Source:** Accessibility Feedback Form and process

Performance Indicator Result:

No complaints have been received related to external publications by ADM(PA).

Activity Status Update:

All content produced and disseminated by ADM(PA) team meets legislated accessibility requirements. ADM(PA) has ensured that they produce and disseminate accessible content to the Defence Team.

Corporate Internal Communications's internal compliance process ensures accessibility is prioritized before publishing, with any disputes escalated to the Director level for resolution.

Activity 6.3.

Promote and encourage the accessible communications standards to Defence Team members for internal and external dissemination that comply with the [Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible](#).

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** Ongoing
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** L1s are versed and apply the policy leveraging available tools and other resources.
- ✓ **Data Source:** Accessibility Feedback Form and process

Performance Indicator Result:

To date, no complaints related to accessible communications have been received via the Defence Team Accessibility feedback process.

Activity Status Update:

As the lead for the Communications priority area, Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs (ADM(PA)) continues to encourage and promote the use accessible communications for internal and external dissemination to all Defence Team members in compliance with the Government of Canada Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible.

Additional Defence Team Efforts:

Individual L1s also report awareness and use of accessible communication standards, as well as encouraging their use to their employees. Some examples include:

The Digital Services Group (DSG) corporate services have socialized and applied accessibility requirements and tools throughout its Live Events support. This included investing in technologies that add functionalities that reduce barriers to participation at online events. Likewise, accessibility standards and best practices for D365 are being applied in DSG's go-forward D365 repositories where employees will be conducting the majority of their work. DSG is also planning for user-experience feedback forms that will allow for site owners to get feedback on accessibility and other barriers.

Assistant Deputy Minister Policy (ADM (Pol)) Group for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion promoted and implemented accessible communication standards for the quarterly newsletter they disseminate to the organization. In doing so, they ensured the quarterly newsletter also complied with the Guidelines on Making Communications Products and

Activities Accessible. The newsletter, in raising awareness about issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion, has highlighted several events and days of awareness related to accessibility, including International Pain Awareness Month, for example. By highlighting these events, the newsletter aims to educate readers and foster a deeper understanding of the importance of accessibility in creating a more inclusive workplace.

The Sexual Misconduct Support and Resource Centre (SMSRC) group's Communications and Marketing Team made creating accessible communications products and activities a top priority for the organization. The SMSRC is committed to ensuring that all communication materials both internal and external adhere to the highest accessibility standards. This includes web content accessibility standards and ensuring that materials are available in multiple formats. SMSRC team members have been encouraged to participate in the 3-hour workshop "Plain language: a clear voice for Canada Plain language is good communication and a legal requirement under the Accessible Canada Act" which cover topics such as the need for plain language, the benefits of plain language, the top plain language tips. The SMSRC conducts regular audits of communication materials to ensure compliance.

Assistant Deputy Minister Review Services (ADM(RS)) shared a targeted communique with its employees in honour of International Week of Deaf People, which included resource and guidance on how to access American Sign Language (ASL) or in Langue des signes québécoise LSQ interpretation. Plain language training was also completed by groups within ADM(RS) and additional sessions are scheduled.

7. Transportation

Transportation remains a complex area for the Defence Team to address due to its international footprint and the many Base and Wing Commands across Canada. While commitments have been made to remove barriers to transportation, they focus prominently on Carling Campus in the National Capital Region. It is recognized that work remains to be done to ensure that employees, CAF members, clients and visitors have access to accessible parking and transportation at all Defence Team buildings and sites.

Barriers identified through consultation

- Parking:
 - There are not enough accessible parking spaces in relation to the demand.
 - Lack of clarity about the process of acquiring parking permits.
 - The accessible parking accommodation process is confusing, requests can go unfulfilled and parking lot contractors can be unresponsive.
 - There are no parking spaces for persons with temporary disabilities.
 - There are very few accessible parking spaces on Bases and Wings.
 - Often accessible parking spaces are blocked by construction, rendering them inaccessible.

- Parking is assigned by rank and not by accessibility requirements.
- Onus falls to the employee to make their own arrangements for parking accommodations, which is the employer's responsibility.
- Shuttles:
 - A lack of communication about where and when shuttles were arriving was identified as an issue.
 - An overall lack of shuttles was identified, both for regular use, as well as a lack of shuttles available for medical runs specifically.
 - CAF members expressed that use of the shuttle bus access was limited in part by one's rank.
 - Several inaccessible features of the shuttle service were identified:
 - The distance between the drop off point and the destination building;
 - The need to use stairs and broken elevators and doors that are difficult to open; and
 - Embarking and disembarking the shuttle bus itself was also identified as a barrier.
 - There is no lift on vehicles used on Bases and Wings.

Newly identified barrier in 2024

- Limited accessible parking at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax was identified.

Desired results

Employees and CAF members have increasingly barrier-free access to parking.

Activities

Activity 7.1.

Ensure process to obtain parking behind the gates at Carling Campus is up to date and posted accessibly for employees, CAF members, clients and visitors. adequate accessible parking is available to employees with physical/mobility disabilities as required.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** CFSG (O-G), Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of visitors to site where process is posted
- ✓ **Data Source:** Web Analytics Report

Performance Indicator Result:

The Canadian Forces Support Group Ottawa-Gatineau (CSFG(O-G)) recently updated and published the website that provides information to obtain parking behind the gates at Carling Campus. Due to the timing of the implementation and progress report, the indicator result is not available.

Activity Status Update:

The Canadian Forces Support Group Ottawa-Gatineau (CSFG(O-G)) recently re-wrote the policy and published the website that explains the process of acquiring accessible parking. Internal processes have been updated. Individuals requiring inside-the-fence parking have access to a process to request access. Approximately 4% of parking spots are accessible spaces, while the requirement is 2%.

Activity 7.2.

Run a pilot at Carling Campus to determine how to address barriers in the transportation footprint with a view to expanding the pilot across Canada to all Bases and Wings.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Defence Team Accessibility Office, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** All L1s
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Number of parking related complaints received through Defence Team Accessibility Feedback process.
- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

Performance Indicator Results:

Activity 7.2. is cancelled. Additional contextualizing information is provided in the activity status update below.

Activity Status Update:

In planning the pilot for Carling Campus, it was determined that more foundational work to better understand transportation at the Defence Team was needed to be able to move forward with a pilot that would be applicable across Canada to all Bases and Wings.

To ensure that the Defence Team is in a position to remove and prevent transportation barriers, efforts have shifted towards undertaking an environmental scan of Defence Team transportation. Although in its early stages, the activity will involve consultations, mapping exercises, and stakeholder identification. This work will continue into 2025 and will influence commitments made in the Defence Team 2025 Accessibility Plan.

8. Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

The Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities is led by Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat).

Accessibility in procurement is about ensuring that the goods and services we buy are accessible to a broad range of end-users by including accessibility criteria in requirements (when appropriate); providing a barrier-free procurement process for the public via access to information and tendering opportunities; and enabling diverse suppliers, including businesses owned or led by persons with disabilities, to participate in procurement processes. Accessible procurement is a shared responsibility between contracting authorities as well as business owners.

Procurement activities for DND and the CAF are complex due to the volume and scope of requests. Despite the complexity, there is an acknowledgement that it can be done more accessibly. Due to its large procurement footprint, there is an opportunity for the Defence Team to position itself to be part of the Government of Canada-wide solution moving forward.

Barriers identified through consultation

- There is currently no standing offer for braille.
- Procurement does not have accessibility built into the process.
- Cost and lack of available funds are often identified as a reason for not being able to procure necessary services and products to make the environment and experiences more accessible.

Desired results

Accessibility requirements are considered when buying goods, services, facilities, and products.

Accessibility considerations in procurement communicated to employees of DND and members of the CAF with procurement responsibilities.

Content for accessibility considerations in statement of works communicated to employees of DND and members of the CAF.

Activities

Activity 8.1.

Review the Statement of Work (SOW) standard, D-01-002-009/SG-001. Content related to accessibility will be reviewed and updated as required.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** September 2024
- ✓ **Performance Indicator:** Updated SOW published

- ✓ **Data Source:** Administrative dataset

Performance Indicator Result:

The Assistant Deputy Minister Materiel (ADM(Mat)) has completed and published the updated Statement of Work (SOW).

Activity Status Update:

Language related to accessibility was refreshed in the Statement of Work (SOW) standard and the SOW standard was published in late September 2024. In addition, the SOW intranet site was updated in late September 2024 and now has a downloadable SOW template for Minor Support Tasks and Professional Services while the Procurement Administration Manual (PAM) 3.2.7.1 was also updated.

Activity 8.2.

Review and update the Procurement Administration Manual (PAM) Chapter 1.10.2 on Accessible Procurement, including the Accessible Procurement SharePoint page referenced within.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** March 2028
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** The updated guidance in PAM 1.10.2 has been published on the Mat intranet site.
- ✓ **Data Source 1:** Administrative dataset
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** Percentage of Procurement files per FY audited by the DSCO Contracting compliance review team (CCRT) that contain a completed Accessibility considerations form signed by the technical authority.
- ✓ **Data Source 2:** Audit results from the DSCO Contracting Compliance review team (CCRT).

Performance Indicator Results:

The Assistant Deputy Minister Materiel (ADM(Mat)) is on track to meet their timeline of March 2028. Due to the timeline for completion, results for the performance indicators are not available for the 2024 progress reporting period.

Activity Status Update:

The revision of the Procurement Administration Manual (PAM) Chapter 1.10.2 on Accessible Procurement is underway. (ADM(Mat)) is on track to meet their completion timeline of March 2028.

Activity 8.3.

Develop content on accessibility requirements for a new section on Technical Support for Procurement Management and Social Procurement for Part 8 of the Technical Support Guide.

- ✓ **L1 Lead:** Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat)
- ✓ **L1 Support(s):** N/A
- ✓ **Timeline for Completion:** December 2025
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 1:** Instructions on Accessible considerations has been published in the Technical Support Guide.
- ✓ **Data Source 1:** Administrative Dataset
- ✓ **Performance Indicator 2:** Percentage of Procurement files per FY audited by the DSCO Contracting compliance review team (CCRT) that contain a completed Accessibility considerations form signed by the technical authority.
- ✓ **Data Source 2:** Audit results from the DSCO Contracting Compliance review team (CCRT).

Performance Indicator Results:

Performance Indicator 1: The Assistant Deputy Minister Materiel (ADM(Mat)) continues to be in progress towards their December 2025 timeline. Due to the timeline for completion, the indicator result is not available for the 2024 progress reporting period.

Performance Indicator 2: Due to the timeline for completion, the indicator result is not available for the 2024 progress reporting period.

Activity Status Update:

The new section of the Technical Support Guide (TSG) that covers the Technical Support for Procurement Management and Social Procurement is underway. The work will be completed in phases and is expected to be completed by the December 2025 deadline.

Accountability and Governance

The way accessibility fits into the existing Defence Team governance structure is being considered to ensure that senior leadership is best positioned in enabling accountability, stewardship, and transparency on accessibility.

The Representation and Inclusion Sub-Committee provides a forum for accessibility-related issues to be discussed at the executive level. This forum is and will continue to be key to ensuring that executives are made aware of barriers identified and that solutions receive the approvals and traction that will allow service providers to take the necessary actions to remove the barriers.

The director-level (L3) Accessibility Working Group also plays an important role in shaping accessibility at the Defence Team. Although representatives are not personally

accountable for the delivery of commitments made in plans and progress reports, representatives are key stewards in ensuring their respective senior leadership and chains of command are up to date on accessibility requirements and initiatives.

Monitoring and reporting

Performance Measurement

The Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO) in Chief Professional Conduct and Culture and functional authority of the accessibility program is currently developing an accessibility performance measurement strategy, a gap identified in previous plans and reports. Although performance indicators were integrated into the Defence Team's 2022 Corrective Accessibility Plan, the DTAO has the goal of integrating a robust performance measurement strategy into the upcoming 2025-2027 Accessibility Plan.

The development of the strategy involves leveraging best practices from across the Government of Canada enterprise through the Interdepartmental Accessibility Community of Practice and through direct engagement with OPSA, as well as drawing on the [Results Framework for the Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#). The performance measurement strategy will be key in establishing the Defence Team as accessibility-confident as it will provide the necessary results to support evidence-based decision making, accountability and continuous improvement.

To demonstrate the Defence Team's commitment towards measurement, the enclosed progress report highlights accessibility performance indicators and results under each of the priority areas.

Reporting

Moving forward into the 2025-2027 reporting period, the Defence Team Accessibility Office (DTAO) will continue to engage with persons with disabilities, stakeholders, and governance committees to identify and implement strategies to support the removal of barriers for people with disabilities. The DTAO will continue to monitor progress and raise progress with senior leadership through its chain of command and various governance forums to ensure accountability of results. In accordance with the *Accessible Canada Act* and Regulations, the Defence Team will continue to publish an updated accessibility plan every 3 years with Progress Reports every year in between.

Conclusion

The enclosed 2024 Progress Report demonstrates the Defence Team's efforts to work towards the common goal of creating a barrier-free workplace. Although steps have been taken towards this goal, we recognized that there is still a long way to go in creating a Defence Team workplace that is fully inclusive and accessible.

Creating a barrier-free workplace will be a long-term process that will require dedicated, deliberate, and sustained action over time. Part of this commitment will involve remaining adaptable and approaching learning with openness and genuine curiosity, allowing the Defence Team to continue to evolve and create the necessary conditions that will allow all employees and members to maximize their contribution and achieve their full potential.

Annex A – Identified Barriers by Priority Area

1. Culture

- Experiences of stigma, exclusion, bullying and intimidation.
- Negative beliefs, assumptions and comments about neurodivergent people.
- Derogatory terms used to refer to people with disabilities.
- Negative attitudes towards and treatment of people with disabilities in the CAF.
- Application of the universality of service principle creates stigma around and discrimination against CAF members with disabilities.
- Experiences of stigma and exclusion of CAF members with disabilities, especially those with cognitive and learning disabilities, and being seen as unfit to serve.
- CAF Members with disabilities are harassed for being non-deployable.
- A shift back to social activities and team building being exclusively in-person without a digital alternative.
- Town halls are being held exclusively in-person without hybrid alternatives or recordings made available to participants.
- There is an under socialization of accessibility, especially outside of the National Capital Region (NCR).
- The inconsistent policy application of allowing service dogs and service dogs in training on Bases and Wings was raised as a barrier.
- Uncertainty as to how the *Accessible Canada Act* applies to the Canadian Armed Forces.
- Uncertainty as to how the *Accessible Canada Act* applies to the Canadian Armed Forces in the context of housing for military members and their families living on bases.

2. Employment (Civilian)

- Stigma and exclusion in career advancement and promotion:
 - Avoidance of self-identifying as a person with a disability or disabilities to managers out of the concern of being viewed as less competent and be looked over for career advancement opportunities.
 - Frustration of not being granted career growth opportunities due to identifying as a person with a disability.
 - Work not being tasked after raising accommodation needs.
 - Fear that performance evaluations may be impacted by their accommodation needs.
 - Accommodations not being considered during performance evaluations.
 - Feeling of having to work harder than peers without disabilities to prove their worth as employees.
 - Defence Team members with disabilities are not promoted as rapidly.
- Self-identifying as a person with a disability in hiring pools and losing out on employment opportunities.

- No proactive technical assistance was offered or provided during the onboarding process to employees who self-identify with a disability and requiring additional assistance.
- Gap in considerations for the intersection of disability and recruitment of Indigenous applicants.
- The accommodations process was identified as a barrier.
 - Being forced to interact with the medical system to receive accommodation was identified as a barrier.
 - Fear of speaking with managers about accommodation needs due to attitudinal reasons and fear of confidentiality being breached.
 - Labour Relations consistently brought into accommodations process and frames conversation that persons with disabilities are a workplace issue.
 - Lack of clear timelines and expectations for the accommodations process.
 - Lack of resources available on how to request accommodations and steps of the accommodations process.
 - The accommodation process was not made clear during hiring process.
 - Difficulty carrying accommodations forward from previous departments.
 - The mainstream culture remains that workplace accommodations are adjudicated by senior executives, causing personal information to be shared unnecessarily widely.
 - Attitudes, especially those of managers and senior leadership, towards accommodation requests prevented people from wanting to recommend the Defence Team as an employer to their friends.
 - Lack of subject matter expertise regarding accommodations in the assessment process.
- The return to the office presents barriers for many persons with disabilities.
 - The hybrid work model is not accessible.
 - Workplace shared hoteling stations do not consider the need for ergonomic setups and instead rely heavily on a one size fits all approach.
 - Workplace hoteling stations re-enforce an unaccommodated approach to working.
 - Appropriate accommodation for remote work needs to be granted with less stigma.
 - People with disabilities feel less safe in the physical office.
 - DND work arrangement processes are contradictory and need to be aligned.
- Managers not being approachable regarding accommodation requests or discussions about accessibility, especially pertaining to discussions about mental health.
- The spirit and intent of the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport is not honoured in accommodations process.
- Government of Canada Accessibility Passport solutions are not supported, despite it being followed by previous employers.
- Long wait times to receive response and support from the Office of Disability Management (ODM).

- Inefficient allocation of time and funds being put towards language training causes stress, overtime, and insufficient time for learning for some persons with disabilities.
- Second language training, as it related to the services rendered by external organizations and the lack of accommodation available, is a barrier for some persons with disabilities.
- Barriers to participation in training provided through the Defence Learning Network (DLN) were identified, including the lack of closed captioning.
- Medical proof of disabilities continues to be requested in support of accommodation requests, despite the implementation of the Government of Canada Accessibility Passport.
- Official travel policies and processes are not fully accessibility and do not always prioritize the need for accommodations.

2. Employment (CAF)

- There is no CAF-specific solution to the GOC Accessibility Passport.
- Ableism creates stigma around and discrimination against CAF members with disabilities.
- CAF members with disabilities are harassed at times for non-deployment.
- Negative attitudes towards and treatment of people with disabilities in the CAF.
- Differences between CAF and civilian public service privacy of personal information policies are not well understood.
- No DAOD that outlines the operational requirements of the institution in determining the limits of any accommodation.

3. Built Environment

- Buildings lack clear and accessible labelling and signage.
- The inaccessibility of stairs is compounded by a lack of elevators, ramps, and stairs lacking railings.
- Having to navigate long corridors, navigate confusing spaces and not being able to access parts of buildings.
- Non-automated doors were noted as a barrier to mobility.
- Insufficient or a complete lack of accessible washrooms was identified as a barrier.
- Lighting and, specifically, the inability to control lighting was identified as a barrier.
- Ergonomic issues, including uncomfortable furniture that increases pain and discomfort levels and does not allow participants to sit comfortably at their desk or in flex spaces was identified as a barrier.
- Recreational spaces, including break rooms, gyms, and pools were identified as not being accessible.
- The built environment of Bases and Wings is not accessible by design.

- Assistive technology, such as elevators, are often disabled on bases.
- Common spaces on Bases and Wings are not designed with accessibility needs in mind.
- The number of accessible housing units on Bases and Wings is limited.
- The cost of accessible housing for members is greater.

4. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

- Many of the current policies place the burden on individuals with disabilities to identify solutions rather than a proactive application of accessibility considerations by service providers.
- CAF medical services and gatekeeping in terms of testing of ADHD, neurodivergence, and mental illness identified as a barrier.
- Official language requirements and expectations for employees with disabilities are not accessible.

5. Information Communication Technologies (ICT)

- Inconsistent approval of requests to use certain information communication technologies.
- Long wait times to obtain information communication technologies.
- Not recognizing valid ergonomic reports from previous departments and having to redo assessments for DND causing further delays.
- Computer paraphernalia to support accessibility not proactively provided (e.g., headset, keyboard, monitors)
- Ergonomic needs are not proactively considered resulting in multiple ergonomic requests by persons with disabilities.
- Lack of ergonomic equipment for working in a hybrid environment (having to choose which setup to be ergonomic and/or forces to travel with ergonomic devices).
- The Bluetooth ban on the DWAN impacts many assistive technologies.
- Requests for items such as external mics rejected when entered into Assyst even when there are accommodations rationale provided.
- DLN has numerous outdated courses where the text is difficult to read with dyslexia, the problems carried over from DLN 2.0
- MS Teams closed captioning is not reliable and only works in one official language at a time.
- Applications are not accessible by design (for example, Power BI and Adobe Acrobat).
- Potential biases in artificial intelligence tools (AI) based on the materials they are trained with and who they are trained by.
- The standard headphones provided to DND employees are not compatible with hearing aids.
- There is often a lack of appropriate sound equipment during town halls creating a barrier in hearing and understanding speakers.

- Supply management issues in procuring specialized hardware as part of accommodation requests were noted.
- There is no centralized Information Technology (IT) service support across Bases and Wings, which leads to inconsistent support provided.
- Closed captioning is not being consistently enabled in meetings.

6. Communication (other than ICT)

- Products are often not written in plain language.
- Formatting of military documents inherently inaccessible (for example, use of all caps in CANFORGENS) and do not follow GC accessible guidelines.
- Consistent use and reliance on jargon and acronyms.
- Lack of availability of documentation in alternative formats (digital or hardcopy, for example).
- Often only single channels of communications are made available with no alternatives (for example, email-only or telephone-only communication).
- A lack of ASL/QSL interpretation during townhalls, meetings, and events.
- A lack of advance circulation of materials at townhalls, meetings and events.
- A lack of information on the intranet about the Defence Team Accessibility Office, the Director, Human Rights and Diversity, and related resources was identified as a barrier.
- The mechanisms to report barriers and request feedback are not well known.

7. Transport

- Parking:
 - There are not enough accessible parking spaces in relation to the demand.
 - Lack of clarity about the process of acquiring parking permits.
 - The accessible parking accommodation process is confusing, requests can go unfulfilled and parking lot contractors can be unresponsive.
 - There are no parking spaces for persons with temporary disabilities.
 - There are very few accessible parking spaces on Bases and Wings.
 - Often accessible parking spaces are blocked by construction, rendering them inaccessible.
 - Parking is assigned by rank and not by accessibility requirements.
 - Onus falls to the employee to make their own arrangements for parking accommodations, which is the employer's responsibility.
- Limited accessible parking at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Halifax was identified.
- Shuttles:
 - A lack of communication about where and when shuttles were arriving was identified as an issue.
 - An overall lack of shuttles was identified, both for regular use, as well as a lack of shuttles available for medical runs specifically.

- CAF members expressed that use of the shuttle bus access was limited in part by one's rank.
- Several inaccessible features of the shuttle service were identified:
 - The distance between the drop off point and the destination building;
 - The need to use stairs and broken elevators and doors that are difficult to open; and
 - Embarking and disembarking the shuttle bus itself was also identified as a barrier.
- There is no lift on vehicles used on Bases and Wings.

8. Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

- There is currently no standing offer for braille.
- Procurement does not have accessibility built into the process.
- Cost and lack of available funds are often identified as a reason for not being able to procure necessary services and products to make the environment and experiences more accessible.

Annex B – Activities at a Glance (2024)

1. Culture

Activity No.	Activity	Activity Lead	Activity Support	Timeline for Completion	Activity Status
1.1	Develop and deliver annual programming and communications for National AccessAbility Week (NAAW) and International Day of Persons with Disabilities.	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs – ADM(PA)	December 2024	Complete
1.2	Develop and implement a communications strategy for the Defence Team Accessibility Plan, as well as products to raise awareness of accessibility and disability inclusion.	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs – ADM(PA)	December 2024	Complete
1.3	Develop and implement an accessibility awareness campaign.	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	Assistant Deputy Minister Public Affairs – ADM(PA)	December 2024	Complete

2. Employment (Civilian)

Activity No.	Activity	Activity Lead	Activity Support	Timeline for Completion	Activity Status
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2.1	Set and report on annual hiring, inclusion, and promotion goals for EE groups, including persons with disabilities.	Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources – Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ)	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) All L1s	FY 2024-25	In Progress (On-Track)
2.2	Conduct Intersectional and accessibility reviews of key employment systems to identify, eliminate, mitigate barriers (target areas: accommodations, grievances, official languages training, orientation, performance & talent management).	Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources – Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ)	N/A	2024-2027	In Progress (On-Track)
2.3	Lead the implementation of the Accessibility Passport.	Assistant Deputy Minister, Human Resources – Civilian – ADM(HR-Civ)	All L1s	FY 2024-25	In Progress (On-Track)

2. Employment (CAF)

Activity No.	Activity	Activity Lead	Activity Support	Timeline for Completion	Activity Status
2.4	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture will enable self-identification in order to set and report on representation for EE designated groups,	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)	December 2025	In Progress (On-Track)

	including persons with disabilities.				
2.5	Conduct reviews of new CAF policies, programs, and systems to ensure removal of accessibility barriers, as possible, per the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> .	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)	Ongoing – will be reported annually	In Progress (On-Track)
2.6	Conduct reviews of the Universality of Service (U of S) policy and standards to better align and respond to the evolution of the CAF's roles and operations, while considering developments in Canadian Human Rights law (i.e., the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> , the <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i> , the <i>Employment Equity Act</i> , etc.)	Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	Ongoing	In Progress (On-Track)
2.7	Continued review of aptitude test to better align operational requirements and the limits of accommodation with the <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> (ACA) and <i>Employment Equity Act</i> .	Chief of Military Personnel (CMP)	Army Air Force Navy	Ongoing	Cancelled

3. Built Environment

Activity No.	Activity	Activity Lead	Activity Support	Timeline for Completion	Activity Status
3.1	Assess and improve the accessibility of the built environment within DND/CAF by conducting accessibility audits and assessing the results.	Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure and Environment – ADM(IE)	N/A	Timelines for specific studies and projects will be identified during assessment phase.	In Progress (On-Track)
3.2	Continue to improve and develop documents related to accessibility in the built environment by: (1) Continuing to ensure any new contracts involving the built environment have considered requirements for accessibility; and (2) Transitioning the current policy instruments related to accessibility to the new format (CETO, policy, directive, standard, guidelines).	Assistant Deputy Minister, Infrastructure and Environment – ADM(IE)	N/A	Q2 2024	In Progress (Delayed)

4. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Activity No.	Activity	Activity Lead	Activity Support	Timeline for Completion	Activity Status
4.1	Make it easier for persons with disabilities to provide accessibility-related feedback on programs and services without having to submit a formal complaint.	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	All L1s	December 2024	Complete
4.2	Strengthen the role of the Defence Team Accessibility Office for Accessible Client Service. This team will offer guidance on making services more accessible.	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	N/A	December 2024	Complete
4.3	Add an accessibility and intersectional checklist to the suite of tools used to perform analysis. This will ensure the lived experiences and needs of persons with disabilities are considered in policy and program development.	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	Chief of Military Personnel (CMP) All L1s	December 2024	In Progress (Delayed)

5. Information Communication Technologies (ICT)

Activity No.	Activity	Activity Lead	Activity Support	Timeline for Completion	Activity Status
5.1	Develop a tracking process using the Enterprise Information Technology	Digital Services Group (DSG)	Assistant Deputy Minister (Human	December 2024	In Progress (Delayed)

	Service Management (EITSM) tool for all user ICT accommodation demands.		Resources – Civilian)		
5.2	Track all user ICT accommodation demands through EITSM and provide monthly report.	Digital Services Group (DSG)	Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian) – ADM(HR-Civ)	March 2025	In Progress (On-Track)
5.3	Establish and maintain an online catalogue of already approved and pertinent hardware and software solutions.	Digital Services Group (DSG)	Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian) – ADM(HR-Civ)	December 2024	In Progress (Delayed)
5.4	Adopt a Common and Standardized Approach. Develop and implement a common and standard approach to deliver AAAC services to the DT members.	Digital Services Group (DSG)	Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian) – ADM(HR-Civ)	December 2024	In Progress (Delayed)

6. Communications (other than ICT)

Activity No.	Activity	Activity Lead	Activity Support	Timeline for Completion	Activity Status
6.1	Provide accessible content produced and disseminated by ADM(PA) to the Defence Team.	Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA)	N/A	Ongoing	Complete
6.2	Ensure external communications produced and disseminated by	Assistant Deputy Minister, Public		Ongoing	Complete

	ADM(PA) are compliant with regulated accessibility requirements.	Affairs – ADM(PA)			
6.3	Promote and encourage the accessible communications standards to Defence Team members for internal and external dissemination that comply with the Guidelines on Making Communications Products and Activities Accessible .	Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Affairs – ADM(PA)	All L1s	Ongoing	Complete

7. Transportation

Activity No.	Activity	Activity Lead	Activity Support	Timeline for Completion	Activity Status
7.1	Ensure process to obtain parking behind the gates at Carling Campus is up to date and posted accessibly for employees, CAF members, clients and visitors. adequate accessible parking is available to employees with physical/mobility disabilities as required.	CFSG (O-G), Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS)	N/A	December 2024	Complete
7.2	Run a pilot at Carling Campus to determine how to address barriers in the transportation footprint with a	Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC)	All L1s	December 2024	Cancelled

	view to expanding the pilot across Canada to all Bases and Wings.				
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8. Procurement of Goods and Services

Activity No.	Activity	Activity Lead	Activity Support	Timeline for Completion	Activity Status
8.1	Review the Statement of Work (SOW) standard, D-01-002-009/SG-001. Content related to accessibility will be reviewed and updated as required.	Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat)	N/A	September 2024	Complete
8.2	Review and update the Procurement Administration Manual (PAM) Chapter 1.10.2 on Accessible Procurement, including the Accessible Procurement SharePoint page referenced within.	Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat)	N/A	March 2028	In Progress (On-Track)
8.3	Develop content on accessibility requirements for a new section on Technical Support for Procurement Management and Social Procurement for Part 8 of the Technical Support Guide.	Assistant Deputy Minister, Materiel – ADM(Mat)	N/A	December 2025	In Progress (On-Track)

Annex C – Glossary

accessibility

The degree to which a product, service, program or environment can be accessed or used by all.

accommodation

Any change in the work environment that allows a person with functional limitations to do their job. Accommodations can be temporary, periodic or long-term, including:

- adjusting the physical workspace
- adapting the equipment or tools
- working flexible hours or job-sharing
- moving the workspace
- working from home
- removing or changing some non-essential tasks for others
- time off for medical appointments

assistive or adaptive device/technology

A device, system or equipment designed to help a person do a task. Examples include canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, hearing aids and personal emergency response systems. They can also be IT-related items such as screen-reading software.

barrier

Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. Barriers can be physical, architectural, technological, attitudinal or based on information or communications. They can also be the result of a policy or practice. (Source: [Accessible Canada Act](#))

clients

People, businesses or their representatives served by, or using services provided by a government department.

disability

A disability is any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society. (Source: [Accessible Canada Act](#))

equity-seeking group

A group of persons who are disadvantaged based on one or more prohibited grounds of discrimination within the meaning of the Canadian Human Rights Act. (Source: [Public Service Employment Act](#))

inclusion

The act of including someone or something as part of a group. An inclusive workplace is fair, equitable, supportive, welcoming and respectful.

Inclusion values and leverages differences in identities, abilities, backgrounds, cultures, skills, experiences and perspectives that support and reinforce Canada's evolving human rights framework. (Source: [Building a Diverse and Inclusive Public Service: Final Report of the Joint Union/Management Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion](#))

intersectionality

The interconnected nature of various social aspects, such as sex, gender, age, race, ethnicity, Indigenous identity, economic status, immigrant status, sexual orientation, disability, and geography, as they apply to a given individual or group, viewed as impacting experiences of discrimination or disadvantage.

An intersectional accessibility lens is the analytical framework that starts with/centers experiences of people with (a) disability(ies).

nothing without us

"Nothing without us" is one of the guiding principles of the [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#). It means that persons with disabilities need to be fully and directly involved in the design of policies, plans, programs and services.

self-identification

Providing employment equity information for statistical purposes. The federal public service uses this information to monitor the progress of employment equity groups and to report on workforce representation.

systemic barrier

A systemic barrier is a pattern of behaviour in the policies and practices of an organization, which puts equity-seeking groups at a disadvantage.