Canada Energy Regulator

Régie de l'énergie du Canada

Annual Progress Report on the Canada Energy Regulator Accessibility Plan 2022-23

Canada

Contents

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How to provide feedback

Feedback on the CER's Accessibility Plan can be given to the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) at accessible@cer-rec.gc.ca. Telephone: (403) 292-4800. Or by completing this form.

The CHRO (or delegate) can also answer any questions on how to receive the CER's Accessibility Plan and Accessibility Report in an accessible format, as well as provide an accessible description of the CER's feedback processes for the Accessibility Plan.

The CER also has offices in Montreal, Vancouver, and Yellowknife. The contact information for each is listed below.

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Background

The Accessible Canada Act (ACA)

The *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA or the Act) received Royal Assent in June 2019, with the fundamental objective of creating a barrier-free Canada for people with disabilities by January 1, 2040. This monumental endeavor necessitates the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers within federal jurisdiction, primarily focusing on the following Priority Areas:

- Employment
- The built environment (encompassing buildings and public spaces)
- Information and communication technologies
- Communication (beyond information and communication technologies)
- The procurement of goods, services, and facilities
- The design and delivery of programs and services
- Transportation

A pivotal requirement outlined in the ACA mandates that organizations operating under federal jurisdiction develop and implement Accessibility Plans. These plans outline the strategies employed to identify, eliminate, and prevent barriers within the Priority Areas. In compliance with this requirement, the CER developed its first Accessibility Plan, which was submitted to the Accessibility Commissioner and made available to the public by being published on both the internal and external websites on December 31, 2022.

Definitions under the ACA:

The ACA provides crucial definitions that serve as the foundation for understanding its scope and objectives:

Barrier: The Act defines a barrier as "anything – including anything physical, architectural, technological, or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice – that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment or a functional limitation."

Disability: The Act defines disability as "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."

The following sections of this report will provide a comprehensive overview of our organization's efforts and progress in alignment with the ACA's objectives, addressing barriers, and promoting accessibility and inclusivity. It will also detail our consultations, feedback processes, and actions to enhance accessibility within our organization.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

At the CER, our mission is to ensure the safe and efficient delivery of energy across Canada and the world while upholding the highest safety and environmental standards. Our dedicated team, spanning coast to coast, works in a hybrid environment that emphasizes our commitment to accessibility, equity and inclusion.

Our Accessibility Plan progress report demonstrates our dedication to implementing the first Accessibility Plan for 2023–25, in compliance with the *Accessible Canada Act*. The CER's Accessibility Plan aligns with our Strategic Plan, including deliverables such as the Diversity and Belonging Roadmap, Hybrid Workplace Initiative and the commitments in the Employment Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Plan for 2021–24.

This progress report highlights our achievements in fostering diversity and creating a barrier-free environment. Of the thirty-one actions identified in the CER Accessibility Plan for 2023-25, I am proud to report that we have completed eleven and made progress in advancing the other twenty actions. These early achievements underscore our commitment to creating an inclusive and accessible environment. While we celebrate this progress, we acknowledge that there is still substantial work to be done to attain our goals.

The CER fully embraces the Government of Canada's vision to create a barrier-free nation by 2040. We welcome your feedback on our Accessibility Plan progress as we strive for a barrier-free CER.

Tracy Sletto
Chief Executive Officer
Canada Energy Regulator

Executive Summary

The CER's Accessibility Report affirms our commitment to promoting inclusivity and accessibility in accordance with the *Accessible Canada Act* (ACA). The report is structured around the seven Priority Areas, mirroring the CER's Accessibility Plan, and offers an in-depth perspective on the progress and discussions within each area.

Our approach to implementing the Accessibility Plan is firmly rooted in the progress achieved through the adoption of the CER's Diversity and Belonging Roadmap (Roadmap) in 2022. The integration of the Roadmap and the Accessibility Plan underscores our dedication to fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse environment that nurtures the well-being of all individuals.

The development of our Accessibility Plan evaluated initiatives already in progress, aligning them with our ongoing commitments, long-term strategies, and continuous improvement efforts. Prioritizing actions has ensured that our plan is not only attainable but also realistic, promoting alignment across our entire organization. With numerous initiatives already in motion, there is ample potential for further advancements.

Completed Action Highlights:

1. Implementation of leadership performance management accountabilities.
2. Enhanced transparency in communicating accommodation processes during application stages.
3. Improved accommodations procurement for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).
4. Implementation of training on Accessible Procurement.
5. Integration of privacy training into accessible procurement training.
6. Integration of accessibility considerations from the outset in procurement processes.
7. Streamlined procurement procedures for accommodations.
8. Effective leveraging of equipment from Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology program (AAACT) to evaluate accommodation effectiveness.
9. Successful execution of the CER's self-identification campaign led to a significant reduction in gaps for people with disabilities, decreasing from 29 in 2022 to 16 in 2023, as indicated in the Employment Equity Report 2023.
10. Review of misconduct-related policies.
11. Establishment of the Accessibility Champion Role.

These early achievements underscore our commitment to creating an inclusive and accessible environment. While we celebrate this progress, we acknowledge that there is still substantial work to be done to attain our goals.

In the upcoming year, our primary focus for 2024 will revolve around:

- Incorporating the accessibility passport considerations into our evolving hybrid workplace;
- Continuing general and targeted training on accessibility;
- Integrating accessibility considerations into programs, policies and processes; and
- Hiring, promotion and retention of people with disabilities.

Looking forward, we will consider feedback received on the plan, upholding our commitment to continuous improvement and contribution to a barrier-free Canada by 2040.

Introduction

This Accessibility Report serves as a testament to the CER's commitment to fostering inclusivity and accessibility, aligning with the ACA and its overarching goal of creating a barrier-free Canada by 2040. The ACA, a federal law enacted in 2019, sets a precedent in the pursuit of identifying, removing, and preventing barriers facing people with disabilities, encompassing physical, architectural, technological, attitudinal, information-based, and communicative aspects, along with policy-related or systemic barriers.

In this legislative endeavor, the Act lays the groundwork for seven priority areas: Employment, the Built Environment (encompassing buildings and public spaces), Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), Communication (beyond ICT), the Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities, the Design and Delivery of Programs and Services, and Transportation, which encompasses providers crossing provincial or international borders. This approach aims to facilitate equal and full participation in society for people with disabilities, embracing their diverse range of abilities.

The establishment of the Accessibility Commissioner is a pivotal element of the ACA, tasked with the role of enforcing the Act and the accompanying Accessible Canada Regulations. With the authority to conduct inspections, issue production and compliance orders, and impose administrative monetary penalties, the Commissioner acts as the vanguard of accessibility progress, ensuring accountability and compliance in the federal jurisdiction. A foundational principle of the ACA, "Nothing Without Us," mandates that people with disabilities be actively consulted in the development of laws, policies, and programs that directly impact them, fostering inclusivity and fairness.

The CER embraces the vision articulated in the Act and has taken firm steps in its journey to foster accessibility within its sphere. This commitment is exemplified through the development of the CER's inaugural Accessibility Plan for 2023-25. The plan represents the culmination of extensive consultations with CER staff and research into barriers to accessibility.

Feedback plays a pivotal role in shaping the CER's accessibility initiatives. The organization actively seeks input on its Accessibility Plan, with a commitment to acknowledging feedback through the same means it was received. This open feedback process facilitates ongoing improvements, helping the CER adapt and evolve its strategies.

Several notable initiatives stand as testament to the CER's commitment to promoting accessibility and nurturing a barrier-free environment. From the creation of its Accessibility Plan to the implementation of a Government of Canada Workplace Accessibility Passport, the CER is dedicated to ensuring that its services are accessible to all Canadians. The organization's efforts extend to addressing workplace barriers, fostering an inclusive environment, and ensuring equal opportunities for all. The journey towards creating a barrier-free Canada is a collective endeavor, and the CER is committed to contributing to this transformative vision.

This report will provide an overview of the steps taken thus far, the challenges encountered, and the future endeavors on the horizon. As we detail our progress, we underscore our commitment to creating a barrier-free Canada and fostering an inclusive and accessible environment for all.

CER Accessibility Plan Priority Areas and Accomplishments

The CER Accessibility Plan for the 2023-25 was developed, with staff consultations, research on accessibility barriers, and identification of potential solutions.

Each of the seven Priority Areas identified in the ACA is discussed separately, along with the CER's accomplishments in each area during the year. This section provides a detailed account of the progress made.

Progress in Priority Area One: Employment

The CER has made significant strides in the area of employment for people with disabilities, aligning its efforts with the overarching goals set forth in the Act and the Government of Canada's Accessibility Strategy. This section provides a detailed account of the progress made in Priority Area One: Employment.

To achieve the commitment of hiring 5,000 net new people with disabilities by 2025 across the federal government, the CER has undertaken several key initiatives.

The foundation of these efforts lies in recognizing the existing representation gaps in its workforce. The CER's Employment Equity Report for 2020–21 revealed a notable underrepresentation of people with disabilities in its workforce, standing at 3.3 percent compared to a workforce availability of 8.8 percent. The noticeable difference pointed to the existence of systemic barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities at the CER, particularly in professional, supervisor, and administrative roles.

To address this discrepancy, the CER has taken multifaceted measures:

Self-Identification Campaign: Recognizing the need for a more accurate representation, the CER initiated a self-identification campaign. Employees were encouraged to voluntarily disclose their disability status, resulting in a significant reduction in gaps from 29 in 2021-22 to 16 in 2022-23, as reported in the Employment Equity Reports. This accomplishment underscores the organization's commitment to fostering inclusivity within its workforce.

Training on Bias and Barriers: Amendments to the *Public Service Employment Act* have been implemented, with workshops and training provided to CER leaders. This proactive approach addresses biases and barriers related to hiring Employment Equity groups, ensuring equal opportunities in the recruitment process.

Improvement in Assessments and Web Accessibility: Enhancements have been made in the assessment of candidates, along with improvements to the website, Statement of Merit Criteria (SOMC), and offer letters. These improvements directly align with the goals of the CER's Accessibility Plan, aiming to eliminate barriers for people with disabilities.

Implementation of the Accessibility Passport: The CER implemented the Government of Canada (GC) Workplace Accessibility Passport, which is a tool for public service employees to document the barriers they may face at work and the adaptive tools and support measures they need to succeed. Managers are responsible for ensuring each employee has the tools and support measures they need, including any adaptive tool or measure. For people with disabilities, workplace accommodations are vital for a safe and effective professional experience. The GC Workplace Accessibility Passport simplifies this process, serving as a record that captures agreements between employees and managers. What sets it apart is its portability throughout a public service career, eliminating the need for recurrent negotiations during job changes. Currently adopted by several government departments, the passport aims to reduce delays, eliminate confusion, and enhance the mobility of federal employees with disabilities.

Recruitment through the David C. Onley Initiative Career Fair: The CER actively participated in the "Government of Canada Opportunities for Students and Recent Graduates with Disabilities" career fair on November 9, 2023, as part of the David C. Onley Initiative for Employment and Enterprise Development. This initiative, led by Carleton University and funded by the Government of Ontario, is a partnership among four postsecondary institutions in Ottawa. Its primary goal is to develop knowledge, resources, and tools to support students with disabilities in their employment readiness and career aspirations.

Progress in Workplace Accommodations: In the realm of workplace accommodations, staff have played a crucial role in advancing the CER's commitment to inclusivity and support for people with disabilities. Below are some examples:

> **Better communications and support for accessibility and accommodations:** Staff has actively engaged in enhancing communications and support for accessibility and accommodations. Labour Relations training for Leaders has integrated Duty to Accommodate (DTA) processes into two modules.

> **Familiarize employees involved in the accommodations processes with Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) supports:** CER staff are committed to addressing the need to familiarize employees with the AAACT program. A dedicated DTA training for employees was conducted in December 2023. This training encompasses essential information on the AAACT process, ensuring employees are well-versed in available accommodation supports.

CER staff remains steadfast in its efforts to facilitate an accessible and supportive work environment, aligning with the CER's broader objectives in promoting diversity and inclusivity in the workplace.

Progress in Hiring Processes

In the realm of Employment, CER Human Resources (HR) staff have played a crucial role in advancing the CER's commitment to hiring people with disabilities in alignment with the Act. The focus has been on making the hiring process fairer and more inclusive for people with disabilities. Below is a list of the CER's specific contribution to the accomplishments related to removing barriers in the hiring processes:

Supporting Student Hires and Equity Groups: In the 2023-24 fiscal year, CER staff have made progress in aligning with its commitment to inclusivity and diversity. A total of twenty students were hired from May to November 2023, with a focus on promoting diversity across equity groups, including students with disabilities.

In addition to these hires, the CER also participated in the Career Fair: Government of Canada Opportunities for Students and Recent Graduates with Disabilities. This event, part of the David C. Onley Initiative, connected the CER staff with exceptional talent from renowned institutions in alignment with the government's objective to hire 5,000 people with disabilities by 2025.

VP, People & Workforce Supports, and team at the Govt. of Canada Opportunities for Students and Recent Graduates with Disabilities Career Fair.

Ryan Straschnitzki shares his inspiring journey of resilience after a life-altering event.

Through active participation in the career fair, CER staff engaged with more than fifty students, conducting over fifteen first-round interviews, and submitting thirteen entries to the CER's new database. Additionally, the team has initiated efforts to access the Health Canada/PHAC database, comprising more than four hundred persons with disabilities, further expanding avenues for diverse hiring.

National AccessAbility Week at CER: Inspiring Resilience with Ryan Straschnitzki As part of our commitment to fostering a more accessible and inclusive workplace, the CER celebrated National AccessAbility Week from May 28 to June 3, 2023.

Event Highlights:

During this impactful week, CER had the honor of hosting Ryan Straschnitzki, a survivor of the Humboldt Hockey Team bus crash. Ryan shared his inspiring journey of positivity and resilience, offering a firsthand account of overcoming challenges and embracing life after a life-altering event. His story served as a powerful reminder of the importance of inclusivity and support for individuals with disabilities.

CER's Commitment in Action:

The event not only showcased our dedication to National AccessAbility Week but also demonstrated the tangible steps we are taking to create a workplace where everyone, regardless of ability, feels valued and included. Ryan's presence and his motivational narrative aligned with our mission to become a better, more accessible regulator.

In conclusion, the accomplishments outlined in Priority Area One reflect the CER's ongoing commitment to breaking down barriers to employment and fostering a workplace environment that embraces diversity and inclusion.

Moving Forward:

As we reflect on this impactful event, it reinforces our commitment to continuous improvement and our journey towards a barrier-free Canada. National AccessAbility Week serves as a catalyst for further initiatives and actions that contribute to a more inclusive and supportive work environment at the CER.

While progress has been achieved, the CER acknowledges the continuous nature of the journey towards full accessibility and inclusivity. The organization remains dedicated to addressing systemic barriers, refining recruitment processes, and cultivating a workplace culture that fully supports people with disabilities.

Progress in Priority Area Two: The Built Environment

The CER is dedicated to creating an inclusive and accessible built environment, prioritizing both its office spaces and public facilities. In alignment with the second priority area of the Accessibility Plan, the CER has implemented various initiatives to enhance accessibility, underscoring its commitment to inclusivity in the physical spaces it oversees.

Accessibility Enhancements: In recent years, the CER has made considerable progress in addressing accessibility challenges within its office facilities. Key initiatives include installing optical access buttons for all washrooms and reception doors. Notably, a gender-neutral, fully accessible washroom and change room have been established at the Calgary office, contributing to more accommodating facilities. Collaborating with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), the CER is actively pursuing accessibility enhancements at its regional offices.

Hybrid Workplace Adaptations: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CER initiated a Hybrid Workplace Pilot, allowing staff to return to the office. This pilot not only addressed accessibility concerns but also provided increased flexibility. Valuable feedback from staff emphasized the positive impact of remote work, demonstrating improved accessibility and a leveled playing field for employees requiring accommodations.

Accessibility Assessments: As part of its commitment to enhancing accessibility, the CER plans to conduct physical accessibility assessments of its office environments. These assessments are aimed at identifying priorities for improvement, ensuring that CER facilities are accessible to all. In 2023-24, the CER will prioritize and conduct a physical accessibility assessment in one of its offices or office areas. This proactive approach reflects the organization's dedication to continuous improvement.

Communication and Transparency: Recognizing the importance of transparent communication, the CER is committed to providing information about the accessibility measures of its facilities on its intranet and job postings. This initiative seeks to promote inclusivity, attract diverse talent, and ensure potential employees are well-informed about the accessibility of CER facilities.

Progress in Priority Area Three: Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The Government of Canada's Accessibility Strategy underscores the universal usability of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). While substantial strides have been made, our ongoing commitment to accessibility warrants a comprehensive assessment of external ICT services. Our journey involves aligning with national standards, leveraging existing features, and addressing barriers in data visualization.

Advancing ICT Accessibility Using Government Standards: In September 2023, the CER initiated the ICT Accessibility phase one project. This endeavor aims to align the CER with

Government of Canada ICT standards. Our focus includes assessing CER's ICT products against accessibility plans, standards, and user feedback. The project, currently in its technical review phase, involves the creation of a CER-specific checklist and product assessment. This checklist, when finalized, will serve as a valuable tool for prioritizing accessibility implementation. The culmination of our efforts will be a comprehensive recommendation report, expected to be completed by March 31, 2024.

Ensuring Compliance with Latest ICT Accessibility Standards: The CER acknowledges the importance of adhering to the new Standard on Information and Communication Technology Accessibility introduced by the GC in fall 2022. This standard broadens accessibility requirements to encompass all procured, developed, and used ICT within the GC. The CER is committed to taking necessary actions to bring our organization into compliance with this standard.

Leveraging Microsoft Office Accessibility for Enhanced Inclusivity: Recognizing the underutilization of existing accessibility features within the Microsoft Office 365 Suite, the CER aims to promote awareness and usage of these built-in functionalities. While these features have the potential to significantly enhance accessibility, the lack of awareness among staff poses a challenge. Efforts are underway to bridge this knowledge gap and ensure that all staff can benefit from these tools.

Industry Monitoring for Enhanced Data Visualization Accessibility Tools: As part of our commitment to staying at the forefront of accessibility, the CER continues to monitor the industry for advancements in accessibility tools, particularly those related to data visualization. Acknowledging the enriched user experience that data visualizations bring, we are conscious of the need to make these features accessible to all, including those relying on machine reading technology.

In conclusion, the CER's ICT initiatives are not only aligned with national standards but also underscore our dedication to creating an inclusive digital environment. Through ongoing projects, training initiatives, and collaboration, we are poised to overcome challenges and ensure that our ICT services are accessible to everyone.

Progress in Priority Area Four: Communication, other than ICT

Our commitment to enhancing communication accessibility at the CER reflects a multifaceted approach targeting awareness, understanding, and inclusivity. As outlined in our Accessibility Plan, three key components guide our efforts: addressing prejudices and stigmatization faced by persons with disabilities, providing training and awareness on accessibility issues, and fostering inclusive communication practices.

Training and Awareness: As part of the CER Employment Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Plan, a comprehensive review of course offerings have been initiated to elevate accessibility awareness and understanding among all staff. Recognizing the importance of fostering an

inclusive workplace culture, this endeavor aims to address barriers rooted in insufficient awareness and knowledge.

Plain Language Initiatives: The promotion of plain language, aligned with the Government of Canada's policy objectives, remains a commitment at the CER. Efforts are underway to enhance policies, procedures, and tools to further support the use of plain language in both internal and external communications. This initiative seeks to eliminate barriers for individuals with neurological or cognitive disabilities who may face challenges with overly complex language.

Decision in Brief Implementation: The CER acknowledges the complexity of regulatory decision-making processes and the potential challenges it poses for individuals with neurological or cognitive disabilities. In response, we have implemented the Decision in Brief (DiB) practice to accompany Reasons for Decision, particularly in cases involving complexity or significant public interest. While progress has been made in creating templates and issuing DiB for specific, more complex decisions, achieving the goal of a grade 8-10 readership level is recognized as an ongoing work in progress. To date, 25 percent of the goal has been achieved, signifying our commitment to enhancing accessibility and transparency in regulatory decisions.

In summary, our progress in Priority Area Four reflects a comprehensive commitment to fostering an inclusive communication environment at the CER, addressing barriers, and continuously striving for improvements in accessibility and understanding.

Promoting Neurodiversity at CER: A Personal Insight

In a thoughtful internal article, Kathryn Eagles, an Environmental Protection Technical Specialist at the CER, candidly shares her experience as a neurodiverse professional. With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autism, Kathryn embraces the challenges of navigating a work culture that often favors a specific personality type. As a participant in the Government of Canada's [Mosaic Leadership Development Program](), she advocates for the importance of diverse perspectives in leadership. Beyond her role, Kathryn mentor's neurodiverse children, emphasizing the need for more inclusive application processes. Despite the hurdles, Kathryn's commitment is clear: "The work environment was not designed for me, but I'm going to participate in it. And I'm going to find a way to do that on my own terms." Her story highlights the CER's dedication to inclusivity and accessibility.

Kathryn Eagles openly shares her experience as a neurodiverse professional, providing valuable insights into workplace diversity and inclusion.

Progress in Priority Area Five: The Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

The CER is dedicated to promoting accessibility in its procurement processes, ensuring that all goods, services, and facilities consider, and address accessibility needs. Significant progress has been made in line with the commitments outlined in the Accessibility Plan. Below are the accomplishments related to Priority Area Five: The Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities.

Training Initiatives:

- **Accessible Procurement Training:** The Procurement staff at the CER have attended information sessions conducted by the Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS), and Shared Services Canada (SSC). These sessions emphasized the importance of accessibility in procurement, enhancing the team's understanding of accessible procurement principles.
- **Introduction of Toolkits:** The Accessibility in Procurement Toolkit and Accessibility in Procurement Checklist have been introduced to several teams within the CER. These resources serve as guidance for integrating accessibility considerations into procurement plans.

Privacy Considerations in Procurement:

- **Training Implementation:** Privacy training was provided to the procurement team to ensure that privacy considerations are factored into the processing of contract requests involving accessibility requirements.
- **Toolkit Revisions:** The Accessibility in Procurement Toolkit and Checklist underwent revisions to explicitly include privacy information considerations. These revisions aim to create a comprehensive framework that aligns with both accessibility and privacy requirements.
- Inclusion of Accessibility in SAP Purchase Requisition Supplementary Form:
- Accessibility considerations have been incorporated into the SAP Purchase Requisition Supplementary Form, ensuring that business units take accessibility into account when initiating requirements for contracts. The Accessibility in Procurement Checklist is included in the document for requesting contracts, emphasizing the importance of accessibility considerations from the outset.

Streamlining Procurement Procedures for Accommodations:

- **Process Review:** The procurement team is actively reviewing processes to manage contract requests with accessibility requirements, particularly concerning privacy information. This review aims to streamline procedures for more efficient and effective procurement related to accommodations.

- **Toolkit and Checklist Utilization:** The Accessibility in Procurement Toolkit and Accessibility in Procurement Checklist will serve as essential resources for the procurement team and CER staff, guiding them in planning and executing procurement with accessibility considerations.

Leveraging AAACT Opportunities:

- **Incorporating AAACT in Procurement Process:** The procurement team has reviewed and revised processes to incorporate the [Accessibility, Accommodation, and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) program](#) as one of the options for accessibility considerations. This ensures that AAACT is recommended to clients during the planning and execution of procurement processes.

These accomplishments reflect the CER's commitment to creating a more accessible and inclusive environment through its procurement practices. The ongoing efforts in training, toolkit adoption, and process improvements underscore the organization's dedication to addressing accessibility considerations at every stage of the procurement lifecycle.

Progress in Priority Area Six: The Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

In recognizing the paramount importance of integrating accessibility into the design and delivery of its programs and services, the CER has made significant strides in this priority area. The commitment to considering accessibility from the outset ensures that all individuals, including those with disabilities, can fully participate in and benefit from the CER's initiatives.

Incorporating GBA Plus Lens: The CER has prioritized the integration of a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) lens into its programs and services, which inherently includes considerations for accessibility. This ensures that initiatives are developed with a comprehensive understanding of how they may impact different segments of the population, including those with disabilities.

Human Resource Policies Review: Building on this commitment, the CER initiated a three-year comprehensive review of its Human Resource-related policies in early 2022. These policies are being rigorously assessed through the lenses of GBA Plus, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Notably, three policies - Policy on Talent and Performance Management, Policy on Employment Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and Policy on Recognition - have undergone reviews, updates, and approvals.

Self-Identification Campaign and Progress: In March 2023, the CER conducted a Self-Identification (Self-ID) campaign to enhance its understanding of the demographic composition of its workforce. The campaign successfully reduced gaps for all Employment Equity (EE) groups. However, the representation of people with disabilities stands at 6 percent, falling short of the labour market availability estimate of 8.7 percent. This insight underscores the need for intensified efforts to enhance the inclusion and representation of individuals with disabilities.

Self-identification is recognized as a pivotal element in shaping accessibility initiatives. It empowers the organization to make informed decisions, promote equitable practices, and cultivate a supportive and diverse workforce.

Future Program Design with Accessibility in Mind: Building on the insights gained from the Self-Identification campaign and the ongoing policy reviews, the CER is poised to incorporate accessibility considerations into the design of future programs and services. Recognizing that addressing accessibility issues requires accurate data, the CER has committed to improving its datasets, including launching initiatives to encourage staff to self-identify. This commitment ensures that the organization can better address accessibility challenges faced by individuals with disabilities.

Progress in Priority Area Seven: Transportation

Understanding the critical role of transportation in its operations, the CER has been diligent in addressing accessibility concerns related to travel, especially given its regional offices and the potential need for employees to travel across the country for field inspections.

Continuous Improvement in Travel Policies: The CER's commitment to accessibility extends to its travel policies and processes. The organization is dedicated to ongoing improvements in these policies to identify and eliminate any barriers to accessibility. This commitment ensures that CER employees, regardless of their location or specific travel requirements, have access to inclusive and accommodating travel arrangements.

The progress in addressing accessibility concerns related to transportation is actively managed by Procurement, which oversees travel policies. Procurement plays a crucial role in ensuring that the policies are continually reviewed, updated, and aligned with accessibility objectives. Any advancements or changes in this area will be reported in the upcoming year's report.

Focus for the Upcoming Year (Year+1)

In the upcoming year, our primary focus for 2024 will revolve around the following key initiatives:

Integration of Accessibility Passport in the Hybrid Workplace:

Incorporating accessibility passport considerations into our evolving hybrid workplace will be a key priority. This involves conducting comprehensive accessibility assessments as an integral part of our hybrid work approach. By doing so, we aim to create an inclusive work environment that caters to the diverse needs of our employees, ensuring that the hybrid workplace is accessible to all.

Continued Accessibility Training Initiatives:

Continuing both general and targeted training on accessibility remains a focal point for the upcoming year. We recognize the importance of ensuring that all employees, from leadership to staff, are well-versed in accessibility principles. This commitment extends to providing

specialized training where needed, fostering a workplace culture that not only understands but actively embraces accessibility in every aspect of our operations.

Integration of Accessibility in Policies and Processes:

We are dedicated to integrating accessibility considerations into our updated policies and processes. This involves a comprehensive review and revision of existing policies to ensure they align with the latest accessibility standards and best practices. By embedding accessibility into our foundational documents, we aim to institutionalize inclusivity, making it an inherent part of how we operate.

Advancement in the Employment of People with Disabilities:

The hiring, promotion, and retention of people with disabilities at the CER will be a central focus in the upcoming year. Building on the progress made, we are committed to expanding our efforts to create a workforce that is representative of the diverse talents and capabilities of individuals with disabilities. This includes targeted initiatives to enhance career development opportunities, support promotion pathways, and foster an inclusive workplace culture that encourages the long-term retention of employees with disabilities.

Consultations

Aligned with the ACA, the CER is dedicated to robust consultations to enhance our accessibility progress reports. Our approach is comprehensive, focusing on identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility.

Internal and External Consultations: We collaborated extensively with diverse employee groups, emphasizing individuals with disabilities. External stakeholders, including the Office of the Public Service Accessibility, Justice Canada, and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, were also key contributors.

Diverse Participation: Ensuring diverse representation, our hybrid consultations included a significant number of participants from various disability communities, offering a broad spectrum of perspectives.

Inclusive Consultation Format: Utilizing a hybrid format, blending in-person and virtual elements, we accommodated diverse preferences and accessibility needs, removing barriers and enhancing inclusivity.

Valuable Insights: Participants shared insights on existing barriers and proposed solutions, informing our accessibility progress report. Comments were documented and analyzed to substantiate our conclusions.

Our commitment to transparency and continuous improvement is evident in our consultation approach, ensuring the central role of persons with disabilities in evolving accessibility initiatives at the CER.

Feedback

In our commitment to collaboration, feedback, and continuous improvement, the CER values the role of input from internal and external stakeholders, particularly individuals with disabilities, in shaping our accessibility initiatives. We actively seek insights from diverse stakeholders, including employees, advocacy groups, and subject matter experts, using regular consultations and feedback mechanisms to evaluate our plan's effectiveness. Recognizing the dynamic nature of accessibility, we adapt strategies based on received feedback, ensuring our plan remains responsive to emerging needs, technological advancements, and evolving best practices. Committed to continuous improvement, we cultivate a culture of continuous learning and training, ensuring our workforce is well-informed and equipped to champion accessibility across all operations. Beyond mere compliance, we actively pursue groundbreaking approaches, exploring innovative technologies, and collaborating with external experts, aligning our efforts with the evolving landscape of accessibility.

Conclusion: Paving the Way to a Barrier-Free Future

The progress made by the CER in eliminating barriers underscores our unwavering commitment to accessibility and inclusion. Out of the thirty-one actions outlined in the CER Accessibility Plan for 2023–25, we have successfully completed eleven actions and made notable strides in the remaining twenty. As we navigate the intricacies of the contemporary workplace, we acknowledge that the journey toward full accessibility is continuous. This comprehensive approach showcases our dedication to continuous improvement and our overarching mission to contribute to the realization of a barrier-free Canada by 2040. By addressing systemic barriers, refining our processes, and fostering a workplace culture that champions inclusivity, the CER is actively shaping an exemplary model for workplaces across the country.

Appendix A: Accessibility and Inclusion Engagement Activities 2023

January

1. Workplace Neurodiversity: New Normal? Disability & Diversity
2. Bouncing Back from Pandemic Burnout
3. Visible Minorities - Management for and with Racialized People: Discussion for Managers
4. Ask Me Anything Series - Barriers: The Long Fight
5. Participate in Bell Let's Talk Day
6. Ask Me Anything Series: LGBTQ2+Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) at work for Managers
7. Overcoming Mental Illness One Summit at a Time
8. The practice of Empathetic Communication

February

1. Leadership Fatigue: Responding to Stress, Burnout, and Overload
2. Strengthening Mental Health Through Career Development
3. Psychological Safety at Work
4. Growth and Protection: Finding the Right Balance
5. Workplace Neurodiversity: The New Normal?
6. Diversity: Secret Power Behind High Performing Teams

March

1. Reflections on Accessibility
2. Perspective of an Executive on the Importance of Mental Health
3. Moving from Bias to Inclusion

April

1. Beyond the Prescribed Workload: Better Understanding and Managing the Real Workload
2. Anchoring Yourself in the Turmoil Through Caring Leadership
3. Decoding the Code of Conduct

May

1. GCdocs Bootcamps have arrived!
2. Overcoming Adversity and Reclaiming Power as Indigenous Women
3. Designing for All: Implications for the Public Service of Canada
4. Understanding the intersections of Gender Equity, Diversity and Climate Change
5. Strategies - Trauma Awareness and Resilience
6. Designing for All: Implications for the Public Service of Canada
7. What Does "Better" Look Like? An Intersectional Approach to Government Policy, Programs, and Operations
8. Canadian Congress on Disability Inclusion 2023
9. National AccessAbility Week
10. Unleashing the potential of Dog Guides – a personal story from Christian Iniguez
11. AccessAbility Day 2023

June

1. Join us to hear Humboldt Hockey Survivor Ryan Straschnitzki's message of resilience
2. Ombuds Session – Building Trust and Connection at Work
3. Men's Mental Health: Male Depression, Suicide and What to do about it
4. Individual confidential discussions with Ombuds
5. Employment Opportunity for Students with Disabilities (EOSD) - Manager Information Session
6. Career Resilience and Mental Health

July

1. Mental Health and the Workplace: Raising Awareness
2. Build Culture Connection: Strengthen Social Health at Work

August

1. Unveiling the Power of Personal Values at Work

September

1. Inaugural meeting of the Equity Network
2. Power of Healthy Tension

October

1. Mental Health Marathon
2. Flipping the Script on Performance Anxiety in the Workplace

November

1. EAP E-Learning Platforms: LifeSpeak & Torchlight
2. Canada Disability Benefit Regulations
3. Managing Addictions
4. IDPD 2023 - GC Workplace Accessibility Passport
5. Finding Opportunity in Adversity

December

1. International Day of Persons with Disabilities
2. Kitchen Café - GC Workplace Accessibility Passport
3. Psychological Health & Physical Safety in the Workplace
4. Psychological Well-Being: Before, During, After the Holidays