Shared Services Canada's Accessibility Plan 2022–25

A shared path to a more inclusive, barrier-free public service

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Message from the President and the Executive Vice-President

We are pleased to share the first Shared Services Canada (SSC) Accessibility Plan.

This three-year Plan will strengthen our foundation for building an accessible and inclusive workplace. It sets the priorities and the actions we will take to achieve the results we expect.

Our Plan sets clear goals to identify, remove, and prevent barriers in our workplace, policies, programs and services. Developed in collaboration and consultation with persons with disabilities, it outlines how we will apply a consistent accessibility and disability inclusion lens to everything we do.

In line with the Accessible Canada Act, as an employer, SSC aims to create an inclusive and barrier-free environment where everyone can participate fully. As a service provider, SSC is also mandated to provide accessible digital services and tools.

The Plan builds on the great work that we are already doing to advance accessibility of enterprise systems, including rolling out improved collaboration tools like Microsoft 365, providing advice and tools to the GC on accessible information and communication technology procurement, being an early adopter of the Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport, hiring neurodiverse

candidates, designing and delivering accessibility training, tools and services, including launching the Lending Library Service Pilot.

Despite these and other efforts, we know there is still much work to do to advance accessibility and disability inclusion at SSC. That is why we will create additional opportunities for open dialogue to learn about—and address—accessibility barriers. We will continue having conversations with employees and partners to foster a respectful and inclusive workplace culture.

Thanks to our employees and partners for their ongoing work in advancing accessibility and for helping us build this Plan. We all become stronger when everyone is included.

Sony Perron
President
(he, him, his)

Scott Jones
Executive Vice-President
(he, him, his)

Message from the Persons with Disability Co-champions

We are delighted to offer our support for Shared Services Canada (SSC) first Accessibility Plan, which addresses the priority areas identified in the Accessible Canada Act. Our Plan is a big step in making tomorrow more equitable, diverse, inclusive and accessible.

This Plan reflects SSC's commitment to accessibility and to the cultural change that will ensure everyone feels included, respected, and empowered in our workplace.

As SSC's Co-Champions for the Persons with Disabilities Network, we act as spokespersons to help achieve departmental activities and objectives. We share the responsibility of making this Plan a reality. We do this by working to proactively identify, remove, and prevent barriers in our workplaces, policies, programs, and services.

SSC has already undertaken a number of activities to address and remove barriers which provide a strong foundation to build upon. We want to continue bringing accessibility to the forefront of everything we do and make changes that have meaningful impact. This Plan will evolve as we continue the conversation with employees with disabilities, allies, employees at all levels, and partners. This will help us identify even more barriers and possible solutions to ensure our workplace, services and products are disability-inclusive and barrier-free.

We will continue to give our members a safe place to connect, share stories, discuss common issues, exchange ideas, insights, and concerns. One way we do this is through hosting virtual "coffee chats". These chats allow us to discuss how SSC can increase awareness, support recruitment, retention and career progression for employees with disabilities. They also help us understand some of the current challenges facing our employees with disabilities. As we move forward together in implementing this multi-year Plan, we will provide employees with progress updates.

Please join us as we move closer to an accessibility inclusive workplace.

Matt Davies
Co-Champion, Persons with Disabilities

Mike Pepkowski
Co-Champion, Persons with Disabilities

1 General

1.1 Accessibility feedback

If you have questions or comments about SSC's Accessibility Plan, including any barriers you may have experienced when dealing with SSC, please contact the Director of the Accessibility Strategy and Governance unit.

Provide your feedback using any of the methods below.

By email:
     sscaccessibility-accessibilitespc@ssc-spc.gc.ca
Online:
     Provide feedback on accessibility at Shared Services Canada
By telephone:
     (Toll-free) 1-833-970-3746
By mail:
     Director, Accessibility Strategy and Governance Unit
     Shared Services Canada
     10 Wellington Street, 2nd Floor
     Gatineau, Quebec, K1A 0H4

Please note that all interactions are confidential. SSC will not share your identity with anyone without your consent.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 SSC: An accessibility leader in the GC

SSC is uniquely positioned as an accessibility leader, given our mandate to provide Information and Communication

Technology (ICT) services to the GC. SSC is home to the [Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) program](#), which enables public servants and organizations across the GC to build accessible and inclusive workplaces.

SSC is also involved in many initiatives to improve accessibility and disability inclusion, including:

- Leading [seven government-wide](#) actions supporting the goal to "make information and communications technology usable by all" under the [Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada](#)
- Supporting other departments in reaching their Accessibility Strategy goals, and
- Leading initiatives to support the hiring of 5,000 new employees with disabilities by 2025
- Developing and delivering accessibility training
- Supporting an accessibility ICT procurement pilot

2 Consultations

In developing this Plan, SSC held consultation sessions with SSC employees and partner organizations. The purpose was to gather information about perceived barriers to accessibility at SSC and to hear about possible solutions from persons with lived experiences. Refer to [Appendix A](#) for more information on the methodology used and highlights of what we heard.

Once the Accessibility Plan commitments were drafted for each priority area, it was shared with members of SSC's Persons with Disabilities Network and other key stakeholders. Input received was incorporated into this Plan.

Additionally, SSC underwent an Employment Systems Review (ESR) in 2021 that resulted in a number of recommendations that have been built into the Employment section of this Plan.

3 SSC's Accessibility Commitments

The commitments in this Plan form the baseline against which SSC will assess its progress towards becoming a more disability inclusive and accessible organization.

The scope of the Plan reflects the multiple roles we play as an organization: as a provider of modern, secure and reliable IT services to Government of Canada organizations and as an employer.

In addition to the seven priorities from the *Accessible Canada Act*, SSC has added one other priority: culture. The commitments are organized in the following order:

1. Design and delivery of programs and services
2. Information and communication technology (ICT)
3. Procurement of goods, services and facilities
4. Employment
5. Built environment
6. Communication, other than ICT
7. Culture
8. Transportation

Each priority includes the following:

- **Goals** – What can we hope to accomplish by 2040? These are longer term and aspirational, and are intended to live on past this iteration of the Plan.

- **Objectives** – What are we committed to making progress on over the next three years toward achieving our goals?

- **Key planned actions** – What actions will we take to meet our objectives?

This Plan is the first step towards our goal of achieving accessibility and disability inclusion in all areas. SSC will:

- integrate these commitments into existing planning and reporting
- develop implementation and delivery plans to be able to achieve the Plan's goals and objectives and to track progress
- take an iterative approach, and focus on incremental progress, not perfection.

3.1 Priority 1: Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

Accessibility in the design and delivery of SSC programs and services means ensuring that the needs of persons with disabilities are intentionally included into the design, development, and implementation for all enterprise IT services that SSC provides to partner departments.

SSC plays a key role in making the GC's vision for a more accessible Canada a reality because the department procures and provides ICT infrastructure that supports the delivery of programs and services to Canadians. This section focuses on our delivery of modern, reliable, secure, and accessible enterprise IT infrastructure to the GC.

SSC's mandate requires it to adapt and transform to best support the modernization of government services and to ensure public servants have the technology they need to do their job.This includes our own employees here at SSC. As a result, all actions taken to improve the accessibility of ICT

for the GC will apply to SSC as an organization and as an employer. This chapter does not cover the accessibility of SSC's corporate solutions, tools, and practices; for example, the technology SSC employees need to do their work. For information on SSC's corporate solutions and tools, refer to [Section 3.2: Information and Communication Technology (ICT)](#).

3.1.1 Key barriers

- Many of the digital systems used to enable programs and services are not usable by persons with disabilities.
- The quality standards for customer service are not equal for users with disabilities.
- Limited service delivery channels for persons with disabilities reduces their access to IT services.

3.1.2 Goals to reach by 2040

To help realize a Canada without barriers by 2040, SSC aspires to reach these two goals in relation to our programs and services:

Goal 1

GC partner departments are satisfied with the accessibility of the technology, information and related services that SSC provides.

Goal 2

SSC is consistently building in accessibility when acquiring, developing, and deploying technology, information, and related services that GC partner departments use.

3.1.3 Objectives for 2022–25

Objective 1

> Accessibility formally included in SSC's decision-making, governance, processes, and practices as it applies to enterprise IT infrastructure and services.

Objective 2

> SSC employees have the knowledge and skills necessary to build-in accessibility when acquiring, designing and delivering enterprise IT infrastructure and services.

Objective 3

> SSC delivers modern tools that are accessible by design and allow federal public servants to deliver the essential services on which Canadians rely.

Objective 4

> To support GC employees with disabilities, injuries and ergonomic requirements in their workplace by providing vital accessibility, accommodations and adaptive computer technology services.

3.1.4 Key planned actions

1. Review existing governance to identify opportunities to incorporate accessibility information from feedback and consultations in decision-making on a continual basis.
2. Work with SSC's departmental planning and reporting team to align and integrate accessibility requirements

into existing planning and reporting systems, processes, tools, and workflows.

3. Establish an accessibility testing policy starting with SSC's enterprise user-centric services and technologies, then looking at SSC internal operational services and technologies and then technology specific operational technologies.

4. Increase representation of persons with disabilities in SSC's workforce by using employment best practices so lived experiences contribute to the design and delivery of enterprise IT infrastructure and services.

5. Develop and implement strategies to improve accessibility capacity at SSC in the following areas:
   a. accessibility testing for SSC enterprise IT systems and services
   b. accessibility training for anyone responsible for the design and/or delivery of SSC's programs and services

6. Review, in consultation with persons with disabilities, key SSC enterprise processes and practices to identify options and address accessibility gaps.

7. Review practices and materials to identify opportunities to align accessibility assessments with security, privacy and risk assessments.

8. Develop a roadmap to address accessibility barriers in SSC's ICT for end users and employees.

9. Assess demand for:
   a. AAACT services to ensure SSC continues to provide relevant support for departments who offer programs and services to Canadians and federal public service employees with disabilities, injuries and ergonomic requirements. This includes a review

of AAACT's service offerings, tools, training, resources and adaptive computer technologies.
   b. SSC's Lending Library program to ensure SSC continues to offer relevant short-term accommodations, adaptive technology, services and tools for public service employees with disabilities or injuries.

3.2 Priority 2: Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

ICT accessibility ensures that people with and without disabilities can access the same information, perform the same tasks and receive the same services using information technology. It is the digital equivalent to accessibility in the physical environment (for example, curb cuts, ramps and railings). While ICT accessibility benefits everyone who uses it, it is a necessity for many people with disabilities.

Given SSC's mandate to provide secure and reliable networks, modern ICT tools and client-centric digital services to our partner departments, ICT accessibility strongly connects to the Procurement and Programs and Services sections of this Accessibility Plan. This section, however, focuses on the accessibility of SSC's corporate solutions, tools, and practices that SSC employees use to do their work.

The appearance of duplicate actions in this chapter and the Design and Delivery of Programs and Services chapter are intentional, as SSC is taking similar actions to ensure progress in both our corporate and enterprise solutions, tools, and practices.

3.2.1 Key barriers

- Challenges in accessing the ICT required for work, even when using adaptive technologies.
- Accessibility features are often not enabled on commonly available software and hardware.
- ICT security and privacy practices can unintentionally cause barriers to people with disabilities, yet the intersection between security, privacy and accessibility is rarely considered in ICT reviews and approvals.
- Some key GC applications and tools are not fully accessible (for example, Phoenix, PeopleSoft and GCdocs).
- Employees may create documents in non-accessible formats.
- There is a reported lack of accessible ICT tools and solutions to support language assessment training.
- Low network bandwidth availability for online meetings may create problems for those requiring adaptive technologies or accessibility features.
- Current oversight on the design, retrofit and procurement of ICT infrastructure and solutions does not prioritize accessibility.

3.2.2 Goals to reach by 2040

Goal 1

SSC employees are satisfied with the accessibility of the ICT and related services they use.

Goal 2

SSC is consistently building-in accessibility when acquiring, developing and deploying the technology,

information, and related services SSC employees use.

3.2.3 Objectives for 2022–25

Objective 1

Accessibility is formally included in SSC's decision-making, governance, processes, and practices as it applies to SSC's corporate ICT solutions, tools, and practices.

Objective 2

SSC employees have the knowledge and skills necessary to build-in accessibility when acquiring, developing and delivering the technology, information and related services used by SSC employees.

Objective 3

SSC's hybrid work environment is enabled with accessible technological tools that enhance user experience.

Objective 4

SSC employees can get workplace accommodations and adaptive technology through a simplified process.

3.2.4 Key planned actions

1. Review existing governance to identify opportunities to incorporate accessibility information from feedback and consultations in decision-making on a continual basis.

2. Integrate accessibility into SSC's Enterprise IT Procurement and Corporate Service Branch's annual

business planning and reporting, and corporate risk profile.

3. Develop and adopt training strategies to improve accessibility competency for anyone responsible for the design and/or delivery of SSC's corporate ICT solutions, tools and practices.

4. Review key SSC corporate processes and practices with persons with disabilities to identify and address accessibility gaps.

5. Collect accessibility feedback of SSC employees on their hybrid work environment experience and take corrective action where necessary.

6. Develop and adopt a plan to increase SSC employees' use of the GC Workplace Accessibility Passport, AAACT, and the Lending Library program.

3.3 Priority 3: Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities

Accessibility in procurement means meeting the broadest set of user needs possible right from the start of the process. If something is purchased that is not fully accessible, a short-term workaround may be required until issues can be resolved. Longer term solutions may be achieved by leveraging contractual obligations or through other means.

Using an accessible good, service or facility from the beginning minimizes the need for accommodation. This saves time, money, and energy related to workarounds, adding accessibility after the fact, or maintaining separate accessible goods, services or facilities. Being inclusive by

design invests in robust, resilient, and economical systems that can serve the broadest range of users over time.

3.3.1 Key barriers

- Commercially available ICT solutions may not be fully accessible. In an effort to encourage the acqusition of accessible tools, since 2018, the GC has been piloting the internationally recognized EN 301 549 Harmonized European Standard – Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services. This standard however, remains voluntary. As a result, there are limitations to how conformance can be enforced.

- SSC has created bilingual tools that are available to GC Technical and Contracting Authorities; but, they may not be using them. Until accessibility is part of every ICT solution's design, this problem will persist.

3.3.2 Goals to reach by 2040

Goal 1

To understand the industry's readiness for accessibility and to encourage vendors to move toward full conformance with the EN 301 549 standard.

Goal 2

To conform with the proposed new ICT accessibility standard and the requirement to procure accessible ICTs and digital content from the start.

3.3.3 Objectives for 2022–25

Objective 1

SSC engagement activities provide insights into the readiness of the ICT industry to provide accessible goods, services, and facilities.

Objective 2

SSC's framework and tools for procurement of accessible ICT are aligned with the internationally recognized EN 301 549 standard.

3.3.4 Key planned actions

1. SSC will reach out to suppliers to better understand industry's readiness to provide accessible digital communications, workplace support, and enterprise resource planning solutions.

2. Liaise with other GC organizations, including Treasury Board Secretariat and Accessible Standards Canada on a planned new GC ICT accessibility standard including implementation as it relates to SSC's mandate.

3. Establish a formal process to monitor and report progress on procurement of accessible ICT, including the quantity of procurements subject to SSC's procurement governance review that have considered ICT accessibility.

3.4 Priority 4: Employment

Employment refers to processes and practices that SSC follows across every phase of an employee's employment journey. It includes recruitment through to hiring, onboarding, accommodations, career and job development, performance management, and job exit.

As part of SSC's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and employment equity, and to ensure that all designated group members are equally represented at all levels of our organization, the Department has put in place the following supports for all employment equity groups:

- Employee networks, including a Persons with Disabilities Network and a Diversity Council
- Executive level champions
- Governance committees

To better understand the concerns of its employees with disabilities and the barriers to accessibility and inclusion they encounter, SSC uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data sources including:

- the Employment Equity Act self-identification questionnaire.
- the Public Service Employee Survey (with the Accessibility Act definition) provides both quantitative and qualitative perceptual data on their employment journey.
- SSC's 2020-2021 Employment System Review (ESR) – A legislative exercise under the Employment Equity Act.

3.4.1 Key barriers

- Some persons with disabilities find:
  - employment processes frustrating at all stages of their careers.
  - disclosing their disability problematic, as they don't see many candidates who self-identify receive promotions.
  - hiring processes long and overly complex.
- From recruitment to onboarding, some employees feel that attitudes, combined with technical, and

communication barriers, discourage candidates from applying. It can:

- make people feel powerless.
- lead some to disengagement and/or burnout.
- make people consider leaving SSC or the government altogether.

- Some employees with disabilities:
  - felt they were overlooked for promotions although fully qualified.
  - expressed frustration with application and onboarding processes.
  - noted unmet accommodations they need to manage their day-to-day work.

3.4.2 Goals to reach by 2040

Goal 1

Improve the recruitment, hiring and retention of persons with disabilities at SSC.

3.4.3 Objectives for 2022–25

Objective 1

Persons with disabilities are equally considered when it comes to making hiring decisions at SSC.

Objective 2

SSC leaders have the disability confidence necessary to support and be an ally for persons with disabilities.

Objective 3

SSC's systems, processes, and tools improve the employee workplace experience so that persons with disabilities get the support they need to reach their full potential.

Objective 4

SSC is a leader in the GC when it comes to proactively identifying and removing accessibility and disability inclusion barriers in the workplace, as it relates to employment processes.

3.4.4 Key planned actions

1. Make use of best practices from within SSC and across the GC to develop and implement an integrated strategy to better align staffing plans to the department's established targets for hiring persons with disabilities.

2. Design and deliver tailored training on various disabilities to managers.

3. Establish a Centre of Expertise to support employee accommodation needs that will:
   - Develop and deliver regular communications for supervisors about the Duty to Accommodate and the resources available at SSC to support employee accommodations.
   - Put in place a "yes by default" approach for accommodations and adaptive computer technology. This would allow SSC to handle employee accommodations and adaptive computer technology requests more quickly and efficiently.
   - Develop information and tools to improve onboarding for employees with disabilities. This will

include ensuring they have the accommodations they need upon arrival.

- Develop and implement a performance/data management strategy for capturing employee/accommodation information to identify and report on data/trends.

4. Ensure full implementation of current action plans to address:
   a. Recommendations of SSC's Employment Systems Review (ESR), including creating working groups to review policies, processes and behaviours related to employment

   b. Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

3.5 Priority 5: Built Environment

Built environment refers to all physical human-made structures and objects that make up SSC spaces, from entrances, elevators, and signage to meeting rooms, lighting, and so on.

SSC has started converting its workplaces to GCworkplace standards and is aiming to complete the transformation by 2026-27. Although the GCWorkplace standards meet the CSA Accessible design for the built environment [Footnote 1], SSC has developed its own internal standards that go beyond the current minimum accessibility requirements. SSC routinely involves the AAACT program in accommodations projects and engages with both accessibility experts and persons with lived experiences throughout the project lifecycles to ensure that projects meet workplace standards.

Footnote 1

SSC refers to the accessibility standards defined in *[CSA B651-18 – National Standard of Canada – Accessible design for the built environment](#)*.

[Return to footnote 1 referrer](#)

3.5.1 Key barriers

SSC employees and partners identified a number of obstacles when accessing and moving around the various SSC workplaces. These concerns include:

- Routes or pathways not always being accessible from main building doors to SSC work spaces.
- A lack of automatic door openers.
- Poor signage and way-finding, and difficulty moving between and across buildings.
- The design of many physical spaces does not consider the full range of disabilities. Examples include conference rooms, training facilities, washrooms, work spaces, and meeting environments.

3.5.2 Goals to reach by 2040

Goal 1

To make the buildings and work spaces that SSC employees occupy more accessible.

3.5.3 Objectives for 2022–25

Objective 1

SSC work spaces are accessible.

Objective 2

Information about SSC work spaces and places as it relates to accessibility is available to SSC employees and partners so they know how to plan their visits.

3.5.4 Key planned actions

1. Complete move of SSC's AAACT program to a new, more accessible workplace that will allow SSC to offer the following benefits to all GC employees:
   - a more accessible location.
   - a larger space to provide training.
   - a place for showcasing best practices and viewing and testing adaptive and new technologies.

2. Work with PSPC to:
   - conduct accessibility audits of buildings hosting SSC workplaces.
   - make modifications to workplaces, where possible, based on audit findings.

3. Make systems and tools that support employees coming into SSC workplaces more accessible, such as the employee workplace booking system.

4. Update SSC's Building Welcome Guides to include the results of accessibility audit findings.

3.6 Priority 6: Communication, other than ICT

Communication other than ICT refers to the ways people share and access information. It can include the choice of

language used (messaging), use of interpreters, meeting formats, visual communications, and documents.

SSC is committed to continuously improve the communications services it provides and how information is shared in and by the organization. It includes applying an accessibility and disability inclusion lens to how we create and produce digital products, print products, events, and social media content.

SSC recognizes that many communications platforms in use today may not be accessible by default and may have accessibility issues. SSC is working to improve the accessibility of its communications platforms, but it will take time. Commitments to address these issues are covered in the section on [Information and Communication Technology (ICT)](#).

3.6.1 Key barriers

- Day-to-day communications between individuals and groups may not be accessible.

- Documents sometimes cannot be accessed or understood.

- Meetings may not be fully accessible.

- While SSC can create corporate communications tools that are accessible, people using these tools may introduce accessibility issues. For example, people who are editing documents that have been created in accessible formats may not ensure their changes are accessible.

3.6.2 Goals to reach by 2040

Goal 1

SSC employees and GC departments can access SSC digital information, products, and services, and members of the public can access corporate communications information and products.

Goal 2

SSC and its employees consistently communicate in a way that is accessible, not just in SSC's corporate communications, but also as part of everyday communications.

3.6.3 Objectives for 2022–25

Objective 1

SSC employees, partners, and the public have equal access to information through communication supports, alternate formats, accessible websites, and digital content as it applies to SSC's corporate communications products.

Objective 2

SSC employees have the knowledge and skills necessary to create and deliver information in a way that is accessible and inclusive for all.

3.6.4 Key planned actions

1. Complete migration of SSC's intranet to a new digital platform.

2. Review content on SSC's corporate communications platforms to identify opportunities for improvement.

3. Develop and promote accessible and inclusive communications practices and tools.

4. Develop and deliver an awareness curriculum to address gaps related to accessible communications.

3.7 Priority 7: Culture

Culture refers to making accessibility a priority through collaboration, inclusivity, and respect. Obstacles to a disability-inclusive workplace can include attitudes, misunderstanding and/or stigma related to disabilities.

At SSC, we want to create and foster an organizational culture that is equipped, aware and that understands accessibility and disability inclusion. We recognize the need to amplify efforts to become a more inclusive and aware workforce.

3.7.1 Key barriers

- Accessibility continues to be an afterthought for some areas, processes and practices at SSC. For example, not everyone considers accessibility when creating documents or booking meetings.
- Stigma and bias in the workplace related to persons with disabilities persists. This is a serious problem that makes some persons with disabilities choose not to self-identify.

3.7.2 Goals to reach by 2040

Goal 1

SSC's policies, planning, and communications align, and enterprise-wide change leadership focuses on enabling a workforce that is aware and confident about including employees with disabilities in the workplace.

Goal 2

SSC's culture shifts because employees are aware, understand what needs to change, and apply an inclusive lens in their daily tasks, interactions and thoughts.

3.7.3 Objectives for 2022–25

Objective

Improve the culture of accessibility at SSC so its workforce understands and welcomes the benefits that integration and inclusion bring.

3.7.4 Key planned actions

1. Increase awareness of accessibility and inclusion through change management and communications activities, such as:
   a. Publishing accessibility-related information regularly through corporate internal communications channels.

   b. Communications related to key disability inclusion and accessibility events, such as International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) and National AccessAbility Week (NAAW).

   c. Sharing information on available training related to accessibility and disability inclusion.

   d. Communicating SSC's progress in the area of accessibility and disability inclusion at key speaking engagements.

   e. Informing SSC supervisors about the duty to accommodate and the resources available at SSC to

support accommodations.

3.8 Priority 8: Transportation

In the context of the *Accessible Canada Act*, transportation refers to the federally regulated transportation network and only applies to entities that must comply under the *[Canada Transportation Act (CTA)](#)*. This does not apply to SSC.

However, during consultations, SSC heard that travel between workplaces sometimes presented accessibility challenges, and that there are things we can do to support our employees.

3.8.1 Key barriers

- Moving from one building to another for meetings can be difficult and is not always accessible for SSC employees.
- Procedures (for example, the use of a paper-based system to pay for taxis) do not reflect the reality of some persons with disabilities when travelling between buildings to attend meetings.

3.8.2 Goals to reach by 2040

Goal 1

SSC employees are able to travel between buildings with ease.

3.8.3 Objectives for 2022–25

Objective

Explore ways to support SSC employees with disabilities to move more easily between buildings.

3.8.4 Key planned actions

1. Invite persons with disabilities to pilot an accessible mobile application for transport services and incorporate feedback from persons with disabilities during the pilot.

2. On a continuous basis, review and remove additional barriers (such as signage and access) that restrict movement for persons with disabilities between buildings.

4 Conclusion

SSC developed this Plan to prevent and remove all barriers that affect persons with disabilities in alignment with requirements of the Accessible Canada Act. It presents clear goals and objectives to make SSC accessible for all.

SSC will continue to work towards developing and adopting leading accessibility and disability inclusive practices in everything we do. While SSC has made significant progress, there is more to be done, including:

- developing implementation and delivery plans for the commitments in this Plan.
- exploring options to optimize and improve the existing systems, tools, and processes to receive and manage the accessibility and disability inclusion feedback that SSC receives.
- operationalizing accessibility planning and reporting within SSC.

As this first Plan is the baseline, SSC will continue to make progress in eliminating barriers in all priority areas and build on the goals set out in the Plan to achieve the Government of Canada's aim for a barrier-free Canada by 2040. Subsequent annual progress reports and accessibility plans will evolve as SSC's practices and processes change, feedback is received, and needs are assessed.

Thank you to our employees and partners for your support in advancing accessibility and disability inclusion, and for the contributions made to build SSC's first Plan.

Appendix A: Consultations with persons with disabilities

Methodology

SSC consulted with persons with disabilities and their allies in 2022 to inform this Plan.

We took an iterative approach to collecting information on the accessibility barriers that people face. First, we reviewed data from several previous reports on the accessibility barriers in the government and created a summary of the previously identified barriers for each priority area.

During the consultations, we raised departmental awareness on the Accessible Canada Act, shared the summary list of previously identified barriers, asked people to identify their concerns and to identify potential solutions. Many shared lived experiences.

We held consultations with two groups of stakeholders:

- SSC employees with disabilities, their allies, and employees at all levels in the department were invited to provide their feedback in a multitude of ways.
- Employees with disabilities, their allies in partner organizations, and CIO employees in partner organizations.

Approximately 100 people participated in the consultations that were held using Microsoft Teams. In addition to the

sessions, we received approximately 35 responses from individuals via alternate channels, including email and phone. Of these responses, seven came from individuals in three partner departments.

The results of the consultations were published in the What We Heard Report (WWHR). This report was shared with SSC employees and partners, and any feedback received will be part of future accessibility planning activities.

The project team worked with the priority area leads to recommend preliminary actions to address the barriers, which were then compared to the findings in the WWHR. Discussions were held with priority area leads to turn the commitments for the Plan into a set of results-oriented actions.

These draft commitments were shared with members of SSC's Persons with Disabilities Network and other key stakeholders. Feedback was requested via email, and the input received was incorporated into this Plan.

Highlights of the What We Heard Report

This Accessibility Plan will address many of the barriers listed below, but not all. The information here is a summary of what we heard during the consultations with SSC employees and partner organizations. It reflects the input and views of persons with disabilities and their allies:

- Persons with disabilities continue to have difficulty fully understanding and participating in meetings due to technical and communications challenges.

- Documents need to be more accessible—easier to open, easier to access, and easier to understand.
- Employees face obstacles at every stage of the employment journey.
- The official language requirement presents a huge barrier to job changes and promotions.
- Employees who need accommodation or adaptive technology must wait too long to get the basic tools they need to do their jobs.
- Accessibility is an afterthought.
- Training, including language training, is not always accessible.
- Most participants felt that SSC was doing a good job and better than other government departments in comparison.
- Most participants believe that SSC should focus on improving accessibility related to:
  - Communications
  - Meetings
  - Information
  - Forms
  - Documents
  - Web content

General takeaways

Additional comments regarding what SSC could do to improve accessibility include:

- Defining what accessibility and inclusion are.
- Being open and transparent about what has been done with feedback that was previously provided.

- Communicating progress on actions that are being taken.

In some cases, the barriers raised were for issues over which SSC has limited control or authority to fix. These were noted and will be tracked and reported on along with all other feedback.