

Ministry of Citizens' Services Fiscal 2023/24 Estimates Briefing

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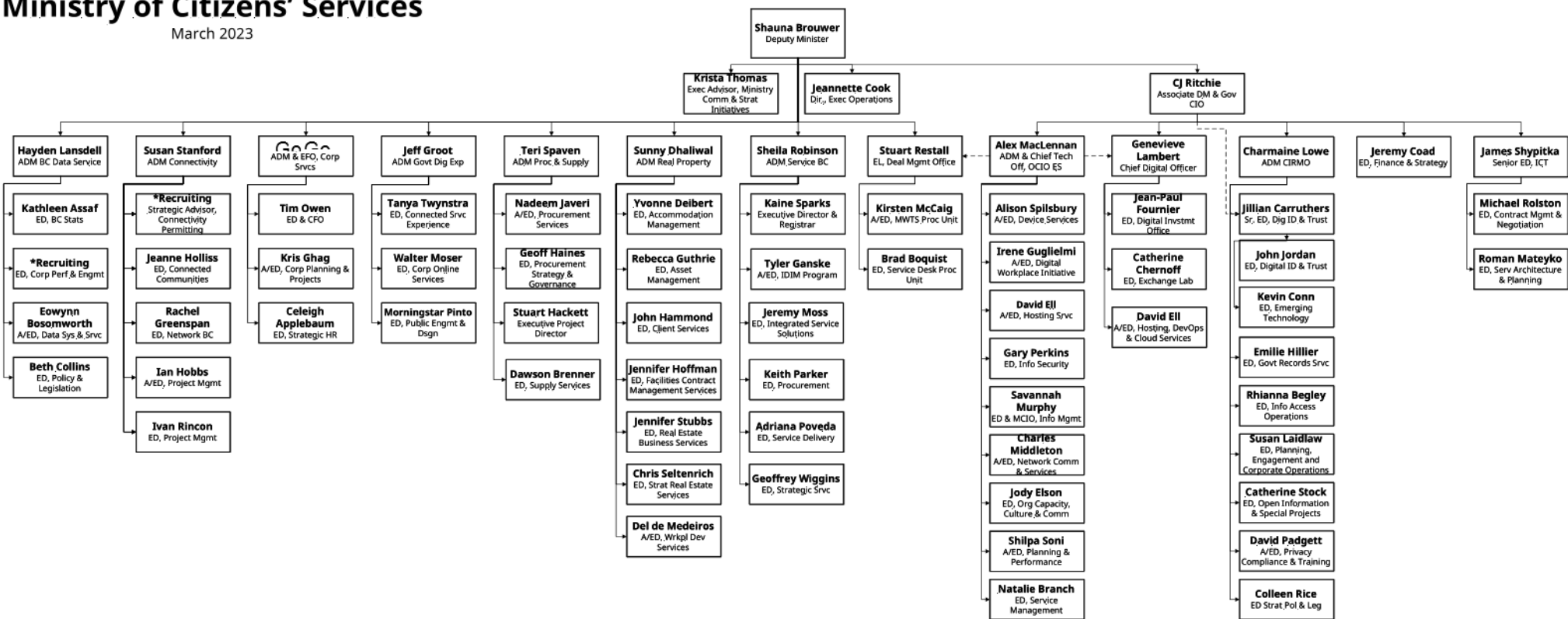
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Ministry of Citizens' Services

March 2023



MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES

The mission of the Ministry of Citizens' Services is to enable cost-effective, accessible, and responsive service delivery to the public through multiple access points and provide efficient services to government.

MINISTRY SUMMARY

(\$000)

	Estimates 2022/23 ¹	Estimates 2023/24
VOTED APPROPRIATION		
Vote 19 — Ministry Operations.....	656,727	682,770
OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>656,727</u>	<u>682,770</u>
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES ²	464,010	425,022
LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS ³	1,500	1,600
REVENUE COLLECTED FOR, AND TRANSFERRED TO, OTHER ENTITIES ⁴	—	—

NOTES

¹ For comparative purposes, figures shown for the 2022/23 operating expenses; capital expenditures; loans, investments and other requirements; and revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities are restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 *Estimates*. A reconciliation of restated operating expenses and capital expenditures is presented in Schedule A.

² A listing of estimated capital expenditures by ministry is presented in Schedule C.

³ A summary of loans, investments and other requirements by ministry is presented in Schedule D.

⁴ A summary of revenue collected for, and transferred to, other entities by ministry is presented in Schedule E.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES

SUMMARY BY CORE BUSINESS

(\$000)

	2022/23	2023/24 ESTIMATES		
OPERATING EXPENSES	Net	Gross	External Recoveries	Net
Core Business				
Services to Citizens and Businesses.....	31,528	47,306	(12,530)	34,776
Office of the Chief Information Officer.....	1,640	5,717	(3,694)	2,023
BC Data Service.....	24,477	29,231	(478)	28,753
Connectivity.....	13,705	23,983	(2)	23,981
Procurement and Supply Services.....	8,753	61,515	(51,191)	10,324
Real Property.....	362,596	470,759	(105,862)	364,897
Enterprise Services.....	173,393	196,841	(22,963)	173,878
Corporate Information and Records Management Office.....	22,646	25,987	(1,343)	24,644
Government Digital Experience.....	8,561	9,486	(2)	9,484
Executive and Support Services.....	9,428	10,045	(35)	10,010
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	<u>656,727</u>	<u>880,870</u>	<u>(198,100)</u>	<u>682,770</u>
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	Capital Expenditures	Capital Expenditures	Receipts and P3 Liabilities	Net
Core Business				
BC Data Service.....	110,000	110,000	—	110,000
Procurement and Supply Services.....	480	753	—	753
Real Property.....	305,718	259,610	—	259,610
Enterprise Services.....	47,476	54,449	—	54,449
Executive and Support Services.....	336	210	—	210
TOTAL	<u>464,010</u>	<u>425,022</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>425,022</u>
LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS	Net	Disbursements	Receipts	Net
Core Business				
Real Property.....	1,500	2,300	(700)	1,600
TOTAL LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS	<u>1,500</u>	<u>2,300</u>	<u>(700)</u>	<u>1,600</u>

MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES

VOTE DESCRIPTIONS

(\$000)

Estimates
2022/23

Estimates
2023/24

VOTE 19 — MINISTRY OPERATIONS

This vote provides for the programs, operations, and other activities described in the voted appropriations under the following core businesses: Services to Citizens and Businesses, Office of the Chief Information Officer, BC Data Service, Connectivity, Procurement and Supply Services, Real Property, Enterprise Services, Corporate Information and Records Management Office, Government Digital Experience, and Executive and Support Services.

SERVICES TO CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES

Voted Appropriations

Service BC Operations.....	30,737	33,985
BC Online.....	790	790
BC Registry Services.....	1	1
	<u>31,528</u>	<u>34,776</u>

Voted Appropriations Description: This sub-vote provides for service delivery to the public through multiple access points, including in-person, telephone, online and virtual; and implementation of cross-government initiatives to improve service delivery to citizens and businesses. In addition, this sub-vote provides for corporate, personal property, manufactured home, and business registry services for citizens and the business community, as well as identity and credential management. Costs may be recovered from ministries, Crown agencies, boards and commissions, the federal government, other public sector organizations, public and private organizations, and the public for products and activities described within this sub-vote.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

Voted Appropriation

Office of the Chief Information Officer.....	<u>1,640</u>	<u>2,023</u>
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Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for strategic planning and technology governance and direction for government. This includes the development of strategy, standards, policies, and programs to support government information management and information technology initiatives; as well as the planning, sourcing, policies, and strategies for telecommunications infrastructure across all levels of government, agencies, organizations, private sector partners, and other jurisdictions on behalf of the Province. Costs may be recovered from ministries, Crown agencies, boards and commissions, and other parties both internal and external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.

BC DATA SERVICE

Voted Appropriation

BC Data Service.....	<u>24,477</u>	<u>28,753</u>
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Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for strategic planning, governance, and leadership for digital initiatives across government, including both technology and data. This scope includes the development of strategy, standards, enterprise architecture, policies, and programs to support government information management and information technology initiatives; review, prioritization, and support for government information management and information technology initiatives and investments; and the promotion and integration of information management and information technology to improve citizen-centred service delivery and public sector modernization. This sub-vote also includes services, advice, and support to government in relation to digital services, infrastructure and the transformation of information management, information technology and business processes. Funding may be provided to organizations to support initiatives described in this sub-vote, as well as other related activities. This sub-vote includes the Province's suite of corporate data services, including advice, technology, support, planning, and capacity building for data-driven policy, initiatives, and programming across government and among key external partners. This sub-vote also provides for the production of economic, social, business, and demographic statistical information along with data dissemination, survey, and analytic services for government under the *Statistics Act*. Costs may be recovered from ministries, Crown agencies, boards and commissions, and other parties both internal and external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.

MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES

VOTE DESCRIPTIONS

(\$000)

	Estimates 2022/23	Estimates 2023/24
CONNECTIVITY		
Voted Appropriation		
Connectivity.....	13,705	23,981
<p>Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides leadership and expertise for the planning, development, funding, and coordination of programs, initiatives, and investments related to the access to, and expansion of, internet connectivity, cellular services, and other telecommunication services throughout British Columbia, including rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. Project funding may be supplemented by other levels of government, the private sector, and other parties. Costs may be recovered from ministries, Crown agencies, boards and commissions, and other parties both internal and external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.</p>		
PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY SERVICES		
Voted Appropriation		
Procurement and Supply Services.....	8,753	10,324
<p>Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for procurement and supply services as outlined under the <i>Procurement Services Act</i>, including warehousing, product distribution, asset disposition services, mail distribution and financial payment processing, print and publications, and intellectual property services to ministries and certain external customers. This sub-vote also provides for procurement transformation and advisory services to government ministries as well as support to a portfolio of strategic contracts and other complex, high-value service contracts across government and, as applicable, broader public sector entities. Costs may be recovered from ministries, Crown agencies, boards and commissions, other public sector organizations, public and private organizations, and the public for products and activities described within this sub-vote.</p>		
REAL PROPERTY		
Voted Appropriation		
Real Property.....	362,596	364,897
<p>Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for the delivery of property and real estate services, accommodation, client services, strategic infrastructure planning, supply management, and project coordination services related to facilities, including property management, construction, development, environmental, and technical services. Activities may include the acquisition of land on behalf of government, disposal of or making available land, and provision of services to public agencies in relation to land, as set out in the <i>Public Agency Accommodation Act</i>. This sub-vote also provides for directly-related accommodation to Indigenous Peoples resulting from the rental, lease, or disposal of Crown land or other related property. Costs associated with the successful disposal of property are recovered from the proceeds of disposal. Costs may be recovered from revenues from the rental, lease, or disposal of Crown land or other related property. Costs may also be recovered from ministries, public agencies, and other public or private sector organizations or other parties for activities described within this sub-vote.</p>		
ENTERPRISE SERVICES		
Voted Appropriation		
Enterprise Services.....	173,393	173,878
<p>Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for strategic infrastructure planning, supply management, operational support and governance; programs in support of digital government and project coordination services related to information management and information technology; corporate business application management; and information technology infrastructure, including network services, device services, security policy and operations, voice and data communications, application hosting, data services, and technical stewardship and standards. Costs may be recovered from ministries, Crown agencies, boards and commissions, and other parties both internal and external to government for products and activities described within this sub-vote.</p>		

MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES

VOTE DESCRIPTIONS

(\$000)

	Estimates 2022/23	Estimates 2023/24
CORPORATE INFORMATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICE		
Voted Appropriation		
Corporate Information and Records Management Office.....	22,646	24,644
Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for strategic corporate information management governance, including access to information, records management, privacy protection, and the development of information management policy; the general operations of the Corporate Information and Records Management Office, including the administration of the <i>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i> , the <i>Personal Information Protection Act</i> , the <i>Information Management Act</i> , and related standards, policies, and operational tools; the development of new legislation and administrative tools to support government's strategic initiatives in information management; records management services, privacy protection, and information access services to government and government organizations, as well as activities to assure compliance with legislation, standards, policies, programs, and practices; and the establishment and operation of digital identity and trust policies, programs, services, and technologies. Costs may be recovered from ministries, Crown agencies, boards and commissions, other levels of government, and other parties both internal and external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.		
GOVERNMENT DIGITAL EXPERIENCE		
Voted Appropriation		
Government Digital Experience.....	8,561	9,484
Voted Appropriation Description: This sub-vote provides for corporate leadership, cross-government planning, policy development, and innovation in the delivery of common web services for government; service and content design; and citizen engagement activities. Costs may be recovered from ministries, organizations within the government reporting entity, and parties external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.		
EXECUTIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES		
Voted Appropriations		
Minister's Office.....	591	710
Corporate Services.....	8,837	9,300
	9,428	10,010
Voted Appropriations Description: This sub-vote provides for the office of the Minister of Citizens' Services and for executive direction of the ministry and administrative support services, including legislative and policy support, corporate planning, performance management, corporate human resource strategies, including employee engagement and employee communications; and other administrative services, including financial, facility, and security management. Costs may be recovered from ministries, Crown agencies, boards and commissions, and other parties both internal and external to government for activities described within this sub-vote.		
VOTE 19 — MINISTRY OPERATIONS	656,727	682,770

MINISTRY GROUP ACCOUNT CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY

GROUP ACCOUNT CLASSIFICATION

Salaries and Benefits	181,631	201,705
Operating Costs	725,911	722,963
Government Transfers	10,000	20,000
Other Expenses	123,796	122,716
Internal Recoveries	(186,513)	(186,514)
External Recoveries	(198,098)	(198,100)
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES.....	656,727	682,770

MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES

LOANS, INVESTMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS BY CORE BUSINESS

(\$'000)

	Estimates 2022/23	Estimates 2023/24
REAL PROPERTY		
STRATEGIC REAL ESTATE SERVICES — Disbursements represent expenditures associated with the development and sale of surplus properties and/or buildings on behalf of the Province. Receipts represent a portion of the proceeds of the sale of the properties and/or buildings applied to costs. Administration costs are funded through the ministry's voted appropriations.		
Disbursements.....	2,500	2,300
Receipts.....	<u>(1,000)</u>	<u>(700)</u>
Net Cash Requirement (Source).....	<u>1,500</u>	<u>1,600</u>

MINISTRY OF CITIZENS' SERVICES

(\$000)

VOTE 19 Ministry Operations

Description	Total 2022/23 Operating Expenses	50	51	52	54	Total Salaries and Benefits	55	57	59	60	63	65	67	68	69
Services to Citizens and Businesses	31,528	27,810	207	7,145	—	35,162	—	390	183	961	11,423	1,036	—	20	45
Service BC Operations	30,737	23,310	173	6,002	—	29,485	—	347	87	529	7,622	545	—	—	22
BC Online	790	2,286	2	581	—	2,869	—	10	85	432	2,999	109	—	—	—
BC Registry Services	1	2,214	32	562	—	2,808	—	33	11	—	802	382	—	20	23
Office of the Chief Information Officer	1,640	2,993	6	760	—	3,759	—	77	31	699	2,490	84	—	—	—
BC Data Service	24,477	15,885	89	4,035	—	20,009	—	98	371	2,582	7,724	354	—	—	—
Connectivity	13,705	2,221	—	564	—	2,785	—	40	62	223	830	44	—	—	—
Procurement and Supply Services	8,753	25,810	597	6,556	—	32,963	—	129	934	3,503	6,427	1,107	—	—	2,542
Real Property	362,596	17,377	34	4,414	—	21,825	—	234	286	454	177	363	—	—	24,199
Enterprise Services	173,393	34,392	163	9,170	—	43,725	—	80	916	3,183	192,130	759	—	—	—
Corporate Information and Records Management Office	22,646	19,382	44	4,923	—	24,349	—	39	768	4,425	1,594	337	—	—	—
Government Digital Experience	8,561	7,008	55	1,781	—	8,844	—	43	18	182	1,046	62	—	—	—
Executive and Support Services	9,428	6,523	13	1,690	58	8,284	—	78	299	264	49	179	—	—	—
Minister's Office	591	439	7	136	58	640	—	38	—	—	10	20	—	—	—
Corporate Services	8,837	6,084	6	1,554	—	7,644	—	40	299	264	39	159	—	—	—
Total	656,727	159,401	1,208	41,038	58	201,705	—	1,208	3,868	16,476	223,890	4,325	—	20	26,786

70	72	73	75	Total Operating Costs	77	79	80	Total Govt Transfers	81	83	85	Total Other Expenses	86	88	Total Internal Recoveries	89	90	Total External Recoveries	Total 2023/24 Operating Expenses
—	—	3,023	242	17,323	—	—	—	—	—	—	892	892	—	(6,071)	(6,071)	(400)	(12,130)	(12,530)	34,776
—	—	1,818	—	10,970	—	—	—	—	—	—	801	801	—	(6,071)	(6,071)	(400)	(800)	(1,200)	33,985
—	—	5	237	3,877	—	—	—	—	—	—	9	9	—	—	—	—	(5,965)	(5,965)	790
—	—	1,200	5	2,476	—	—	—	—	—	—	82	82	—	—	—	—	(5,365)	(5,365)	1
—	—	—	—	3,381	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	4	—	(1,427)	(1,427)	(665)	(3,029)	(3,694)	2,023
—	—	4,250	43	15,422	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	12	—	(6,212)	(6,212)	(1)	(477)	(478)	28,753
—	—	—	—	1,199	—	—	20,000	20,000	—	—	—	—	—	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	23,981
6,416	—	343	4,349	25,750	—	—	—	—	—	—	75,514	75,514	—	(72,712)	(72,712)	(17,092)	(34,099)	(51,191)	10,324
30	—	86,960	315,515	428,218	—	—	—	—	—	—	45,066	45,066	—	(24,350)	(24,350)	(66,932)	(38,930)	(105,862)	364,897
—	—	24,740	—	221,808	—	—	—	—	—	—	304	304	—	(68,996)	(68,996)	(13,871)	(9,092)	(22,963)	173,878
—	—	155	—	7,318	—	—	—	—	—	—	45	45	—	(5,725)	(5,725)	(913)	(430)	(1,343)	24,644
—	—	264	9	1,624	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	15	—	(997)	(997)	(1)	(1)	(2)	9,484
7	—	44	—	920	—	—	—	—	—	—	864	864	—	(23)	(23)	(4)	(31)	(35)	10,010
—	—	2	—	70	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	710
7	—	42	—	850	—	—	—	—	—	—	864	864	—	(23)	(23)	(4)	(31)	(35)	9,300
6,453	—	119,779	320,158	722,963	—	—	20,000	20,000	—	—	122,716	122,716	—	(186,514)	(186,514)	(99,880)	(98,220)	(198,100)	682,770

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Ministry Profile

Revised: Date of last revision, February 22, 2023

Key Messages

- We are 2,500+ dedicated employees spread across British Columbia in 65 communities delivering over 300 services in partnership with 40 ministries and agencies throughout the province through Service BC offices.
- The ministry's vision is to bring innovation, value and service excellence to the public service and citizens of British Columbia and our mission is to work with our partners to create opportunities, find innovative solutions, and implement the changes that support and enable government to achieve its priorities for British Columbians.
- In support of this, we provide cost-effective, accessible, and responsive service delivery to the public through multiple access points and provide efficient services to government.
- Giving people the power to access the information and services they need, when they need it, is a primary focus of the ministry, as we work every day to make life better for British Columbians.
- CITZ provides strategic direction across government to modernize information-management and technology and improve transparency and access for British Columbians. This includes responding to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, providing trusted data and

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

digital services, and statistical and economic research and analysis to businesses and the public sector.

- The ministry also manages government's real estate assets and facilities-related services, technology systems and equipment, including the procurement of high value contracts critical to delivering technology to government and the broader public sector.**
- With a goal of creating more opportunity for businesses of all sizes to engage in government procurement, including increased participation by Indigenous businesses and communities, the ministry is working to support a resilient vendor marketplace and increased business opportunities to create rewarding jobs to benefit individuals, families, and communities across the province.**
- The ministry also provides leadership, management, facilitation, and support for the expansion of high-speed internet connectivity to every corner of the province by 2027. Internet connectivity supports job growth, a strong and diversified economy, health care, and stronger communities.**

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Workforce Profile Divisional Breakdown

Division	Headcount*	Staff with a telework / remote work agreement*
Citizens' Services	2,585	1,688
Deputy Ministers Office	11	9
BC Data Service	129	128
Connectivity	36	28
Corporate Services Division	63	60
Deal Management Office	18	18
Government Digital Experience	131	129
OCIO Corporate Information & Records Management Office	296	258
OCIO Enterprise Services	421	323
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer	143	143
Procurement & Supply	456	132
Real Property Division	288	285
Service BC	593	175

In previous years, it was noted that CITZ had approximately 2,200 staff. The above-noted headcount includes those on various leaves and has increased from previous years due to new hires.

*Figures are as of February, 2023.

Contact:

Gover Govern. ADM Corporate Services 778 698-0400
Division

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Budget Overview

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Key Messages:

- The Ministry of Citizens' Services 2023/24 operating budget has been tabled at \$682.770 million (net), which represents an increase of \$26.043 million, or 3.9%, compared to the 2022/23 restated budget of \$656.727 million (net).
- The ministry's capital budget for 2023/24 is \$425.022 million, which is a net decrease of \$38.988 million, or (8.4%) compared to the 2022/23 budget of \$464 million.

Questions and Answers:

1) How much did your Ministry's operating budget change this year and why?

- My Ministry's operating budget increased by \$26.043 million (or 3.9%) this year, primarily due to:
 - Increase of \$17.163 million to support salaries and benefits lifts stemming from the Shared Recovery Mandate (BCGEU Collective Agreement and Excluded Management Compensation).
 - Increase of \$2.350 million to support implementation of the *Anti-Racism Data Act* (ARDA).

2023/24 Estimates Note

Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- Increase of \$0.120 million for facilities support associated with BC's Housing Strategy.
 - Increase of \$0.119 million to support cross-gov't Minister's Office lifts for staff wages and operating costs.
- Net increase of \$6.300 million resulting from Budget 2022 and Budget 2021 decisions:
 - \$10.000 million increase for the "Connecting British Columbia" program, \$0.397 million for IT Security and Cloud applications, \$0.241m to cover amortization and operating shortfalls from capital budget lifts, \$3.034 million decrease for government wide FTE-growth related IT costs, \$1.000 million decrease in BC Bid related costs, and \$0.313 million decrease for miscellaneous adjustments, primarily CleanBC reduced facility project costs.

2) How much did your Ministry's capital budget change this year and why?

- The Ministry's capital budget decreased by \$38.988 million (or - 8.4%) this year, primarily due to reductions in:
 - Nanaimo Correctional Centre (\$19.093m)
 - BC Corrections Segregation Strategy Renovations (\$13.674m)
 - Kamloops Option to Purchase (land/buildings) (\$9.950m)
 - Port Coquitlam Law Courts Renovation (\$5.472m)

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- Camosun Lab Relocation (\$5.340m)
 - Various Routine Capital projects that completed in FY23 (\$4.928m)
- Main increases in the plan include:
 - Legislative Precinct District Energy System (\$12.000m)
 - Courthouse Improvements (\$6.302m)
 - Workstation Refresh (\$5.000m)
- These changes are primarily due to staging and timing of multi-year projects.

Contact:

Gover Govern

ADM & EFO

Corporate
Services Division

Government Financial
Information Governmen

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services Minister
Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Budget Details

Revised: February 8, 2023

Questions and Answers:

1) What are the Budget 2023 operating budget changes per core business area for your ministry?

- See table on next page for all key changes by core business (division)

Ministry of Citizens' Services
2023/24 Explanation of Changes in Estimates (Core Business)
(\$ in Millions)

Core Business	Estimates 22/23 Restated	Estimates 23/24	Variance	Explanation of Changes
Services to Citizens and Businesses	\$31.528	\$34.776	\$3.248	Budget increase of \$3.2m due to BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹
Office of the Chief Information Officer	\$1.640	\$2.023	\$0.383	Budget increase of \$0.4m due to BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹
BC Data Service	\$24.477	\$28.753	\$4.276	Budget increase is primarily due to \$2.4m for <i>Anti-Racism Data Act</i> (ARDA) implementation and \$1.9m for BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹
Connectivity	\$13.705	\$23.981	\$10.276	Budget increase of \$10.0m to support Connecting BC program, and \$0.3m due to BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹
Procurement and Supply Services	\$8.753	\$10.324	\$1.571	Budget increase of \$2.6m due to BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹ offset by a decrease of \$1.0m for BC Bid incremental costs
Real Property	\$362.596	\$364.897	\$2.301	Budget increases primarily due to \$2.0m for BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹ , \$0.6m for operating costs and amortization for primarily prior approved capital projects, reduction of \$0.3m for Clean BC – Government Fleet program
Enterprise Services	\$173.393	\$173.878	\$0.485	Budget increases is primarily due to BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹ for \$3.3m offset by reduction in FTE Growth related IT costs of \$3.0m, plus \$0.2m of other miscellaneous increases
Corporate Information Records Management Office	\$22.646	\$24.644	\$1.998	Budget increase of \$2.0m due to BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹
Government Digital Experience	\$8.561	\$9.484	\$0.923	Budget increase of \$0.9m due to BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹
Minister's Office	\$0.591	\$0.710	\$0.119	Budget increase of \$0.1m due to BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹
Corporate Services	\$8.837	\$9.300	\$0.463	Budget increase of \$0.5m due to BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹
CITZ Total	\$656.727	\$682.770	\$26.043	

¹Wage increases as per the Shared Recovery Mandate (19th BCGEU Collective Agreement) include BCGEU and excluded management compensation.

2) What are the Budget 2023 operating budget changes per expenditure category for your ministry?

- See table on next page for all key changes by expenditure category
(Group Account Classification - GAC)

Ministry of Citizens' Services

23/24 Explanation of Changes in Estimates (Group Account Classification (GAC) Level) (\$ in Millions)

Expenditure Category	STOB	Estimates 22/23 Restated	Estimates 23/24	Variance	Explanation of Changes
Base Pay & Overtime	50	\$143.405	\$159.401	\$15.996	Budget increases primarily due to \$13.7m Shared Recovery Mandate for BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹ and \$1.4m of Anti Racism Legislation support.
Supplemental Salaries	51	\$1.201	\$1.208	\$0.007	Budget increases due to Shared Recovery Mandate for BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹
Employee Benefits	52	\$36.969	\$41.038	\$4.069	Budget increases primarily due to \$3.5m Shared Recovery Mandate for BCGEU and excluded staff wage increases ¹ and \$0.4m of Anti Racism Legislation support.
Legislative Salaries	54	\$0.056	\$0.058	\$0.002	
Salary & Benefits Sub-Total		\$181.631	\$201.705	\$20.074	
Operating Costs	55 - 75	\$725.911	\$722.963	(\$2.948)	Budget decreases primarily due to reduction in contract services in STOB 63.
Government Transfers	77 - 80	\$10.000	\$20.000	\$10.000	Budget increases due to Connectivity enhancements
Other Expenses	84 - 85	\$123.796	\$122.716	(\$1.080)	Budget decrease costs associated with facility capital asset projects.
Gross Expenditure Total		\$1,067.384	\$1,041.338	\$26.046	
Internal Recoveries	88	(\$186.513)	(186.514)	(\$0.001)	
External Recoveries	89 - 90	(\$198.098)	(\$198.100)	(\$0.002)	
Recoveries Total		(\$384.611)	(\$384.614)	(\$0.003)	
CITZ Net Expenditure Total		\$656.727	\$682.770	\$26.043	

¹Wage increases as per the Shared Recovery Mandate, (19th BCGEU Collective Agreement) include BCGEU and excluded management compensation

3) What are the Budget 2023 capital budget changes for your ministry?

- See table below and next page for all key changes by core business (division) and by project.

CITZ 10-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN - BUDGET 2023 (ESTIMATES)				
(\$ millions)		22/23 Budget	23/24 Budget	Change
Real Property				
	Nanaimo Correctional Centre	\$80.03	\$60.94	(\$19.09)
	Legislative Precinct District Energy System	\$7.00	\$19.00	\$12.00
	Strategic Acquisition of Buildings	\$8.01	\$8.01	\$0.00
	TIs for buildings purchased under Strategic Acquisitions	\$8.00	\$7.92	(\$0.08)
	Energy Smart Program	\$16.53	\$15.53	(\$1.00)
	EV Charging Stations	\$0.99	\$0.48	(\$0.51)
	Courthouse Improvements	\$7.56	\$13.86	\$6.30
	Vancouver Law Courts Inn Renovation	\$12.66	\$12.56	(\$0.10)
	Port Coquitlam Law Courts Renovation	\$25.00	\$19.53	(\$5.47)
	BC Corrections Segregation Strategy Renovations	\$16.60	\$2.93	(\$13.67)
	BC Corrections Accommodation Strategy	\$8.08	\$8.72	\$0.65
	MCFD Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP) - Duncan	\$2.20	\$0.46	(\$1.75)
	SDPR Risk Review related TI's	\$7.82	\$5.59	(\$2.23)
	Camosun Lab Relocation	\$5.34	\$0.00	(\$5.34)
	PSSG Land Acquisition	\$1.46	\$0.68	(\$0.77)
	Kamloops Option to Purchase	\$11.50	\$1.55	(\$9.95)
	Office Furniture	\$1.67	\$1.50	(\$0.17)
	Routine Capital Envelope	\$85.27	\$80.35	(\$4.93)
	Subtotal	\$305.72	\$259.61	(\$46.11)
Digital Platforms and Data				
	Transformation & Technology Funding	\$110.00	\$110.00	\$0.00
	Subtotal	\$110.00	\$110.00	\$0.00

OCIO ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Workstation Refresh	\$24.47	\$29.47	\$5.00
Strategic Transformation & Mainframe Services	\$13.25	\$15.24	\$1.99
Maintenance and Rehabilitation	\$9.75	\$9.74	(\$0.01)
Subtotal	\$47.48	\$54.45	\$6.97

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY SERVICES

Special Equipment	\$0.48	\$0.75	\$0.27
Subtotal	\$0.48	\$0.75	\$0.27

MINISTRY OPERATIONS

Office Equipment	\$0.01	\$0.01	\$0.00
Vehicles	\$0.33	\$0.20	(\$0.13)
Subtotal	\$0.34	\$0.21	(\$0.13)

CITZ TOTAL ESTIMATES CAPITAL BUDGET

\$464.01	\$425.02	(\$38.99)
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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Minister's Office Budget

Revised: February 23, 2023

Key Messages:

- The operating budget for my office is \$710,000 for 2023/24, which is an increase of \$119,000 from last year's budget of \$591,000.
- The budget for my office operations increased by \$109,000 for support staff salaries and benefits as well as \$10,000 received in Budget 2021 for operating expenses.

Questions and Answers:

1. What are the types of costs paid for out of the Minister's Office, and are there any costs funded from other sources?

- Salaries and benefits for my staff, travel, IT costs, and general office and business expenses are all funded from my office budget.
- My annual basic compensation as a Member of the Legislative Assembly under the Member's Remuneration and Pensions Act is paid for through the Legislative Assembly (\$115,046 annually), while my additional compensation as a Cabinet Minister is funded from my Office budget (\$57,523).
- Pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act (BBMAA) 10% of my additional compensation (\$57,523 x 10%

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

= \$5,752) as a Cabinet Minister is held back until individual responsibilities are met.

- Budget 2022 included an amendment to the BBMAA which repealed the **collective** 10% salary holdback provision applicable to a minister in respect of Cabinet's collective responsibilities. This resulted in \$5,752 of my additional compensation not being subject to the holdback provision.
- Additionally, Capital City Allowance for meals, travel, and certain eligible living expenses is funded by the Ministry of Finance.

2. What is the largest cost annually within your office budget?

- Salaries and benefits of my staff is the single largest annual cost; in 2023/24 the budget for this is \$558,000.
- Travel, general office expenses, IT related costs and tech support for my staff and I are the other types of costs covered within my budget (see table below for budget detail).

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Ministry of Citizens' Services

	Fiscal 2022/23 Estimates	Fiscal 2023/24 Estimates	Change from FY23 to FY24
Base Salaries & OT	357,000	439,000	82,000
Supplemental Salaries	0	7,000	7,000
Employee Benefits	113,000	136,000	23,000
Legislative Salaries	56,000	58,000	2,000
Salaries & Benefits Sub Total	526,000	640,000	114,000
Public Servant Travel	38,000	38,000	0
Information Systems	10,000	10,000	0
Office & Business Expenses	15,000	20,000	5,000
Amortization Expense	2,000	2,000	0
Operating Expenses Sub Total	65,000	70,000	5,000
Other Expenses	0	0	0
Other Expenses Sub Total	0	0	0
NET TOTAL	\$591,000	\$710,000	\$119,000

Average FTEs

5.0

Contact:

Gover Govern

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Corporate
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Government Financial
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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Budget Tracking (\$ millions)

Revised: February 27, 2023

Key Messages:

- The Ministry of Citizens' Services' 2023/24 net operating budget has been tabled at \$682.770 million (six hundred and eighty-two million and seven hundred and seventy thousand).
- This represents an increase of \$26.043 million (twenty-six million and forty-three thousand), or 3.9 percent, compared to the 2022/23 restated net budget of \$656.727 million (six hundred and fifty-six million and seven hundred and twenty-seven thousand).
- The ministry's capital budget for 2023/24 is \$425.022 million (four hundred and twenty-five million and twenty-two thousand). This is a reduction of \$38.988 million (thirty-eight million and nine hundred and eighty-eight thousand), or 8.4 per cent, compared to the ministry's 2022/23 budget of \$464 million (four hundred and sixty-four million).

Questions and Answers:

How did the Ministry's Estimates Budget change year over year?

- Please see the table on the next page.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

	(\$ millions)
2022/23 Estimates	\$656.645
Restatements:	
• Increase for building lease transfer associated with Ministry of Attorney General	\$0.082
2022/23 Restated Estimates	\$656.727
Adjustments:	
• Increase to support salaries and benefits lifts stemming from the Shared Recovery Mandate (19 th BCGEU Collective Agreement) and excluded management	\$17.163
• Increase to support implementation of the Anti-Racism Data Act (ARDA)	\$2.350
• Increase for facility support associated with BC's Housing Strategy (Ministry of Attorney General)	\$0.120
• Increase to support cross-gov't Minister's Office lifts for staff wages and operating costs (\$0.119m includes \$0.010m impact from Budget 2021 decisions)	\$0.119
<i>Budget 2022 and Budget 2021 Decisions (impacting Budget 2023)</i>	
• Increase to support "Connecting British Columbia" program	\$10.000
• Increase to support Security and Cloud applications	\$0.397
• Increase to operating and amortization for prior capital budget lifts	\$0.241
• Decrease in FTE growth related IT costs	(\$3.034)
• Decrease in BC Bid related costs	(\$1.000)
• Miscellaneous minor adjustments, primarily adjustments for CleanBC facility project cost changes	(\$0.313)
Total Net Adjustments	\$26.043
2023/24 Estimates	\$682.770

OPERATING FUNDING

1) How much did your Ministry's operating budget change this year and why?

- My Ministry's operating budget increased by \$26.043 million this year, or a 3.9 percent increase, primarily due to:

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- An increase of \$17.163 million to support salaries and benefits lifts stemming from the Shared Recovery Mandate (BCGEU Collective Agreement and Excluded Management Compensation).
- An increase of \$2.350 million to support implementation of the Anti-Racism Data Act (ARDA).
- A net increase of \$6.300 million resulting from Budget 2022 and Budget 2021 decisions:
 - In particular, a \$10.000 million increase for the "Connecting British Columbia" program, a \$1.000 million decrease in BC Bid related costs together with other miscellaneous budget decreases.

CAPITAL FUNDING

2) How much did your Ministry's capital budget change this year and why?

- The Ministry's capital budget reduced by \$38.988 million this year, or 8.4 percent less, primarily due to lower required funding amounts for:
 - Nanaimo Correctional Centre (\$19.093 million reduction)
 - BC Corrections Segregation Strategy Renovations (\$13.674 million reduction)
 - Kamloops land/buildings purchase (\$9.950 million reduction)

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- Port Coquitlam Law Courts Renovation (\$5.472 million reduction)
- Camosun Lab Relocation (\$5.340 million reduction)
- Various Routine Capital projects that completed in FY23 (\$4.928 million reduction)
- These reductions in needed budgets are primarily due to the staging and timing of multi-year projects.
- The main increases in the plan include:
 - The Legislative Precinct District Energy System (\$12.000 million)
 - Courthouse Improvements (\$6.302 million)
 - Workstation Refresh (\$5.000 million) (replacing of employee laptops)

Contact:

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Minister's Mandate Letter Achievements

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Over the last five years, the ministry has undertaken key activities in alignment with government's priorities, including the foundational principles and identified action items in the July 2017, February 2020, November 2020, and December 2022 Minister's mandate letters. Below is a summary of the status updates for the February 2023 Mandate Letter.

Minister's Mandate Letter (December 2022)

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
Continue to expand the use of cross-government data to increase evidence-based decision making and better inform policy and programs for our key priorities, building on government's Data Innovation Program. (BCDS)	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More than 50 core data sets available for population-level analysis in the Data Innovation Program.• Data available to government and academic researchers; working on an approach to enabling non-profits to use the program.• Major projects have supported greater evidence for decisions related to youth mental health, basic income and homelessness.
Work with partners and the public to modernize government services and leverage best-in-class digital tools that enhance cross-sector coordination, and provide services that are efficient, equitable, and prioritize user experience.	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering best-in-class application hosting services in government data centres that allow ministries to quickly create, modernize and continuously improve services.• These approaches are now embedded as Digital Principles in Core Policy.• Published the draft Digital Code of Practice for consultation with the

This material will be proactively released

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
(GDX, OCIO-ICT, OCIO-ES, OCIO-CIRMO, DO, SBC)		<p>public sector and B.C. tech sector to provide in depth guidance for public servants on implementing the Digital Principles to provide services that are efficient, equitable, accessible and prioritize user experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced time to procure a digital team to modernize or deliver new services to 20 days. • To date, ministries have procured 172 opportunities valued at \$34M through the Digital Marketplace. • Developing new 'Team with us' procurement path. • Providing best-in-class digital components that enable rapid response to emergent service needs, like pandemic response, health care services and disaster relief. • Developing a program to support expansion of the use of time-saving components across government. • Supported ministries' service modernization initiatives through investments in the IM/IT Minor Capital Envelope. In 2022/23, the IM/IT Minor Capital budget stands at \$110M and is supporting 70 digital projects from across government.

This material will be proactively released

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2023/24 Estimates Note

Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beyond COVID and vaccines, GDX is leading work – including hearing from people directly – to expand how and when government offers services and information in multiple languages, with the next focus on supports for people newly arriving in B.C.• Continue delivering government's public engagements and supporting ministries with a focus on improving and testing digital tools.• The FOI Modernization project is a multiyear initiative to improve FOI timeliness, service delivery, and modernize technology. Seven ministries are onboarded to the new FOI system, with 4 more planned by the end of FY 2022/23. Participating ministries that piloted the new system decreased the average days to complete an FOI request by almost 7 days.• Progress was made on establishing digital archives by completing a Request for Information on digital archiving solutions, a jurisdictional scan of policy, systems, and best practices, and posting a Request for

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		<p>Proposals to procure a digital archiving system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance equity of access to digital government services using the BC Services Card online, the BC Token was launched for the population demographic that do not have access to a smart phone or tablet. People with Canadian government-issued identity documents can now set up the BC Services Card app to access government services online. People who will benefit from this include those who are not eligible for the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP) but wish to access BC government services online, such as medical professionals from other provinces, BC students studying out of province, military members, new arrivals to BC, and some federal employees.
Continue to improve how procurement processes deliver benefits for people and businesses in communities across the province. (PSD)	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Released the BC Procurement Strategy in 2018 and an update in 2020. Launched the new BC Bid system in May 2022. The External Advisory Committee on Indigenous Procurement Initiative (EAC) held its inaugural

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		<p>meeting in November 2022 and meets on an ongoing basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EAC will make recommendations and advise the Province on the preparation of a plan to increase Indigenous Peoples' participation in the Province's procurement opportunities.
<p>With support from the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives, continue work to help dismantle systemic racism and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous, Black, and other people of colour by implementing the <i>Anti-Racism Data Act</i>. (BCDS)</p>	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently working with Indigenous Governing Entities and the Anti-Racism Data Committee to establish anti-racism research priorities that will help identify and eliminate systemic racism and improve access to government programs and services. Anti-racism research priorities will be released by government in June 2023. Working with Indigenous Peoples and the committee to co-design the BC Demographic Survey, a voluntary population survey which will collect demographic data from the people of BC. This data will be used alongside existing program data to identify and dismantle systemic racism.
<p>Begin the work to address barriers to effective use of data in delivering services to British Columbians</p>	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry released a new BC Data Catalogue that ensures better sightlines for all ministries

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
more efficiently and effectively. (BCDS)		<p>on the data held by other ministries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developed Gender and Sex Data Standard to guide collection of this data in a consistent and accurate way to inform policy and program decisions with data that properly represents our gender-diverse population.• Developed Metadata Standards to guide ministries in cataloging their data in a consistent way and to make data more interoperable when sharing.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Minister's Mandate Letter Achievements

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Over the last five years, the ministry has undertaken key activities in alignment with government's priorities, including the foundational principles and identified action items in the July 2017, February 2020, November 2020, and December 2022 Minister's mandate letters. Below is a summary of the status updates for the November 2020 Mandate Letter.

Minister's Mandate Letter (November 2020)

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
Work to ensure government services remain responsive through the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery. (All Divisions)	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supported digital proof of vaccinations via Health Gateway and mobile BC Services Card.• Delivered information in-person, online via 12 languages, by phone in 140+ languages.• Upgraded government networks and provided technical support to meet the needs of a remote workforce.• Introduced a temporary Ministerial Order under FOIPPA to modify data residency requirements and enable the broader use of communications tools for health-care workers and other public-sector staff.• As part the COVID-19 Supply Hub, led the sourcing, warehousing and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies for sale to non-

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		<p>health sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based off our work on the COVID-19 Supply Hub, which closed as of September 30, 2021, provided technical and logistical support to the Ministry of Health to ensure health-care providers have the PPE they require to maintain operations. • Continue to ensure there is plain-language, easy to find, translated information about COVID-19 and vaccination on gov.bc.ca. • 2022: Transitioned Health Gateway onto API Gateway to enable efficient ongoing API management and substantial cost savings for HLTH.
<p>Lead work to deliver high-speed connectivity throughout the province until all regions are connected to the high-speed network. (CONN)</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry signed an \$830M joint funding MOU with the federal government in March 2022. • The Ministry established the new Connecting Communities BC program, with a first intake opening in September 2022. • To date, completed and approved projects through connectivity programming since 2017 has or will benefit more than 72,000 homes in more than 630 communities. It will also provide

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		cellular services to more than 530 kms of highway province wide.
Continue to expand the use of cross-government data to increase evidence-based decision making and better inform public policy, and assume responsibility for BC Stats. (BCDS)	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry re-assumed responsibility for BC Stats in December 2020. In December 2021, the Provincial Data Plan was established to support the Data Innovation Program and expanded the program to academic researchers.
Support innovation, including in the B.C. tech sector, through open data initiatives. (BCDS)	Substantially completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry released a new BC Data Catalogue that ensures people, non-profits and businesses have greater access to open data. BC now makes over 1,600 data sets available through open data. Worked with local tech companies on a community information tool.
Continue to improve government's public sector data security and privacy practices to ensure that British Columbians' personal information is safeguarded. (OCIO-CIRMO, OCIO-ES)	Substantially completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clients were introduced to the Ministry's next-generation big data security analytics platform. Onboarded 110+ public sector organizations to external security services as of December 2020. Completed findings from 2019 Internal Directory and 2020 IT Asset Management Audits. Consulted with Ministry Privacy Officers and privacy stakeholders

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		across government on the Privacy Impact Assessment process and identified areas for improvement.
Continue to improve how procurement processes deliver benefits for people and businesses in communities across the province. (PSD)	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New BC Bid system was launched in May 2022. • Released the BC Procurement Strategy in 2018 and an update in 2020. • The External Advisory Committee on Indigenous Procurement Initiative actions is in the final stages of formation and had its inaugural meeting in November 2022.
Continue to provide British Columbians with timely access to information and ensure the system provides public accountability. (OCIO-CIRMO)	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 97% of requests, the average processing time continued to drop to 41 days. • Changes made to the FOI system reduced the FOI request backlog by 22%, with a priority being given to the oldest files and requests from individuals seeking personal information. • Amended the <i>Information Management Act</i> to formalize a requirement for employees to document decisions.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernized FOI legislation, system, services, and strengthening privacy protections.
<p>Improve access to information rules to provide greater public accountability. (OCIO-CIRMO)</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry continued to facilitate efficient request processing through standardized practices, streamlined business processes, and continuous improvement methods. Thirteen categories of proactively disclosed records were available to the public by December 2020. Examples of categories include Ministers' and Corporate Transition Binders as well as Estimates Notes. An additional category, Summaries of Ministerial Briefing Notes, was announced by the end of FY21/22 bringing the total to fourteen proactive disclosure categories. Ministries disclosed a great deal of information through online repositories and interactive tools such as the BC Data Catalogue, DriveBC, and the BC Economic Atlas. There are more than 3,000

This material will be proactively released

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		data sets on the BC Data Catalogue, which increases transparency relating to government services.
Support the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Anti-Racism Initiatives in the collection, housing and analysis of race-based data which will be essential to modernizing sectors like policing, health care and education. (BCDS)	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CITZ worked with the Attorney General and the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Anti-Racism Initiatives to support Indigenous and community-led engagement sessions on the approach government should take on implementing anti-racism data legislation. Engagement included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 70 community partner organizations conducting 175+ community events, with over 1,800 people attending. ○ More than 2,900 people responding to an anonymous online public survey ○ A distinction-based process enabling recommendations from 200+ First Nations, Métis Nation BC and BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

2023/24 Estimates Note

Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Supported the Attorney General and the Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Anti-Racism Initiatives in developing and passing the <i>Anti-Racism Data Act</i> in June 2022.Established the Anti-Racism Data Committee in September 2022 to collaborate with government and ensure that the implementation of the Anti-Racism Data Act is informed by the expertise and lived experience of racialized people, including Indigenous Peoples.

Contact:

Gover Govern Assistant Deputy Corporate Services 778 698-0400
Minister Division

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Minister's Mandate Letter Achievements

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Over the last five years, the ministry has undertaken key activities in alignment with government's priorities, including the foundational principles and identified action items in the July 2017, February 2020, November 2020, and December 2022 Minister's mandate letters. Below is a summary of the status updates for the February 2020 Mandate Letter.

Minister's Mandate Letter (February 2020)

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
Continue to expand connectivity to communities throughout the province to support new economic opportunities and improved access to government services. (CONN)	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Ministry has signed an \$830M joint funding MoU with Canada in March 2022.• The Ministry established the new Connecting Communities BC program, administered by the Ministry with a first intake opening in September 2022.• To date, completed and approved projects through connectivity programming since 2017 has or will benefit more than 72,000 homes in more than 630 communities, and bring cellular services to more than 530 kms of highway province wide.
Build on the success of government's new	Substantially completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Ministry published the B.C. Procurement Strategy Update 2020, outlining the work

This material will be proactively released

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
<p>procurement processes to ensure that more local, small, and medium-sized companies can do business with government more efficiently while ensuring public funds are spent wisely.</p> <p>(PSD)</p>		<p>government has been doing in collaboration with businesses and communities, as well as Indigenous peoples, to modernize its procurement system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We launched Discovery Days to create a new, collaborative way for vendors to engage with the B.C. Government. • In partnership with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, the Indigenous Procurement Initiative published a Report presenting the results of engagement with more than 300 Indigenous partners and businesses on how to better support Indigenous businesses and communities to participate in B.C. government procurement opportunities.
<p>Continue to improve government's public sector data security and privacy practices to ensure that British Columbians personal</p>	<p>Substantially completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Information Management Act</i> was amended to formalize the obligation for all government employees to document their decisions. • Mandatory information

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
<p>information is safeguarded. (OCIO-CIRMO, OCIO-ES)</p>		<p>management training was updated to provide public service employees with essential learning and resources. The update introduced new content on the requirement to document government decisions, an expanded information security section, refreshed information management content, an updated look and feel, and a more interactive user experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry completed an Information Management practice review to assess Ministry practices in relation to legislation and policy requirements.
<p>Work with your cabinet colleagues to ensure that public agencies gathering personal information or working with private service providers who gather public information of behalf of government employ the best possible security and privacy practices. (OCIO-CIRMO, OCIO-ES)</p>	<p>Substantially completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry Privacy Officers and privacy stakeholders across government were consulted on the Privacy Impact Assessment process and identified areas for improvement. • The Ministry conducted privacy training sessions to over 500 participants from government, the broader public sector, and the private sector. • The Ministry reviewed all contracts between government

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		ministries and service providers that involve personal information, to ensure FOIPPA standards are upheld and personal privacy is protected.
<p>Ensure that your ministry makes timely progress on the implementation of the <i>Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i>, both in identifying priority legislative areas for inclusion in the action plan, and in ensuring that future ministry actions are consistent with the principles set out in the Act.</p> <p>(CONN, OCIO-CIRMO, BCDS, PSD)</p>	In progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry continued to implement the <i>Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act</i>, in all aspects of daily operations. • MIRR and CITZ are co-leading the Indigenous Procurement Initiative, actively undertaking engagement with Indigenous partners, organizations, businesses, and communities to gather experiences and recommendations to inform how best to increase Indigenous participation in government's procurement opportunities. • Established and committed to DRIPA action 4.36, to ensure every First Nations community in B.C. has high-speed internet services by 2027. • Fall 2019: Inclusive BC Sans font launched and adopted across government websites and workstations. • Summer 2022: First Nations

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		<p>Leadership Council and Métis Nation BC—Received positive feedback on draft Indigenous data priorities identified and collaborative approach to the work to enable use of Indigenous language data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> July 2022: Received cross ministry endorsement of approach to the work to enable use of Indigenous language data.
<p>Ensure that the process of vetting and awarding government IT contracts is conducted in a manner that saves money, increases innovation, improves competition, and helps our technology sector grow and ensure that government IT and software development procurement work better for companies that hire locally, operate sustainably, and have a local supply chain. (PSD)</p>	Substantially completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry issued over 85 contracts to dozens of small to medium-sized tech companies through the new Sprint With Us and Code With Us programs, which are faster, easier and more transparent than traditional procurement processes. The Ministry began supporting the Province's COVID-19 Supply Hub with technology, procurement, and supply delivery to triage vendor offers related to personal protective equipment (PPE) and other vital supplies.
Work to maintain government's successful	In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry facilitated efficient request

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
record of providing British Columbians with timely access to information and ensure the system provides public accountability. (OCIO-CIRMO)		processing through standardized practices, streamlined business processes and continuous-improvement methods.
Improve access to information rules to provide greater public accountability. (OCIO-CIRMO)	In Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry amended FOI disclosure guidelines, after introducing a secure file transfer delivery system and implementing a BC Services Card verification process, to enable individuals seeking their own information from government to do so in a more secure and efficient manner. The Ministry improved access to information by identifying additional types of government records that can be made available to people without a freedom of information request.

Contact:

Governor General	Assistant Deputy Minister	Corporate Services Division	778 698-0400
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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Minister's Mandate Letter Achievements

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Over the last five years, the ministry has undertaken key activities in alignment with government's priorities, including the foundational principles and identified action items in the July 2017, February 2020, November 2020, and December 2022 Minister's mandate letters. Below is a summary of the status updates for the July 2017 Mandate Letter.

Minister's Mandate Letter (July 2017)

Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
Institute a cap on the value and the length of government IT contracts to save money, increase innovation, improve competition, and help our technology sector grow. (PSD)	Substantially completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Ministry released the BC Procurement Strategy. The strategy sets strategic goals and identifies specific actions to modernize BC's procurement system.• The Ministry started the Sprint With Us program, which makes it easier for tech companies of all sizes to work with government by reducing the time and effort required to bid on a project.• The 'Code With Us' program was launched and offers developers a fixed price for developing software code that meets specific criteria.• A 'Strategic Sourcing Framework' has been developed as part of the new approach for strategic

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		contracts. The framework embeds government values into strategic procurement planning, including opportunities for small and medium-sized business, building alignment across the portfolio, and bundling services to best meet citizen and government needs.
Ensure government IT and software development procurement work better for companies that hire locally and have a local supply chain. (PSD)	Substantially completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Social and Environmental Procurement Guidelines was introduced and provides instruction to buyers on how to evaluate social and environmental impact within government procurements. The Ministry awarded a contract to replace the BC Bid application in December 2017 and launched the first public pilot to test the new system.
Improve access to information rules to provide greater public accountability. (OCIO-CIRMO)	Substantially completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry completed public engagement on Access to Information and Protection of Privacy and publicly reported the results. The Ministry completed user-centred "Service Design" analysis of the freedom of information request process and publicly reported the results.

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Mandate Letter Item	Status	Milestones
		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Ministry began a Digital Archives project to plan a new, modern system that supports the long-term preservation of historically important government information.• The Ministry updated and delivered mandatory information management training to over 90% of the BC Public Service.
Improve response and processing times for freedom of information requests. (OCIO-CIRMO)	Substantially completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Ministry facilitated efficient request processing through standardized practices, streamlined business processes and continuous-improvement methods.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Reconciliation Summary

Revised: Date of last revision, February 16, 2023

Key Messages:

- **The Ministry is working to implement the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (November 2019), in all aspects of Ministry business.**

Declaration Act Action Plan

- The first Declaration Act Action Plan is the next step in delivering transformative change in government's relationship with Indigenous Peoples in B.C.
- Our goal is implementing the human rights of Indigenous peoples into the very foundations of our province, through every ministry and in every aspect of society - from schools to the legal system, to children and families, to land stewardship and everything in between.
- Through this work we are building a province where Indigenous excellence, leadership, governance, and self-determination can be recognized and respected.
- British Columbia is the first province to release an action plan dedicated to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UN Declaration) in Canada.
- The plan was developed with Indigenous Peoples, First Nations, and organizations through intensive consultation. This significant engagement ensures the plan aligns and reflects the priorities of Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Métis, and Inuit – living in B.C.

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- Together, we're working to make this province a place where First Nations, Métis and Inuit people have full enjoyment of their inherent rights and can pursue their dreams and raise their families without experiencing racism or discrimination.
- To build a better future, we must make the province a place where the human rights of Indigenous Peoples are respected, celebrated, and finally implemented.
- The work ahead of us won't be easy – but together, we can change the trajectory of history, and address the harms done by more than 150 years of colonialism.
- The plan outlines work each ministry in government is doing over five years to implement the UN Declaration between 2022 and 2027.
- Citizens' Services is the lead ministry on three of the actions:
 - o 3.14 Advance the collection and use of disaggregated demographic data, guided by a distinctions-based approach to Indigenous data sovereignty and self-determination, including supporting the establishment of a First Nations-governed and mandated regional data governance centre in alignment with the First Nations Data Governance Strategy.
 - CITZ is:
 - supporting the establishment of a First Nations-governed and mandated regional data governance centre in alignment with the First Nations Data Governance Strategy

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- working collaboratively with Indigenous partners by establishing an Indigenous data advisory group
- o 3.15 Adopt an inclusive digital font that allows for Indigenous languages to be included in communication, signage, services, and official records.
 - BC Sans is a new typeface for government. It was developed to create an Open Font License set of fonts for improved readability and delivery of our digital services, and contain support for multiple languages including Indigenous languages in B.C.
 - Supporting inclusion and reconciliation, this will remove technical barriers and make it easier for program areas across government to include Indigenous languages in communications, signage, services, and official records.
 - The font is available for download and has been deployed to all BC Public Service workstations and is the standard for provincial government websites and online public engagements.
 - Planning has focused on increasing awareness of the inclusive font within government and understanding the dependencies and challenges for program areas in its adoption.
- o 4.36 Ensure every First Nations community in B.C. has high-speed internet services.
 - Connectivity is essential to addressing the fundamental rights and needs of First Nations and

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communities.

- Quality, reliable and equitable high-speed internet, and telecommunications services are critical to advancing meaningful reconciliation, supporting Indigenous self-determination, and enabling sustainable, inclusive, and innovative Indigenous economies.
 - Connecting all First Nations reserves with high-speed internet is vital to reconciliation efforts and is a commitment in the Declaration Act Draft Action Plan.
 - Last year, the federal government announced a funding partnership that will support expansion of internet services to the remaining underserved First Nations reserves by 2027.
-
- The action plan does not include all initiatives to advance reconciliation in B.C. Actions proposed do not replace, limit, change or stop existing initiatives or related commitments. These efforts will continue alongside the development and implementation of the action plan.
 - Our Ministry has a table that will be overseeing implementation of the commitments and supporting the broader changes in culture and skills of our employees needed to make reconciliation efforts successful.

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Indigenous Community Connectivity

- Bridging the digital divide is a critical part of British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and our commitment to reconciliation and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- Connectivity is represented directly in the Declaration Act Action Plan and indirectly supports many actions in the plan, including Indigenous language revitalization, education and training, healthcare, and economic development.
- Working together with Indigenous communities, service providers and other organizations, we're seeing steady progress.
- Since 2017, funding has been approved for projects to improve internet access for households in 206 First Nations reserves in B.C.
- We expanded high-speed internet services to rural, remote, and Indigenous communities throughout B.C. to increase opportunities to learn, do business, access services, respond to emergencies and stay connected as part of the Connecting British Columbia program.
- The provincial and federal governments are supporting a Rogers project to provide continuous cellular coverage between Prince Rupert and Smithers on Highway 16 – the Highway of Tears.
- This fulfils a critical recommendation from the Highway of Tears Symposium Report's 33 recommendations aimed at enhancing safety for Indigenous women and girls.

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Connected Coast

- Connected Coast is an innovative project that is bringing high-speed internet capacity to 139 B.C. rural and remote communities, including 48 Indigenous communities representing 44 First Nations.
- A subsea fibre is laid along the ocean floor to key landing sites, bringing high-speed fibre to remote coastal communities.
- So far 52 landing sites have been built and over 1,000 km of submarine cable has been laid. The project should complete in 2024.

Connecting Communities BC Program

- On March 8, 2022, the Governments of British Columbia and Canada announced an agreement to invest up to \$830 million (\$415 million each) to support expanding broadband infrastructure in the province to all under-served households.
- These investments ensure that people and businesses in communities throughout B.C. have the connectivity services they need to thrive.
- Connecting Communities BC is the next generation of our Provincial funding program for connectivity.
- The program will fund applicants to build connectivity infrastructure, using multiple technologies – for example, fibre, cable, and fixed wireless.
- Two application intakes have been open so far for this program, and there will be more to come, until we reach our goal of connecting all corners of the province to high-speed internet services.

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Data Plan

- Reliable, timely, quality data is needed to understand and identify real workable solutions to big issues in B.C., like homelessness, systemic violence against women and girls, the impact of climate change and reconciliation.
- Government collects lots of data in all interactions with citizens and through service delivery. The challenge is not the quantity of data, but how we use that data and make the most of it to help people.
- We need a coordinated approach to Indigenous data, and guided by the Declaration Act and working with Indigenous peoples, we will develop an Indigenous data plan.
- Government has made transformative commitments with respect to the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act) and *Anti-Racism Data Act*.
- Under BC's Declaration Act commitments, we are working to support the establishment of First Nations governed and mandated regional data governance centre to support data sovereignty and enable new data management arrangements.
- In addition, we are consulting and collaborating with Indigenous governments on data initiatives under the *Anti-Racism Data Act* and prioritizing data actions they identify as most important.
- In addition to ongoing partnerships with Indigenous leadership organizations, we began holding monthly virtual discussion circles with Indigenous governing entities since Fall 2022.

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Anti-racism Initiatives

- We know there are policy gaps and barriers to accessing programs, and this disproportionately impacts Indigenous and other racialized people.
- The *Anti-Racism Data Act*, which became law in June 2022, is an important tool to help the Province dismantle systemic racism.
- The legislation enables government to collect and use demographic information such as race, gender and ancestry to identify and eliminate systemic racism.
- With this information, the Province can identify where there are barriers and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous, Black, and other racialized people.
- The legislation was informed by the thoughts of more than 13,000 British Columbians through engagement with Indigenous Peoples and racialized communities, as well as key partners such as the B.C. Human Rights Commissioner, First Nations Leadership Council, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and Métis Nation BC.
- It is one of the first pieces of legislation to be co-developed with Indigenous Peoples under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act)
- The legislation prioritizes CITZ ongoing alignment with UNDRIP and the Declaration Act by:
 - o establishing a government-to-government approach for Indigenous data governance,
 - o requiring the Director of Statistics to consult Indigenous peoples, and
 - o ensuring Indigenous involvement on the anti-racism provincial data committee.

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Procurement Strategy

- Together with Indigenous partners, government is working to develop an approach that will support more Indigenous businesses in B.C. to participate in government procurement opportunities.
- In recent years, we rolled out cultural competency training to B.C. Government employees who deliver procurement and contract management.
- Social impact procurement guidelines:
 - The social impact guidelines provide clarity on how government ministries can consider social value when purchasing services with a total value under \$75,000.
 - Social impact elements that may be considered, on a case-by-case basis in a procurement and measured through a contract, include supplier diversity and workforce development.
 - This means creating opportunities for Indigenous Peoples, employment equity seeking groups, people with disabilities and offering apprenticeships, skills training and other developmental support to employees, contractors, or volunteers, including diverse supplier groups.
- After seeking the input and advice of Indigenous partners, an external advisory committee has now been formed. committee has been formed to make recommendations and advise the Province on the preparation of an Action Plan to increase Indigenous Peoples' participation in the Province's procurement opportunities.

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Indigenous Procurement Initiative

- Together with Indigenous partners, we're working to develop an approach that will support more Indigenous people in B.C. to participate in government procurement opportunities.
- The people we engaged with and the report on what we heard were clear that continued engagement and collaboration between the Province and Indigenous People should be a foundation for the work ahead. And so, we committed in that strategy update to establish an external advisory committee.
- The committee and the report on what we heard will inform and guide our work to co-develop recommended short, medium, and long-term actions to help the province develop a coordinated approach to procurement with Indigenous businesses and to increase Indigenous Peoples' participation in government's procurement opportunities.
- In support of that goal, we have also:
 - o Created a dedicated project office and hired staff to assist the committee and this work.
 - o Rolled out Indigenous cultural competency training and content to B.C. Government staff who deliver procurement and contract management.
 - o Established a streamlined process for ministries to contract with qualified Indigenous facilitators to help ensure government's engagements with Indigenous Peoples are culturally safe.

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Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act Amendments

- We are demonstrating the province's commitment to diversity, inclusion, reconciliation, and equity by increasing information sharing with Indigenous Peoples, adding Indigenous cultural protections and removing non-inclusive language.
- On November 25th 2021, amendments to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* received royal assent.
- These amendments to FOIPPA included a suite of measures to increase transparency and accountability including:
 - Increased public bodies' ability to disclose to Indigenous governing entities.
 - Adding a requirement for public bodies to seek consent from Indigenous governing entities to disclose information that is culturally sensitive through FOI.

Indigenous Names in BC Registries

- Ensuring business and society names reflect Indigenous people's language and culture is an important part of reconciliation and supporting the diversity of our province.
- We are committed to working with Indigenous peoples to understand how best to collect and manage data in a culturally appropriate way.
- This starts with having data standards that are built with

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Indigenous people, as well as technologies that work with Indigenous characters.

- BC Registries is exploring changes that can be made to be more inclusive of Indigenous languages in business name registration.
- We are committed to being more inclusive of Indigenous languages and have introduced a font for government website content, forms and services that supports Indigenous languages in B.C.
- BC Sans is available for download and has been deployed to all BC Public Service workstations.

Provincial Properties

- Nanaimo Correctional Centre Project:
 - o The project team consulted with the City of Nanaimo and the Snuneymuxw [Snah-nay-mo] and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations, as well as a host of others with interest in the facility.
 - o Through collaboration with the Snuneymuxw [Snah-nay-mo] and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations on related programming and design elements, the new facility also provides a more therapeutic and normalized living environment along with culturally responsive programming and spaces.
- The Real Property Division (RPD) has developed the Social Stewardship Policy and Barrier Free Program in cooperation with the Rick Hansen Foundation to remove government buildings barriers and increase inclusivity. RPD plans to continue to grow

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Social Stewardship work in government buildings with the development of two new programs focusing on Indigenous Reconciliation and Diversity & Inclusion.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: CITZ Support for Response to Provincial Flooding and Forest Fires.

Revised: Date of last revision, February 15, 2023

Key Messages:

- Every year, my Ministry plays a vital role in supporting the public and other ministries in response to natural disasters and emergencies, such as flooding events and wildfires.
- For example, in November 2021, B.C. experienced catastrophic flooding caused by heavy rains, resulting in severe floods and mudslides, which blocked every major highway connecting the Lower Mainland with the rest of the province.
- My ministry, in partnership with our service providers, has a sophisticated framework and process to effectively respond to and recover from emergencies.
- First, immediately following an emergency, we assess potential impacts to continuity of services by gathering situational awareness details from many different stakeholders, including the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, federal partners, and local governments.
- Second, we activate our Emergency Operations Centre to coordinate the emergency response and to support our client's business continuity plan requirements.

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- **Finally, we transition from mitigation to recovery by implementing the necessary project(s) required to restore services to our clients.**
- **In addition, we work with the ministries to ensure that appropriate Emergency Response Plans are in place, including conducting preventive maintenance to emergency equipment, to be ready for different scenarios.**

Questions and Answers:

1) How can people expect to access information from the government in the event of an extreme weather event or other major emergency?

- Citizen-facing emergency response phone lines and online information will always be available during an emergency.
- For example, when the atmospheric river event caused flooding in late 2021:
 - The Service BC flood support line received over 5,000 calls.
 - The flood response information on gov.bc.ca/floodresponse was viewed a total of 424,000 times.
 - The travel restrictions page and materials on disaster financial aid were translated into four languages. These translated pages were viewed 2,900 times.

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2) What is the scope of translated web materials in the event of an extreme weather event or other major emergency? How do translation services play a role in supporting British Columbians?

- The Service BC Provincial Contact Centre offers telephone support in over 140 languages and emergency response related website content is translated into multiple languages as well.
- For example, when the atmospheric river event caused flooding in late 2021:
 - The flood support line offered support in over 140 languages, daily from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
 - The flooding response main web page collated all relevant information for people including essential travel, supports available to farmers, those who required financial aid and highway information.
 - The travel restrictions page was translated into 4 languages and additional materials on disaster financial aid were translated by request of EMCR.

3) Are there plans to expand the temporary disaster (flood response) web presence, contact centre, and in-person supports in future?

- Citizen-facing emergency response phone lines and online information will always be available during an emergency. In the event of a similar emergency, we would assess the

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available supports and services, including any additional phone lines, web presence, and in-person supports that might be required.

- Service BC is currently working with EMCR to develop information and training material for front line teams to enhance the delivery of disaster support services in the future.
- Service BC is also working with EMCR on mobile outreach programs to better serve communities during natural disasters and emergencies. In addition to community and mobile outreach, Service BC has 65 geographically dispersed service centres across the province.

4) Are there lessons learned or post-mortem planning around bringing ministries and stakeholders together on this?

- My ministry is continuing to work with EMCR to discuss future web needs to help ensure government remains prepared to get people the information they need in a timely way during an emergency.
- As EMCR is responsible for this program, I will defer these questions to the ministry responsible.

5) What actions are taken when a government building is compromised by major flooding?

- Once flooding starts, Real Property Division's service provider enacts their emergency response procedures, and the building is secured physically to prevent looting and theft.

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- To prevent further damage, controlled shutdowns of the building systems may be initiated.
- For example, this process was followed when the atmospheric river event caused flooding in late 2021 and, additionally, generators were used to restore critical power (laboratory, coolers, and freezers) and pumps were brought in to maintain and prevent extended flooding.

6) What remediation is required at the Agriculture Centre? What is the cost? Are there any outstanding issues at this building?

- The Plant and Animal Health Centre suffered significant damage to the building systems, laboratories, lab equipment, and staff areas due to the flooding.
- Following the incident, site cleanup and disinfection, electrical repairs (transfer switch and generator), Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) repairs and additional security were required.
- The total estimated cost of the repair work and the feasibility study to protect the site for the next 4 to 5 years, portions of which are still underway, is approximately \$6M.
- Design and construction work at this site will commence following the completion of the feasibility study.
- The work has been partially funded by Citizens' Services (approximately \$2M) and partially funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (approximately \$4M).

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7) In 2022, how did the Ministry assist in the province's response to mass forest fires and flooding?

- The Office of the Chief Information Officer activated the Information Technology Operations Centre (ITOC), which co-ordinates and tracks all IT requests relating to emergency event response, such as wildfire or flooding and addresses IT and support requests from ministries 24/7.
- Divisions with emergency response responsibilities were well integrated into the ITOC and ensured that any solutions and workarounds for impacted services were addressed at the highest priority.
- Notably, the Ministry's IT responses in 2022 have been:
 - Assisting EMCR in standing up new Provincial Regional Emergency Operations Centers closer to the impacted flood areas.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: CITZ COVID Response and Recovery Summary

Revised: Date of last revision, March 1, 2023

Key Messages:

- Citizens' Services has played a pivotal role in supporting government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have provided a number of supports to keep British Columbians and the BC Public Service informed and safe.
- As we move forward, the Ministry is focused on supporting recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by improving the services people count on and helping to build a strong and sustainable economy.

Questions and Answers:

COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery

1) How is the Ministry of Citizens' Services supporting British Columbians in the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Connectivity and Cellular Coverage

- One of the ministry's core commitments is to ensure every British Columbian has equal access to high-speed internet by 2027. Internet connectivity supports job growth, a strengthened and diversified economy, health care, and

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stronger communities.

- Strong telecommunications networks and connectivity are critical components of economic recovery and growth. The continued importance of providing funding to accelerate capital investments by internet service providers is vital to restarting the economy in rural B.C. during and post-pandemic.
- The \$15 million in dedicated funding for cellular coverage expansion includes 252 km and two rest areas along Highway 16, known as the Highway of Tears, in northern B.C. Construction has begun on this project and is expected to be complete in Fall 2023.
- The Province is providing \$75 million in new funding through Budget 2023 to expand cellular coverage on highways that are currently underserved.
- This is anticipated to provide connectivity along at least 550 km of highways.

Better Access to Data and Digital Business Opportunities

- To date, government has made 173 procurement opportunities valued at a total of almost \$31 million available to tech companies of all sizes through the Digital Marketplace.
- In 2022/23 alone, this included posting 38 procurement opportunities valued at \$9.8 million on the Digital Marketplace.

BC Bid Tool

- BC Bid is the online marketplace tool that businesses use to

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gain access and insight to contract opportunities offered by core government and hundreds of publicly funded organizations, such as crown corporations, health authorities, and municipalities.

- The new BC Bid tool is part of a strategy to transform government procurement and make it easy for people to do business with the province

Procurement Strategy

- B.C.'s first-ever procurement strategy focused on providing best value, while also creating social, environmental, and economic benefits for people. Work continues to build on initial successes of the strategy to improve how government purchases goods and services.
- Achieving the goals of the BC Procurement Strategy is even more important as the province takes steps to create a resilient economy and a strong recovery after the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Improved BC Data Catalogue

- People, businesses, and organizations can access an improved BC Data Catalogue to find provincial government data, applications and web services that can be used to make informed decisions and create opportunities for British Columbians.
- The updated catalogue provides access to non-sensitive data, helping B.C. tech firms create new products for people in B.C.
- There are more than 3,000 sets of data in the catalogue,

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allowing businesses to easily make knowledgeable decisions, build new products or services, and develop new business models. The creation of new datasets has increased by 35% since improvements to the catalogue were made in fall 2021.

2) How is the Ministry of Citizens' Services supporting the BC Public Service in the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Enabling Public Service Renewal - Workplaces

- A Future Workplace Strategy was developed to modernize government buildings, address a more than 50 percent office vacancy due to a growing uptake in flexible work, and accommodate a more distributed public service workforce throughout British Columbia.
- Regional hiring as a default under “purpose driven flexibility” and a “guided” approach to hybrid work is driving a significant change.
- The Future Workplace Strategy calls for the consolidation of office space, and investments in additional ShareSpace facilities in strategic urban, suburban, and regional locations.
- Modernizing workspaces to support hybrid work requirements includes limiting dedicated workpoints in favour of establishing up to 70% of space to support mobile employees.
- The resounding success of a ShareSpace pilot in Langford has confirmed the general viability and uptake of ShareSpace to meet targeted government office space requirements based on the following metrics:

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- 60% peak utilization. Industry headquarters locations are currently seeing less than 17% utilization.
- A reduction of approximately 7,200 vehicle trips, contributing to CleanBC commitments by decreasing an estimated 65.4 tons of CO2 emissions.
- 98% of ShareSpace users feel they're productive when they work at these locations.
- The ShareSpace Community Managers welcome on average 30 new users per month.
- A 92% positive rating on office experiences reported through the space booking software used at these locations.
- A priority in upcoming years will be the installation of vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the province for citizen, employee, and government fleet vehicle use.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

1) What are some examples of how the Ministry of Citizens' Services supported British Columbians during the COVID-19 pandemic response?

Services to Residents of British Columbia

- The Ministry responded quickly to the public health emergency by launching an Emergency Response intake of the Connecting British Columbia program, which saw 47 projects funded to improve high-speed internet reliability and performance for

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people throughout B.C. by September 2020.

- Service BC's 65 Service BC Centres, the Provincial Contact Centre and BC Registries remained open throughout the pandemic, supporting people and businesses in B.C. to connect to government programs and services.
- Service BC launched the Book an Appointment app during the pandemic, enabling residents to navigate the online application to find the nearest Service BC location, select from the services and time slots available to book an appointment and authenticate their identity using the BC Services Card.
- British Columbians were able to authenticate their identity online and significantly reduce the timeframe to receive the federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit, Employment Insurance, Old Age Security and Canada Pension Plan benefits.
- The integration of the BC Services Card with the Health Gateway service has been critical to B.C.'s COVID-19 response allowing individuals to access their COVID-19 test results and their proof of vaccination.

COVID-19 Response on gov.bc.ca

- In 2022 COVID-19 related content was viewed 18.1 million times and has been accessed over 135 million times since 2020.
- In June 2020, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, GDX launched the COVID-19 Chatbot. In 2022, it answered approximately 403,000 questions and it has answered nearly 2.5 million questions since 2020.

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- Starting in April 2021, all COVID-19 and vaccine information was translated into 12 languages: Arabic, Farsi, French, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese.
- Starting in 2022, COVID-19 and vaccination information was also translated into Ukrainian and Russian.

2) What are some examples of how the Ministry of Citizens' Services supported the BC Public Service during the COVID-19 pandemic response?

Workplace Technologies

- CITZ has provided support to partners across the Government of B.C. in delivering modern, digital services. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated demand for remote service delivery across government.
- Teams within the Office of the Chief Information Officer play a critical and growing role in supporting ministries in using modern tools to address their business needs.
- This support includes guidance and tools on appropriately managing data, resourcing, and guidance for delivering solutions relating to information management and technology, and access to tools to deliver technical solutions online.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Distribution

- The Ministry supported the Province's COVID-19 Supply Hub until its wind-down in September 2021, with technology support, procurement, warehousing, and

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supply delivery for personal protective equipment and other vital supplies.

Government Facilities

- The Ministry helped keep employees safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing clean and safe facilities.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Title: Supporting Government Priorities: COVID-19 Response on gov.bc.ca

Revised: Date of last revision, February 10, 2023

Key Messages:

- As part of my mandate, I'm responsible to ensure we continue adapting to the changing context of COVID so that British Columbians have access to government services, and that we help support ministries to deliver these services in a way that maximizes benefits for British Columbians.
- Throughout the pandemic we have seen the importance of having accessible multi-channel services.
- My ministry helped ensure that COVID-related government services are easy to find, easy to read and inclusive of people's needs.
- The Government Digital Experience Division (GDX) developed and continues to manage the main web pages and digital assistant/chat bot for COVID-19 and vaccine information on gov.bc.ca.
- This web content is coordinated with the health information provided by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), HealthLink BC, WorkSafeBC, Service BC call centres, government social media channels and the federal government.

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Questions and Answers:

1) What kind of information are you providing on the website?

Over time, the COVID-19 web pages have included:

- Vaccination information, including dedicated content for children, youth, and booster eligibility
- Influenza vaccination information
- Proof of vaccination information for British Columbians and business owners
- Restrictions and rules about masking and provincial travel
- Provincial economic recovery initiatives and grants
- Links to pertinent information about return to work and return to school, as well as federal travel information.

2) How much did it cost to provide this service?

- In FY22/23, the Ministry of Health provided approximately \$700,000 to CITZ (GDX) for COVID related support and \$830,000 for chatbot services for a total of approximately \$1.53M.

3) What webpages still currently support British Columbians throughout this stage of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Current COVID-19 content includes information on boosters, vaccine booking, vaccine and children, treatments, testing, proof of vaccine, and information like posters.

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- Translated materials of all of the above are available in Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, French, Punjabi, Tagalog, Arabic, Farsi, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Vietnamese, Hindi. Select pages also available in Russian, Ukrainian.

4) What are you doing to support British Columbians whose first language is not English to ensure everyone is able to access the information and services they need?

- Starting in April 2021, all COVID-19 and vaccine information was translated into 12 languages: Arabic, Farsi, French, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Traditional Chinese, and Vietnamese.
- Starting in 2022, COVID-19 and vaccination information was also translated into Ukrainian and Russian.
- As well, people can access interpreters over the phone in 140 languages through Service BC.

5) How do you ensure the information is easily accessible and understandable?

- Applying web standards, like plain language, to ensure people can easily find, understand, and access information.
- Conducting research with people to understand their needs and challenges as they try to navigate government services. The research findings are used to make improvements to services, forms, web content and social media communications. For example, research focused on the vaccination experience and hesitancy by parents/ guardians of children between the ages of six months- to four-year. Findings were used to improve content,

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inform digital communications and social media and to develop and distribute printed materials to parents.

- Ongoing collaboration to ensure connection of information across the multiple agencies involved in communicating with the public, including BCCDC, HealthLink BC, Ministry of Health and GCPE.
- Implementing new technologies like a virtual assistant/chatbot to make it easier for people to find information they are looking for. This work includes providing a common chatbot experience that is used by gov.bc.ca, BCCDC, HealthLink BC, BC Cancer and Interior Health websites.

Contact:

Jeff Groot

ADM

Government Digital
Experience Division

Government Financial
Information

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Facts and Figures (Connectivity)

Revised: Date of last revision, January 13, 2023

Connectivity in BC

Status of connectivity as of October 2022

Status of broadband connectivity

- The BC and federal governments have committed to invest up to \$830 million to support the expansion of high-speed internet services to all remaining rural and Indigenous households in B.C. by 2027.
- The goal is to provide all households with a minimum speed of 50/10 Megabits per second, the universal service objective set by the federal regulator, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.
- When this funding was announced, there were 115,000 under-served households in B.C. There is now an estimated 93,500 under-served households, and approximately a third of these have a project pending that is approved or in progress. These figures mark important progress toward meeting the goal of connecting all households in B.C. to high-speed internet services.
- Figures below show the status of broadband connectivity and how the government is tracking towards 100 per cent of households served with high-speed internet services. Note: Figures below are based on analysis from the Connectivity Division.

This material will be proactively released

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	Total households in B.C.	Rural households (includes households on rural First Nations reserves)	Households on First Nation reserves
Total	2,063,417	325,015	36,961
# Served	1,969,874	237,180	28,084
% Served	95% (95.5%)	73%	76%
# Currently under-served	93,543	87,835	8,877
# In progress*	31,161	29,941	3,937
% In progress*	2% (1.5%)	9% (9.2%)	11% (10.6%)
# Remaining under-served when current projects complete**	62,382	57,894	4,940
% Remaining under-served when current projects complete**	3%	18% (17.8%)	13% (13.4%)

*In progress means there is a project approved or in progress for these households.

**The remaining under-served households when all current Provincially funded projects are complete.

Status of highway cellular connectivity

- The BC Government is committed to supporting connectivity on B.C. highways for public safety. Of the 15,000 kms of primary and secondary highways in the province, 4,200 kms, or just over 28%, is without cellular coverage. Of these 4,200 kms, 3,100 kms of highway are without power necessary for cell towers.

	Totals
Total kms of primary and secondary highways	15,000 km
# Highway kms served	10,800 km
% Highway kms served	72%
# Highway kms with no cellular coverage and no power	3,100 km
# Highway kms with no coverage, but with power	1,100 km
% Highway kms with no coverage, but with power	7%
# Total number of MoTI rest areas	213
# Total number of MoTI rest areas with cellular and/or Wi-Fi coverage	131
% MoTI rest areas served with cellular or Wi-Fi coverage	61%

This material will be proactively released

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Connectivity program update (as of October 2022)

Since 2017:

- 184 projects selected:
 - 86 projects are approved and in progress
 - 98 projects are complete
- 49 projects are co-funded with federal funding programs.

Households and communities benefiting:

- 72,430 households to be connected from all projects.
- 630 rural and remote communities, including 206 First Nation reserves will benefit from these projects.

Other benefits:

- 532 kms of highway cellular, including 252 kms and two rest areas along Highway 16 (Highway of Tears).
- 30 highway rest areas, ferry terminals and campgrounds with improved connectivity including cellular coverage and/or Wi-Fi.
- 5 emergency call boxes.

Funding disbursement breakdown:

- \$557 million total connectivity investments in B.C. partially covered by the provincial connectivity programming:
 - \$188 million of **provincial funding** has been allocated to projects
 - \$171 million in **federal funding** has been allocated to provincial projects.

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- \$198 million in funding from **service providers and other sources.**

Contact:

Jeanne Holliss ED, Connected Communities Connectivity Division 250-516-3848

Communities Benefitting from Connecting British Columbia Program

January 2023



In-Flight Project



Completed Project

Since 2017, completed and approved projects through connectivity programming has or will benefit more than 72,000 homes in more than 630 communities including 206 First Nation reserves.



BRITISH
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Ministry of
Citizens' Services

Connectivity Division

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Indigenous Community Connectivity

Revised: Date of last revision, February 15, 2023

Key Messages:

- **Bridging the digital divide is a critical part of British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and our commitment to reconciliation and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).**
- **The Province's commitment to connect all First Nations communities to high-speed internet is outlined in action 4.36 of the Declaration Act Action Plan.**
- **Working together with Indigenous communities, service providers and other organizations, we're seeing steady progress.**
- **Since 2017, funding has been approved for projects to improve internet access for households in 206 First Nations reserves in B.C.**
- **With record investments we are making in connectivity, this number will continue to grow.**
- **Internet connectivity improves access to education, health care services, economic development, and training opportunities.**

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- **The provincial and federal governments are supporting a Rogers project to provide continuous cellular coverage between Prince Rupert and Smithers on Highway 16 – the Highway of Tears.**
- **This fulfils a critical recommendation from the Highway of Tears Symposium Report's 33 recommendations aimed at enhancing safety for Indigenous women and girls.**
- **Construction started on the cellular build at the end of 2021 and is due to complete later this year.**

Questions and Answers:

1) How many First Nations households are without high-speed internet services?

- We estimate 24% of households on First Nations reserves currently do not have access to high-speed internet. When all current Provincially-funded projects are complete, this figure will drop to approximately 13% of households on First Nations reserves that still require a project to have access to high-speed internet services.

2) What has been the progress to date?

- Connectivity funding since 2017 has supported many Indigenous communities to achieve their connectivity goals.
- In 2017, we estimated 25% of rural Indigenous communities were fully connected with access to 50/10 Megabits per second internet speeds.

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- Today we measure households served to give a more detailed analysis of connectivity in an area. Provincial funding has contributed to the 76% of First Nations households on reserve with access to high-speed internet services. When current projects in-flight are complete, that number will grow to 87%.
- For example, the \$45-million Connected Coast project will bring high-speed internet capacity capability to 139 rural and remote communities (159 landing sites), including 48 Indigenous communities representing 44 First Nations. The cable reached Haida Gwaii in June and construction of a last-mile project to bring high-speed internet to over 700 homes to the community is currently underway.
- In addition, the Connecting British Columbia program provided funding for the expansion of cellular networks in B.C., with \$15 million allocated so far to improve cellular connectivity on highways. This will include 252 kms and two rest areas along Highway 16 – the Highway of Tears.

3) How does connectivity support reconciliation?

- Supporting connectivity for all First Nations is a foundational government strategy for reconciliation and self-determination.
- Connectivity is represented directly in action 4.36 in the Declaration Act Action Plan 'to ensure every First Nations community in B.C. has high-speed internet services,' and indirectly supports many actions in the Plan, including Indigenous language revitalization, education and training, healthcare, and economic development.

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4) How do the Provincial funding programs support a First Nation and their right to self-determination?

First Nation communities are requested to provide a Council Resolution to confirm community support. As part of the Connecting Communities BC funding program, these are mandatory for all last-mile projects, giving communities an important voice in projects in their areas.

Contact:

Jeanne Holliss Executive Director Connectivity 250-516-3848

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Cellular Coverage on Highways and Communities

Revised: Date of last revision, March 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- Cellular connectivity along highways is critical for public safety and access to emergency services – especially along rural and remote stretches.
- In 2020, \$15 million from the Connecting British Columbia program's \$90 million Stronger BC Economic Recovery intake was dedicated to support expansion of highway cellular service and connectivity at rest areas.
- We exceeded our goal of supporting an additional 140 km of highway cellular service by contributing funding to projects that will provide cellular connectivity to an additional 532 km of highway.
- And we more than doubled our goal of connecting 14 rest areas, with connectivity in progress for 30 rest areas, campgrounds, and ferry terminals in the province.
- Funding for cellular coverage expansion includes 252 km and two rest areas along Highway 16, known as the Highway of Tears, in northern B.C. Construction has begun on this project and is expected to be complete in Fall 2023.
- This investment is key to ensuring women, especially Indigenous women, who are not safe can call for help and receive the services they need in a timely manner. Closing cellular gaps along Highway 16 was a recommendation in the

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Highway of Tears Symposium Report.

If Pressed:

- **Alternate technologies such as roadside emergency call boxes – an emergency telephone service – are being installed along Highway 97 (Alaska Highway) where cell coverage is currently unavailable due to a lack of available power. This will provide critical access to 911 services on this route.**
- **Provincial funding of up to \$4.9 million is supporting the installation of seven new towers to bring cellular coverage to 70 km of highway between Sooke and Port Renfrew. As of January 2023, five of seven towers have been installed and are providing continuous cellular coverage from Sooke to Bear Beach. Rogers Communications expects to install the remaining two towers by Spring 2023.**

New Cellular Funding – Supplemental Estimates for last fiscal 2022/23:

- **Expanding cellular coverage has been identified as a key priority for local governments and Indigenous nations, as it improves personal safety and natural disaster response capacity.**
- **The new investment of \$75 million for cellular projects will expand highway cellular connectivity to over 550 kms of highway that are underserved.**
- **This expanded cellular coverage along highways will improve public safety and the ability to call for help, as well as aligning with the StrongerBC economic plan and action 4.36 of the Declaration Act Action Plan.**

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Questions and Answers:

1) How many highway kilometres in B.C. do not have access to cellular connectivity?

- B.C. has approximately 15,000 kms of highway throughout the province, approximately 4,200 kms (28%) of which are without cellular services. Of these 4,200 kms, about 3,100 kms are also without access to the electric power necessary for cell towers to operate.
- B.C.'s vast areas, rugged terrain and topography can make expansion of this type of infrastructure challenging and costly for service providers.

2) If the \$15 million from StrongerBC funding will achieve 532 km of new cellular coverage, why will \$75 million only achieve 550 kms?

- Of the \$90 million StrongerBC funding announced in 2020, \$15 million was allocated to highway cellular projects including connectivity to rest areas and call boxes.
- The \$15 million estimated 140 kms of new highway cellular coverage based on an average cost per cellular tower and average coverage distance estimated at the time.
- The Province's StrongerBC funding was announced and available before Innovation, Science and Economic Development announced \$50 million nationally as part of the new Universal Broadband Fund.

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- Funding from NDIIT, plus \$2.25 million from the Universal Broadband Fund and service providers realized almost \$41 million in total project value.
- An estimated 550 kms will be achieved with the new \$75 million in funding. This funding assumes approved projects, which will expand cellular to very remote and challenging areas will maximize eligible funds per criteria which has already been established by the Universal Broadband Fund.
- The \$75 million for 550 kms is an estimate of cost based on the average cost of a cellular tower times the average number of kms of service.
- 550 kms is the minimum kms expected to be achieved from the funding.
- The combination of more challenging and remote locales and the increased cost of construction have also contributed to the estimated kms achievable with the \$75 million.

If pressed on how much funding NDIIT contributed:

- The Province allocated \$15 million toward highway cellular and \$75 million to internet to the home in 2020 under StrongerBC funding.
- In the spring of 2021, NDIIT redirected \$7 million from within the \$90 million toward highway cellular given broadband internet targets would be exceeded and they had an opportunity to approve high quality highway cellular projects.

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- NDIT ultimately allocated approximately \$22 million toward projects contributing to 532 kms of new highway cellular coverage.
- Based on approved projects by NDIT, total project value of nine projects is almost \$41 million meaning provincial funds are anticipated to achieve an almost 1:1 funding ratio.
- Our target of 550 kms for the \$75 million is based on current programming allowable funding levels up to 90% of project costs and considered the higher cost and more remote and challenging locations of construction than three years ago.
- Where possible, other funding will be leveraged to increase the number of kilometers of cellular coverage.

3) Why can't the BC Government direct service providers to build on certain highways?

- Telecommunications companies are regulated by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).
- The Province cannot direct service providers as to where and when they expand their networks, however we are in regular dialogue with them to talk about how to overcome gaps in cellular on highways.

4) Is this new cellular funding part of the Connecting Communities BC program?

- No, the funding would be provided to the Northern Development Initiative Trust (NDIT) to administer a new

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program to advance cellular along underserved highway segments.

- NDIT has administered connectivity programs, including highway cellular for a number of years.
- The direct nature of cellular projects, with fewer eligible applicants and less complexity than broadband internet projects make NDIT an ideal program partner.

5) Recent tech outages have shown that networks are not as resilient as they could be. What is government doing to ensure people can safely connect with first responders, or an ambulance?

- Everyone in B.C. should be able to call 911 when they need to.
- Telecommunications companies in Canada are regulated by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC); however, large outages raise concern around the need for a backup network, especially for people who may be in medical distress, or need to call 911.
- On September 8, the Federal Minister for Innovation, Science and Economic Development announced that the 13 largest telecommunication companies in Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to ensure and guarantee emergency roaming, mutual assistance, and a communications protocol for advising the public and governments during major outages and other emergencies.
- As of September 9, should one of these providers face a major network outage, the other companies have committed to

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provide the support and assistance necessary so that Canadians can reach loved ones, access 911, and conduct business transactions.

- Based on this agreement, the provincial government through the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, and the Ministry of Citizens' Services have engaged with telecommunications providers to define provincial protocols for ensuring the proper response for British Columbians in case of an outage.

Contact:

Rachel Greenspan Executive Director Connectivity Division 250-880-7603
Network BC

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Connectivity Funding Programs

Revised: Date of last revision, March 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- Everyone, everywhere in B.C. needs access to reliable, high-speed internet to be able to work, learn and stay in touch with friends and family.
- On March 8, 2022, the Governments of British Columbia and Canada announced an agreement to invest up to \$830 million (\$415 million each) to support expanding broadband infrastructure in the province to all under-served households by 2027.
- These investments will ensure that people and businesses in communities throughout B.C. can have the connectivity they need to access all the personal and economic opportunities that come with reliable, quality internet service.
- Connecting Communities BC, the next generation of our funding program for connectivity, has offered two funding intakes so far and is actively reviewing applications. Further intakes may open to serve the remaining gaps.
- I encourage internet service providers in the province to apply for funding, if they have not already, to help bring high-speed internet services to our under-served rural and Indigenous communities.
- First Nation Council Resolutions and/or letters of support are mandatory for all last-mile projects, giving communities an

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important voice in projects in their areas.

- **Applications from unincorporated areas require a regional district board resolution or letter.**

Questions and Answers:

1) How much has the government invested in connectivity?

- Since 2017, the Provincial government has invested over \$500 million into expanding high-speed internet and cellular connectivity. B.C.'s objective is to connect all remaining underserved households to high-speed internet services by 2027.

2) What funding programs are available?

- Since 2017, the Provincial government has allocated funds to two connectivity funding programs.
- The Connecting British Columbia program is administered by the Northern Development Initiative Trust. Funding intakes for this program are now closed, however many projects funded by this program are still in the process of being built. 184 projects have been approved so far through this program, benefiting over 72,000 households in B.C.
- The Connecting Communities BC is the next generation of Provincial connectivity funding programs and was created to support expanding access to high-speed internet services to all remaining underserved households in B.C. by 2027.

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- Funding through this program will support projects to improve high-speed internet access through fibre, cable and fixed wireless technologies.
- The second application intake closed on February 16, 2023, and assessments are currently underway.
- Future intakes will continue to be opened until program targets have been met.

3) How is funding allocated?

- Eligible applicants, including larger and smaller service providers, can apply to the Connecting Communities BC program for project funding in areas that do not have consistent 50/10 Mbps internet service.
- The first intake for the Connecting Communities BC program opened on September 7, 2022, and closed December 15, 2022. The second intake opened December 16, 2022, and closed on February 16, 2023.
- Applications for funding are currently being assessed.
- Full details are on the [Connecting Communities BC web pages](#).

4) Is cellular funding available?

- We recognize the importance of cellular connectivity along B.C. highways and in rural and remote communities, especially for public safety.
- The new Connecting Communities BC funding program will be supporting internet connectivity, which includes

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transportation projects that will provide some of the infrastructure to expand cellular services.

- \$15 million was allocated for cellular projects through the Connecting British Columbia program.
- A total amount of \$22 million was allocated to highway cellular projects by NDIT.
- This funding has supported new cellular services for 532 highway kilometers and 30 rest areas, including 252 kilometers and two rest areas along Highway 16 (Highway of Tears).

How is funding allocated?

- The Connecting Communities BC funding program is administered by the Ministry of Citizens' Services in partnership with the federal government.
- Project eligibility and selection criteria have been established that are consistent with the federal Universal Broadband fund.
- Criteria for the program are described in full detail on the [Connecting Communities BC web pages](#).

Contact:

Rachel Greenspan Executive Director Connectivity Division 250 880-7603
Network BC

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Connecting Communities BC Program

Revised: Date of last revision, Feb 3, 2023

Key Messages:

- Everyone in British Columbia deserves to have access to reliable high-speed internet.
- That's why we're making significant investments toward our goal of connecting all rural and Indigenous households to high-speed internet services by 2027.
- On March 8, 2022, the Governments of British Columbia and Canada announced an agreement to invest up to \$830 million (\$415 million each) to support expanding broadband infrastructure in the province to all under-served households.
- These investments ensure that people and businesses in communities throughout B.C. have the connectivity services they need to thrive.
- Connecting Communities BC is the next generation of our Provincial funding program for connectivity.
- Two application intakes have been open so far for this program, and there will be more to come, until we reach our goal of connecting all corners of the province to high-speed internet services.

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- The program funds applicants to build connectivity infrastructure, using multiple technologies – for example, fibre, cable, and fixed wireless.
- This is an exciting time to bring connectivity to people and communities in B.C., and I am eager to finish the job we started.

Questions and Answers:

1) What are the goals of Connecting Communities BC?

- The Connecting Communities BC funding program supports the expansion of high-speed internet services to all remaining under-served rural and indigenous households in B.C.

The goal aligns with Canada's federal connectivity strategy, as well as B.C.'s commitment to connecting all households by 2027.

- It also aligns with action 4.36 in the Declaration Act Action Plan to connect all First Nations communities to high-speed internet services by 2027.
- Currently 62,380 rural and remote households are under-served or don't have an approved project pending construction to bring high-speed internet services in the province.
- The program has completed two application intakes for funding. Assessments of these applications are now taking place.

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- The program will run subsequent intakes until program objectives have been met.

2) Will this program replace existing connectivity funding programs?

- Connecting Communities BC is the next generation of the government's funding program which will help fund the expansion of internet services to every corner of B.C.
- Projects in progress with the Connecting British Columbia program, administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust, will continue to progress and be monitored under that program.

3) What are the application criteria for this program?

- The Province is partnering with Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada to fund the Connecting Communities BC program. Application criteria builds on existing requirements for the federal government's Universal Broadband Fund.
- Full details on eligibility and how to apply are on the Connecting Communities BC web pages:
www.gov.bc.ca/connectingcommunitiesbc

4) What should communities do if they appear served on the ISED National Broadband Service Availability Map (Map), but do not believe they have access to 50/10?

- If there are discrepancies reported between internet speeds reported on the Map and those experienced in communities, there are a few steps communities can take:

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1. Talk to your service provider and see if there is a reason you might be experiencing slower speeds. If there are no technical reasons, talk to the service provider about reporting the discrepancy to ISED.
2. The community can also independently report the discrepancy to ISED through their website.
3. Talk to your service provider about submitting an application to the Connecting Communities BC program and including evidence that the community is under-served. See the [Application Guide – Annex 4](#).

Contact:

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Connected Coast Project

Revised: Date of last revision, January 26, 2023

Key Messages:

- Connected Coast is an innovative project that is bringing high-speed internet capacity to 139 B.C. rural and remote communities, including 48 Indigenous communities.
- The subsea fibre is laid along the ocean floor to key landing sites, bringing high-speed fibre to remote coastal communities.
- The project will serve communities along the B.C. coast from north of Prince Rupert, to Haida Gwaii, south to Vancouver, and around Vancouver Island.
- So far 52 landing sites have been built and over 1,000 km of submarine cable has been laid. The project should complete in 2024.

Questions and Answers:

1) How many people and businesses are getting connected?

- This project will bring high-speed internet capacity to 139 rural and remote communities (159 landing sites), including 48 Indigenous communities representing 44 First Nations.

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- Communities with existing infrastructure to the home will benefit from increased capacity to their community when the fibre is connected.
- Where last-mile infrastructure does not already exist, there is potential funding available for under-served areas through the Connecting Communities BC funding program.
- Approximately 90,000 underserved homes in total are anticipated to benefit from the Connected Coast network.

2) Internet access is important but so is cellular coverage, which many parts of the province currently lack. Why are we prioritizing getting these communities internet access before they can use a cellphone?

- We recognize the importance of cellular connectivity along B.C. highways and in rural and remote communities, especially for public safety.
- The new Connecting Communities BC funding program will be supporting internet connectivity, which includes transport projects that provide some of the infrastructure needed to expand cellular services.
- Nearly \$15 million has been allocated to cellular projects through the Connecting British Columbia program. This has supported new cellular services for 532 highway kilometers and 30 rest areas, including 252 kilometers and two rest areas along Highway 16 (Highway of Tears).

3) So, you're not actually connecting these communities – they still must build their own networks?

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- Some communities will have last-mile infrastructure in place and will benefit from higher speeds as soon as the last-mile network is connected to the Connected Coast fibre. Other communities will need upgraded or new last-mile infrastructure that will connect the fibre to homes and businesses in the community.
- Funding may be available through the Connecting Communities BC program for last-mile projects in areas that are underserved.
- As the Connected Coast project is funded by the provincial and federal governments, any service provider is able to access the network for a last-mile project to the home.

4) What is the status of the Connected Coast Network project since it was announced in 2018?

- Construction of vaults and conduits on landing sites in northern coastal communities of British Columbia where the undersea cable comes ashore has been underway since the fall of 2021.
- A cable-laying vessel called the CanPac Valour arrived from the Gulf of Mexico and left Campbell River in January 2022 to begin laying cable on the ocean floor in the Haida Gwaii area. It was accompanied by the Gitga'at Transporter, a smaller 55-foot vessel that was deployed in the Prince Rupert area.
- As of December 2022, 52 landing sites have been built and over 1,000 km of submarine cable has been laid.

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- The project is divided into segments with construction activities, permitting and consultations progressing at different speeds.
- The project is slated to be completed in 2024.

5) Connected Coast was scheduled to be completed in 2023. Why is the project delayed?

- Connectivity projects like these are complex and can take many years to complete.
- The Connected Coast project is the first of its kind in Canada. It involves installing submarine fibre optic cable along the seabed and will serve some of the most remote coastal communities in B.C. The project requires extensive permitting and consultation to ensure that natural habitats are protected and that communities are consulted and represented in decision-making.
- In addition to this, harsh weather and supply chain issues have impacted some project timelines.
- This project is now well into construction and is expected to be completed in 2024. Once complete, the project will bring high-speed internet capacity to many coastal communities for the first time.

6) In light of the natural disasters in the Province, are there any safeguards in the project that will prevent network disruptions?

- The festooned network design of the Connected Coast network offers high reliability and redundancy.

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- The network also provides redundant paths in the province which can carry data traffic in case a segment of the network experiences failure.
- The additional network capacity will also be capable of supporting cellular technology in the future that can be used for emergency earthquake and tsunami alerting.
- The network also provides additional public safety benefits such as providing alternative routes for data traffic for some of Natural Resources Canada's Early Earthquake Warning System.

Contact:

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Connectivity Project Timelines and Permitting

Revised: Date of last revision, February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- Everyone in British Columbia should have access to affordable and reliable broadband and cellular services.
- Due to factors like B.C.'s rugged and diverse terrain, extreme weather events and supply chain issues, connectivity projects are complex, often require extensive permitting, and can take years for service providers to plan and complete.
- Many areas require multiple projects to achieve connectivity. This includes expanding backbone infrastructure to bring capacity to regions and communities, as well as last-mile projects to connect homes.
- A total of 184 projects have been approved for funding since 2017 under the Connecting British Columbia program. Of these, 86 projects are in progress, and 98 projects are complete.
- And new projects are being submitted and considered through the new connectivity funding program, Connecting Communities BC, to support completion of the work to expand high-speed internet services in B.C. The first intake closed on December 15, 2022 and a second intake closes February 16, 2023.
- On March 8, 2022, the Governments of British Columbia and Canada announced an agreement to invest up to \$830 million (\$415 million each) to support expanding broadband

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infrastructure in the province to all underserved households by 2027.

- **When this funding was announced, there were 115,000 underserved households in B.C. There are now 93,500, marking important progress in meeting that goal.**

Questions and Answers:

1) How will the Province ensure permitting does not unduly delay the Province's goal of connecting all households by 2027?

- The Province is looking at the end-to-end permitting process and has established teams within multiple ministries that enhance education and training for staff and internet service providers, track connectivity projects, and that will be able to identify any permitting challenges early in the process. These teams will provide ongoing support and coordination until projects are complete.

2) How is the Ministry of Citizens' Services collaborating with other Ministries to ensure permitting goes smoothly for connectivity projects?

- The Ministry has established open lines of communication with permit-issuing Ministries across government and is establishing processes that will expedite permitting resolution. This will help to maximize efficiency in the permitting process, including permitting for access to rights-of-way, Crown land, and passive infrastructure, such as utility poles.

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- Specifically, the Connectivity Division in the Ministry of Citizens' Services also has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship to work collaboratively on permitting for connectivity projects.

3) Will these new supports for permitting apply to projects from the Connecting Communities BC program as well as previous funding rounds?

- Permitting experts in the Connectivity Division have been established to address permitting challenges relating to connectivity projects across the two provincially funding programs.
- The team works directly with service providers to facilitate the permitting process and identify and resolve challenges that impact project timelines.
- The Connectivity Division has also funded new positions with the Ministry of Water, Lands, and Resource Stewardship, to specifically focus on receiving and tracking connectivity permitting applications.

Contact: ADM, ED, or Director

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Local Government and Community Supports

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Key Messages:

- **Connecting all communities - particularly rural, remote and Indigenous communities - in the province to high-speed internet is an ambitious goal, which will take all levels of government working with service providers to achieve.**
- **Local governments are ideally placed to advise service providers on their community needs and have an important role in championing local interests.**
- **Every application to the Connecting Communities BC program requires a letter of support from the local government before a project is approved. This ensures that community needs are considered.**
- **The Province has partnered with the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) to support a Regional Connectivity Knowledge Network for local and First Nations governments.**
- **The goal is for participants to provide peer support for connectivity planning in their communities.**
- **We have also worked with UBCM on research for issues important to local governments, like the Internet Speed Study completed in 2022.**

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Questions and Answers:

1) What role do local governments have in connectivity funding programs?

- Every application to the Connecting Communities BC program is required to have a First Nation Council Resolution and/or a letter of support from the local government.
- This ensures that projects being submitted to the program have community support and the voice of the community is considered.

2) What value does the letter of support or a First Nation Council Resolution provide?

- The letter of support from a local government, or a First Nation Council Resolution, demonstrates the community has been consulted on a project and that community needs are considered.
- Every application to the Connecting Communities BC program is required to have a letter of support and/or a First Nation Council Resolution for any area that impacts a community.

3) What if a service provider does not want to expand services into a community that is under-served?

- B.C. is a large province and the areas that remain underserved are some of the more challenging remote and difficult-to-reach areas.

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- It will take a mix of technologies to reach every household in the province and this could include fibre, cable, fixed wireless and potentially satellite solutions.
- For many areas it may take time and multiple projects to serve a community, but we have committed to support the expansion of internet services to every corner of the province.
- Communities that are having challenges getting service provider support can contact ministry staff in the Connectivity Division for assistance.

4) How can local governments find out more about connectivity and get support for their connectivity needs?

- The Province supports local governments in B.C. in a number of ways:
 - i. The Province partners with UBCM to support a local government led peer-to-peer learning forum on connectivity called the Regional Connectivity Knowledge Network (RCKN). The group frequently meets to share experiences, identify topics of interest, and invite experts to the table to inform discussions.
 - ii. The Province has developed a suite of learning resources available on the government website to learn more about connectivity. These resources were developed in response to first-hand experiences discussed at the RCKN.
 - iii. Staff from the Connectivity Division participate in regional broadband committees as requested, providing a provincial perspective and support to the discussion.

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Contact:

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Internet Speeds, Program Eligibility and Connectivity Tools

Revised: Date of last revision, February 3, 2023

Key Messages:

Internet speeds

- Communities across British Columbia voiced concerns that internet speeds used to determine eligibility for connectivity funding may not accurately reflect speeds experienced at the community level.
- A study on internet speeds aimed to understand the differences in available versus experienced internet speeds in selected B.C. rural communities with those reported on the National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map.
- In 2021, the Province and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) and Northern Development Initiative Trust collaborated on this independent speed study to understand the nature of the concern, magnitude, scope and factors contributing to the differences.
- Communities and regional districts participated in the report, which highlighted areas of B.C. that may be experiencing internet speeds that are inconsistent with the national map, and possible reasons for the difference.

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- The subsequent report *Understanding Internet Speed Discrepancies* was released in February 2022. It provides an objective analysis and a factual foundation to inform dialogue on matters related to internet speeds in rural B.C. communities with local governments, internet service providers, the province, and the Federal Government.
- Conversations with the federal government, local governments and service providers are ongoing in areas where speed discrepancies remain.
- There is also an opportunity in the new Connecting Communities BC funding program for a service provider to submit evidence of lower speeds with an application for communities shown as served on the Map.

Community Information Tool and Community Investment Opportunities Tool

- As more services are offered online, communities need to integrate digital capabilities and capacity into their plans – especially if they are rural.
- We recognize the need for communities to have the information to do this planning at their fingertips.
- People now have access to two online community planning tools, offering easy access to data-driven insights and investment opportunities for communities across B.C.
- The Community Information Tool and Community Investment Opportunities Tool provide a central access point

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for community data and connect interested investors with available investment opportunities in communities.

- **Both tools are part of a suite of data-driven planning tools being developed to provide communities with accessible resources for economic and community growth.**
- **The tools will assist economic planners to promote investment and plan infrastructure; helping level the economic development playing field between larger, well-resourced communities and smaller communities that might not have similar market access.**
- **We've heard from communities that are trying to take advantage of economic opportunities, whether resource-based or through tourism or the growth of technology companies.**
- **The tools bring data together that allows users to search information by community or filtered to understand deeper socio-economic trends.**
- **What tools bring together rich data sources that will provide helpful information in a visual or map format that can inform investment and policy decisions.**

Map of funded projects by community

- **Since 2017, the Provincial government has allocated over \$500 million into expanding connectivity to underserved rural and Indigenous communities in B.C.**

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- So far, the program has funded 184 approved projects benefitting more than 72,000 households in the province.
- To see a complete list of all approved and announced projects supported by the Connecting British Columbia program, the Province has a new interactive map on their Connectivity in BC webpages to see completed and in-flight (in progress) projects by community.

Questions and Answers:

1) Why did the province undertake a study into internet speeds?

- Following an update to the National Broadband Internet Service Availability Map (the Map) in January 2021, communities across British Columbia voiced concerns that federal data on broadband internet speeds, which is used as one criteria to determine eligibility for connectivity funding programs, may not accurately reflect the speeds being experienced in homes, businesses, and other locations at the community level.
- Connected Communities, UBCM, and Northern Development Initiative Trust responded collaboratively to these concerns with an independent study of potential differences between the broadband internet speeds experienced in some B.C. communities, and the 50/10 Mbps speeds identified on the map. This was released in February 2022.

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2) What did the study find?

- The study looked at 940 rural locales — communities and/or clusters of homes — that were marked on the map as having 50/10-Megabit per second (Mbps) service. These locales represent different community types such as incorporated municipalities, non-incorporated, rural locales, and Indigenous communities.
- The study found that potential discrepancies between service speeds reflected on the map and speeds experienced and available at the local level may exist in some locales.

3) Why are some locales experiencing slower internet speeds?

- The factors that contribute to slower internet speeds can be complex and multifaceted, but fall into three general categories:
 - Technical or network challenges, including the quality of the network;
 - Consumer preference and/or whether internet service in their home or business is optimized; and
 - Inconsistent ways of measuring internet speeds.

4) What is the province doing in response to the findings in the study?

- The study found the reasons for any discrepancies are complex, multifaceted, and likely differ from place to place. In some locations, further analysis will be required to confirm the causes and determine an effective solution or remediation path for the community or locale.

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- In general, to address the findings of the study and help communities better understand the results, several initiatives have been undertaken:
 - The Ministry has reached out to service providers with the findings from the report to advise on any technical, network or other issues that would impact speeds to communities experiencing discrepancies.
 - A partnership with Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA) looked at the speed testing done in locales with a possible discrepancy. The Province also worked with CIRA on educational resources to help consumers optimize available speeds. These are available on the government's website.
 - The Ministry has produced a summary document to accompany the TANEx report to explain the report findings in plain language.
 - Work is ongoing with the federal government and service providers to discuss the ways speeds are reported and what we can do to support communities.
 - There is a mechanism in the Connecting Communities BC funding program for applicants to submit evidence of possible discrepancies with applications. Details are available in the Application Guide – Annex 4.

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5) How will the Community Information Tool support communities?

- The Community Information Tool combines over 40 public datasets, including Census information, Data BC, the B.C. Data Catalogue, and industrial lands information, into one visual resource.
- The tool allows people to collect location-based data that they would typically need to search for on several websites. Categories include population, median household income, labour force, key sectors, and connectivity.
- Community and regional profiles in the Community Information Tool include socio-economic data, infrastructure, and community assets to provide a sense of a community.
- Users can also discover insights and patterns among B.C. communities using search filters for specific characteristics – such as economic health, access to education and health care, connectivity, infrastructure, or emergency management.

6) What is the Community Investment Opportunities Tool?

- The Community Investment Opportunities Tool connects investors with industrial, commercial, and agricultural properties available for investment throughout the province.
- Community representatives can post properties available for sale or lease to investors. Interested investors can search for available opportunities by filtering based on various criteria.

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7) Who are these resources intended for?

- These tools are available to the public and local governments (municipalities, regional districts, provincial).
- Local governments and their economic development and community planning staff, as well as emergency management, health, and social planners, will be able to use the Community Information Tool to access data-driven insights to assist with better community and economic development.
- Commercial and industrial land developers, realtors, industry, and business owners can explore economic and investment opportunities in communities.
- Students and people curious about data in municipalities can explore community data insights and opportunities using the tools.

8) Why was the Community Investment Opportunities Tool developed?

- We heard from communities and local government planners that they wanted a mechanism where they could post their investment opportunities.
- The Community Investment Opportunities Tool is powered by the same database as the Community Information Tool. Using this platform, we were able to develop the two tools.

9) How much did it cost to develop the tools?

- The Community Information Tool was created by Ministry staff in 2019 as a comprehensive visual tool designed to support

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connectivity investment decisions by incorporating community asset information with digital and other infrastructure data.

- Under Stronger BC, the Ministry was provided \$700,000 to expand the Community Information Tool to support investment decisions by incorporating industrial land (and other land use) data to support investment decisions throughout the province.

10) How will the tools support investments in the province?

- The tools will assist economic planners to promote investment and plan infrastructure; helping level the economic development playing field between larger, well-resourced communities and smaller communities that might not have similar market access.
- With the use of this tool, we can better target, align and leverage connectivity, investments, and community well-being needs with a more comprehensive view of the landscape.
- In addition, the data brought together within the tool allows users, including local governments and investors, to access information through an advanced query function to inform decisions and provide insights to socio-economic trends.

11) When were the tools released?

- The Community Information Tool and the Community Investment Opportunities Tool were launched on January 28, 2022.

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12) What does it mean if there is no project showing on the Province's interactive web map?

The map shows all approved and announced projects supported by the Connecting British Columbia program. These projects are either completed or in progress.

If there is not a project in a specific area, it does not mean that there are no connectivity projects in-flight rather, it may indicate that the area is already served, or there may be private sector investment going into the area.

Contact: ADM, ED, or Director

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Title: Facts and Figures (Digital and Data)

Revised: Date of last revision, February 22, 2023

Overall web analytics on the main government website gov.bc.ca

In 2020:

- Content on gov.bc.ca was viewed 146 million times.
- Traffic peaked in December, with 20.7 million views as traffic on COVID-19 related content increased significantly.
- Despite launching in March 2020, pages in the COVID-19 theme were viewed more often compared to all other themes that year.
- Non-mobile (desktop) devices accounted for the most government page views every month.

In 2021

- Traffic on the main government site increased to 222.9 million views.
- Traffic was highest in April with 27.7 million views, driven by the third COVID-19 wave.
- COVID-19 related content was the busiest throughout the year, except during wildfire season in July and August, when Public Safety and Emergency Services content was viewed more.
- In July, August, September, and December, pages were viewed more on mobile devices than on non-mobile devices. September 2021 had the largest monthly share of pages viewed on mobile devices.

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In 2022

- Content on the main government site was viewed 142.2 million times.
- Traffic was highest in January with 15 million views, driven by COVID-19 related content.
- COVID-19 related content had the highest traffic among all themes in the early months of the year (January through April 2022).
- From May 2022 through December 2022, other themes had the highest monthly page views including health, tax and tax credits, Public safety and emergency services.
- Mobile and non-mobile (desktop) devices accessing gov.bc.ca every month in 2022, was split approximately 42% to 58% respectively, a change from 2021 where mobile usage out-paced desktop use for one-third of the year.

Top on-site search terms

NOTE: This year (2022) we updated the report to ignore capitalization in the top search terms (e.g., treat "FOI" and "foi" as the same search). We've made a small update to the 2021 numbers to reflect this.

- In 2020 there were 5.2 million searches made on gov.bc.ca.
- The 2020 top 5 search terms made on government pages, by term and search count:
 - "special needs": 19,000
 - "behaviour consultant": 17,000

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- "FOI": 14,000
- "current job postings": 13,000
- "covid": 9,000
- In 2021 there were 5.9 million searches made on Government sites.
- The 2021 Top 5 Search Terms made on Government pages, by term and search count:
 - "behaviour consultant": 21,000
 - "special needs": 21,000
 - "covid": 17,000
 - "foi": 15,000
 - "current job postings": 12,000
- In 2022 there were 4.7 million searches made on Government sites.
- The 2022 top 5 search terms made on Government pages, by term and search count:
 - "behaviour consultant": 22,000
 - "special needs": 19,000
 - "foi": 16,000
 - "current job postings": 13,000
 - "msp": 12,000

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COVID-19 related content

- In 2020 COVID-19 related content was viewed 34 million times.
 - The busiest month was December 2020 with 12.2 million views.
- In 2021 COVID-19 related content was viewed 84.5 million times.
 - The busiest month was April 2021 with 16.5 million views, likely related to vaccination roll-out that started at this time.
- In 2022 COVID-19 related content was viewed 18.1 million times.
 - The busiest month was January 2022 with 4.8 million views which was likely due to changing restrictions with a new variant.

Translated COVID-19 content

- A project to translate COVID-19 content began in February 2021.
- In 2021, there were 2.6 million page views on COVID-19 translated content, peaking in September 2021 with 404,000 page views that month.
- In 2021, the top 5 languages by page views in that language were:
 - Simplified Chinese: 610,000
 - Traditional Chinese: 512,000
 - Hindi: 510,000
 - Korean: 224,000
 - French: 171,000
- In 2022, Ukrainian and Russian translations were added.

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- In 2022, there were 1.3 million page views on COVID-19 translated content, peaking in January 2022 with 340,000 page views that month.
- In 2022, the top 5 languages by page views in that language were:
 - Hindi: 315,000
 - Simplified Chinese: 286,000
 - Traditional Chinese: 235,000
 - Japanese: 125,000
 - Korean: 76,000
- Most of the traffic for Hindi content came from India, whereas the other languages were primarily viewed domestically.

Flood response related content

A new section of the site was created for the response to the floods in November 2021:

- Page views for flood response pages totaled 407,000 page views in 2021.
 - November 2021: 260,000
 - December 2021: 147,000
- Translated content for the flood response pages totalled 2,800 page views in 2021.
 - November 2021: 1,700

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- December 2021: 1,100
- Before the pages were unpublished in March 2022, there were 13,000 additional page views, including 100 views of translated content.

Google Search results on www2.gov.bc.ca

We track click-throughs from Google searches to the main government website.

In 2020:

- Google searches resulted in 15.4 million click-throughs to government pages.
- The section of the site that received the most Google searches was "Employment, business and economic development" theme, with 2.4 million click-throughs.
- In 2020, the top 5 search terms from Google by clicks were:
 - "bc government jobs": 156,000
 - "bc government": 148,000
 - "bc emergency benefit for workers": 148,000
 - "gov.bc.ca/spectax": 139,000
 - "msp": 137,000

In 2021:

- Clicks from Google Searches rose to 40.3 million in 2021.

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- In 2021, COVID-19 content received by far the most Google search traffic through most of the year, totaling 14.9 million clicks.
- July and August were the only months when COVID-19 content was not the most searched. In the summer, public safety searches related to wildfires were highest.
- In 2021, the top 5 search terms from Google by clicks were:
 - "bc wildfire map": 528,000
 - "bc vaccine card": 502,000
 - "bc vaccine passport": 479,000
 - "bc covid restrictions": 428,000
 - "vaccine passport bc": 339,000

In 2022:

- There were 25.5 million clicks from Google searches in 2022.
- In 2022, COVID-19 content received by far the most Google search traffic through most of the year, totalling 4.5 million clicks.
- COVID-19 content was the top searched area for the first part of the year from January through May, and then again in October 2022.
- Other themes that were most popular in 2022:
 - June: Taxes and tax credits

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- July, August, and September: Public safety and emergency services (related to wildfires)
- November and December: Employment, business, and economic development
- In 2022, the top 5 search terms from Google by clicks were:
 - "bc stat holidays 2022": 170,000
 - "bc government jobs": 152,000
 - "msp": 131,000
 - "health gateway": 118,000
 - "bc covid restrictions": 99,000

Overall web analytics for Engage.gov.bc.ca

In 2020:

- Content on the site was viewed 648,000 times
- Traffic was highest in December with 106,000 page views.

In 2021:

- Content on the site was viewed 625,000 times
- Traffic was highest in September with 120,000 views and October with 116,000 views.

In 2022:

- Overall traffic on engage.gov.bc.ca was down from 2021.
- Content on the site was viewed 490,000 times.

This material will be proactively released

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- Traffic was highest in March with 85,000 views and April with 64,000 views.

Chatbot

- In June 2020, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, GDX launched the COVID-19 Chatbot.
- In 2020, the chatbot answered 368,000 questions.
- Overall in 2020, the top categories of COVID-19 answers were:
 - Individuals & Families: 31,000
 - Ministry of Transportation: 23,000
 - Financial Support: 20,000
 - Finance: 17,000
 - Travel & Transport: 16,000
- In 2021, the chatbot answered 1.7 million questions.
- Overall, the top categories of COVID-19 answers given in 2021 were:
 - Vaccines: 881,000 answers
 - Travel: 147,000 answers
 - Government Services: 119,000 answers
 - Health and Care: 95,000 answers
 - About COVID-19: 69,000 answers
- In 2022, the chatbot answered 403,000 questions.

This material will be proactively released

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- Overall, in 2022 the top categories of COVID-19 answers given were:
 - Vaccines: 154,000 answers
 - Health and Care: 78,000 answers
 - Government Services: 28,000 answers
 - Travel: 27,000 answers
 - COVID-19 Self assessment: 19,000 answers

Cyber Security

Security Awareness

- In 2022, OCIO Information Security refreshed the Corporate Supply Arrangement for Security Services to help all 2,400 public sector organizations access skilled security resources.
- OCIO Security continues to onboard public sector organizations to our external security services, including more than 120 public sector organizations as of December 2021.
- Over \$25 million annually is spent directly on IT security across government every year and OCIO enhances security posture with updated technical controls each year.
- The B.C. government faced a near tenfold increase in unauthorized access attempts in 2021 over 2015, with 496 million per day or 5741 per second.

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Modernization of digital and data services for people in B.C.

BC Data Catalogue expands

- A newly designed version of the BC Data Catalogue was launched in fall 2021 with 3,217 datasets available to public and 3,434 to government users.
- The BC Data Catalogue provides access to data from 23 ministries and more than 27 public bodies.

New Data Standards created

- A New Gender and Sex Data Standard was launched January 2023 that establishes consistent gender and sex terminology, and guidance to ministries on collection of gender and sex data that recognizes gender diversity, minimizes harm, and meets requirements under the BC Human Rights Code.
- A New Metadata Standard was launched in fall 2022 to bring consistency to how government describes its data and to make it interoperable, easier to share, and easier to reuse.

Data-informed decision making to support better service delivery

- A recent study linked multiple administrative datasets to produce a repeatable method of quantifying homelessness in BC. The initial findings reveal that the homeless cohort estimate is larger than expected from previous point-in-time studies, while demographic information aligns closely with historical knowledge. Additionally, geospatial summaries provide insight into the location and movement of the homeless population.

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- 13 integrated data projects were initiated in the Data Innovation Program (DIP) seeking insights and trends into complex issues such as homelessness, health care attachment, road safety, mental and physical health outcomes for children and youth.

Driving innovation and economic recovery

Better access to data and digital business opportunities

- To date, government has made 173 procurement opportunities valued at a total of almost \$31 million available to tech companies of all sizes through the Digital Marketplace.
- In 2022/23 alone, this included posting 38 procurement opportunities valued at \$9.8 million on the Digital Marketplace.

Increasing digital and data knowledge, skills, and capacity

- 540 people from 18 organizations participated in the Data Science Community of Practice and Training.
- 56 leaders and executives were provided with the knowledge and skills required to lead a modern digital and data driven government.
- 562 public servants were trained in modern digital and data skills through the Province's Digital Academy in 2022/23.
- 48 datasets from eight ministries and five public bodies are integrated and made available to support research across government and academia.

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Digital Transformation and Pandemic Response

- Public Cloud technology, including platforms provided by commercial cloud providers, represents the next great shift in supporting government to deliver better services to people in British Columbia.
- 18 applications are using commercial cloud platforms through the federal government's Cloud Brokering Service, including the redesigned day pass system for BC Parks.
- Ministries can now develop new digital services in days rather than months or years using the Province's private cloud platform. This platform now supports 348 applications supporting programs and services across the B.C. Government.
- Government's critical cloud applications include the BC Health Gateway, Wildfire Predictive Services, and Emergency Support Services.

Attracting and retaining digital talent

Improving hiring services and practices and investing in retention strategies

- The Ministry of Citizens' Services launched a digital talent attraction and recruitment pilot program in 2022/23 to bring talented technologists into government. So far, this pilot program has helped ministries hire 39 new digital professionals, including software developers and service designers.
- Competitions have yielded resources for multiple ministries and have been successful in recruiting hard to attract external talent.

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Managing government's technology investments

Digital Investment Portfolio

- The Digital Investment Portfolio has grown from \$30 million in 2012/13 to \$110 million today. As of January 2023, the portfolio has 70 projects slated for funding.
- For 2023/24, the portfolio's objectives will be to support key ministry priorities, modernize legacy systems and keep ministries delivering services more quickly and cost-effectively through shared investments.
- These investments help support many of government's essential services. For example, investments in the Provincial Health Gateway are empowering patients across the Province with easy access to their health information online. Information available to patients through the Health Gateway includes lab results, medication history, immunisation records and health visits.

Creating safe, secure, and reliable digital and data services

Public and Private Cloud services

- The Ministry's Cloud platforms leverage industry leading security toolsets, frameworks and best practices that enable the province to protect data and applications.
- Ministries are supported to build and launch applications using commercial cloud services with the necessary due diligence.
- Commercial cloud services ordered through the federal government have been vetted for compliance with British Columbia's legislation and policy.

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Service Plan Measurement

- Objective 2.2: Improve the use, management, sharing and protection of data for all British Columbians.
- Performance Measure 2b: Number of net new datasets in B.C. Data Catalogue per fiscal year.

Fiscal	Forecast or Target	Actual
2021/22	145	145
2022/23	167	
2023/24	184	
2024/25	200	
2025/26	220	

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Title: *Anti-Racism Data Act* Implementation, Data Use for Identifying and Eliminating Systemic Racism/Demographic Survey

Revised: Date of last revision, February 8, 2023

Key Messages:

- Government has a moral and ethical responsibility to tackle systemic racism in all its forms in the province.
- We know there are policy gaps and barriers to accessing programs, and this disproportionately impacts Indigenous and other racialized people.
- The *Anti-Racism Data Act*, which became law in June 2022, is an important tool to help the Province dismantle systemic racism.
- The legislation enables government to collect and use demographic information such as race, gender, and ancestry to identify and eliminate systemic racism.
- With this information, the Province can identify where there are barriers and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous, Black, and other racialized people.
- The legislation was informed by the thoughts of more than 13,000 British Columbians through engagement with Indigenous Peoples and racialized communities, as well as key partners such as the B.C. Human Rights Commissioner,

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First Nations Leadership Council, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, and Métis Nation BC.

- **It is one of the first pieces of legislation to be co-developed with Indigenous Peoples under *the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.**
- **The implementation of the legislation is also being informed by the expertise and lived experience of racialized people, including Indigenous People.**

If asked about what action has been taken since the introduction of the Anti-Racism Data Act:

- **We have established processes for ongoing consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Governing Entities (IGEs) – working respectfully and closely on anti-racism data initiatives.**
- **I have also appointed the Anti-Racism Data Committee, which is made up of 11 members that represent a wide cross-section of racialized communities and geographic regions of B.C.**
- **Both the Committee and IGEs are collaborating with government on setting anti-racism research priorities, as well as reviewing statistics and other information before their release to prevent any community harms.**

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- They are also helping to develop data standards and data directives to guide how government collects and uses data to dismantle systemic racism.
- In collaboration with IGEs and the Committee, on June 1, 2023, government will release a list of anti-racism research priorities.
- Through this research, we will gain valuable insight into systemic racism in government programs and services, and be able to turn those insights into actions and solutions to make life better for people in British Columbia.
- On June 1, 2023, government will also release statistics and other information that is relevant to our anti-racism efforts.

If asked about the urgent need to collect data now:

- Government has data about how people use government services, but not clear information about who these people are – such as their race, gender, culture and other aspects of identity that matter to lived experience.
- Without this data, we cannot see where people experience barriers within a program OR where they may experience discrimination that they're never even aware of – for example, if they aren't eligible for a program.
- Population-level demographic/identity data is critical to helping us see racism in the system.

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- We know that this is sensitive information and Indigenous people and other racialized communities don't trust government to collect and use data in a safe way.
- That's why it's essential that we are transparent and focus on building trust.
- We are working quickly, but cautiously, in partnership with Indigenous leaders and community groups including the Anti-Racism Data Committee to co-develop solutions such as the voluntary demographic survey.
- This is just one of the ways Government is taking action against racism.

If asked about how we are consulting Indigenous communities:

- Through B.C.'s *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, we are committed to ensuring that Indigenous Peoples are partners in our approach to collecting and using demographic data.
- We have been consulting with both Indigenous leaders and Indigenous communities on appropriate ways to ensure we have agreement on how government can collect and use this data.
- Work is underway to create an Indigenous advisory network and working groups, with representatives from Indigenous partners to develop specific short, medium, and long-term actions to support Indigenous communities' control over their data and how it is used.

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Questions and Answers:

1) Why was the *Anti-Racism Data Act* needed?

- Most ministries don't collect information on race, ethnicity, ancestry, or similar identity factors in their program data, so the extent of systemic racism in government programs and services is unknown.
- The demand for race-based data was heightened by the pandemic. Government has been challenged to identify how racialized groups have fared in terms of both health and employment.
- The BC Human Rights Commissioner, the BC Representative for Children and Youth as well as the B.C.'s Multicultural Advisory Council, have all called for disaggregated demographic data to better understand racism and inequity in B.C.
- The *Anti-Racism Data Act* authorizes the collection and use of personal information for the purposes of identifying systemic racism. It also commits government to develop standards and directives that ensure that demographic data is collected and used in a respectful and culturally safe way while community harms are prevented.
- With this information, we can identify where systemic racism is taking place, helping us improve how programs and services are delivered to racialized communities, including Indigenous People.

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2) What action has been taken since the legislation was introduced in June 2022?

- We established the Anti-Racism Data Committee in September 2022 to collaborate with government and ensure that the implementation of the *Anti-Racism Data Act* is informed by the expertise and lived experience of racialized people, including Indigenous Peoples.
- We have been working towards creating an Indigenous advisory network and working groups, with representatives from Indigenous partners to develop specific short, medium, and long-term actions to support Indigenous communities' control over their data and how it is used.
- We have been consulting and cooperating with Indigenous Governing Entities (IGEs) and collaborating with the Anti-Racism Data Committee (ARdC) to determine anti-racism research priorities that will help identify and eliminate systemic racism and improve access to government programs and services for Indigenous Peoples and other racialized people.
- We are also working with the Committee and IGEs to co-design the BC Demographic Survey, a voluntary population survey which will collect demographic data from the people of BC.
- This data will be housed securely in the Data Innovation Program and will support anti-racism research, including examining and understanding how government programs and services are being experienced by people from different racialized groups.

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3) Why has the government not yet started collecting race-based data, as recommended by the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner?

- Collecting this data isn't straightforward. The nature of this data means there are differing perspectives on what identity markers should be collected and differing levels of comfort across communities in providing this data.
- The Human Rights Commissioner has called for the meaningful involvement of marginalized communities and inclusive, equitable consultation on anti-racism data legislation. More than 13,000 people and over 70 community organizations participated in an engagement on how government can safely and thoughtfully collect and use demographic data to address systemic racism. The information collected through engagement informed the legislation and will continue to inform its implementation. The *Anti-Racism Data Act* allows for the collection of race-based and other demographic data to identify and eliminate systemic racism.
- Under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, the Province is drafting new laws in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous Peoples of British Columbia.
- We need a comprehensive framework to ensure that when new personal data is collected from British Columbians, we have agreement on how the data will be used, how it will be kept safe and secure, how we will protect people's privacy and who will be able to access the data, under what circumstances.

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- We are developing this framework in consultation with Indigenous leaders and in collaboration with the Anti-Racism Data Committee.

4) The BC Human Rights Commissioner recommended aligning with principles from the Data Innovation Program. What is this program?

- The Data Innovation Program is managed by the Ministry of Citizens' Services. It is a data integration and analytics program, meaning it can link data from different ministries across government, de-identify this data and make it available in a secure environment for population-level research projects.
- The program is based on the Five Safes, world-leading best practices for managing safe access to confidential or sensitive data.

5) The BC Human Rights Commissioner recommended the establishment of a community governance board to work with the government. How has the government responded to this recommendation?

- The *Anti-Racism Data Act* requires the establishment of a committee to advise government on how to safely collect and use data to identify and eliminate systemic racism.
- The Anti-Racism Data Committee was established in September 2022 and has held four meetings since then.

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- Committee members represent a wide cross-section of racialized communities and geographic regions of B.C.
- The committee is an important aspect of ensuring that the implementation of the *Anti-Racism Data Act* is informed by the lived experience and expertise of racialized people. The Committee is supporting the work to determine research priorities, data directives and standards, as well as reviewing statistics and other information before their release to prevent any community harms.

Race-Based Data Use

6) Who will have access to race-based data?

- First and foremost, we need to consult with Indigenous leaders and other racialized communities, and more broadly with the public, to hear their perspectives and priorities and to achieve agreement on this question.

7) How will racialized communities be protected from harm?

- We know that collecting race-based data must be done with great care to avoid further discrimination and bias, while maximizing the power of data to drive much-needed systemic change.
- That's why we are consulting with Indigenous leaders and racialized communities, as well as the BC Human Rights Commissioner and Information and Privacy Commissioner,

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to identify and address any potential for harm at every stage of research, including collection.

- We are also collaborating with the Anti-Racism Data Committee and IGEs on how government can safely collect and use data to identify and eliminate systemic racism. A key focus is to consider cultural safety and community harms when doing their work.
- The Anti-Racism Data Committee will review relevant statistics and other information prior its release to prevent community harms. The first release of statistics and other information will be on June 1, 2023.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: B.C. Data Catalogue

Revised: Date of last revision, February 10, 2023

Key Messages:

- **Accessing government data is critical to helping find solutions for pressing challenges.**
- **The B.C. Data Catalogue is where people can go to find and access government data to inform decision-making and improve policy, services and programs.**
- **Government uses the B.C. Data Catalogue to proactively release data to improve transparency, making information readily available to people in the province.**
- **The B.C. Data Catalogue makes more than 3,200 datasets available to government and public users—some through open data, some by licensed use.**
- **The Catalogue provides access to data from all of core government as well as 27 public agencies.**
- **Users can find a variety of information such as housing needs and supply data, COVID-19 statistics, and data that helps people understand the state of the environment.**

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- **In 2023/24, the Ministry of Citizens' Services will coordinate engagement with government ministries, broader public sector users, and public companies and organizations, to identify opportunities to improve access and use of open and managed data through the Catalogue.**

Questions and Answers:

1) What data is available in the B.C. Data Catalogue?

- The B.C. Data Catalogue makes data available from all ministries and more than 27 public agencies. This includes data on natural resources, finance, the economy, health, justice, education, transportation, and social services.
- The catalogue has data licensed under the Open Government License – British Columbia that enables free and open use of the data with a few conditions to protect government and users.
- There are also datasets licensed under similar open licenses from Crown agencies.

2) How will government meet the target increases of 184 net new datasets in the catalogue in 2023/24; 200 net new datasets in 2024/25, and 220 net new datasets in 2025/26?

- The Ministry is engaging the BC Behavioral Insights group (a unit in the BC Public Service Agency that works with ministries across government to co-design citizen-centred program solutions that are rooted in evidence-based research of human behaviour) to better

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understand barriers Ministries and agencies may have to making more of their data available in the catalogue, and design and test new ways to overcome these barriers.

- The ministry is developing new tools and services and working with ministries and public bodies to help program areas share datasets that are not yet available in the catalogue.

3) How does privacy and data security get managed?

- The B.C. Data Catalogue only hosts datasets that have been de-identified, where data is stripped of any information that could potentially identify individuals.
- Datasets are reviewed by Ministry privacy and security officers before being loaded into the catalogue for access.
- Reviews take place to ensure that data doesn't have personal information and that appropriate security controls are in place.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Data Innovation Program and Data Science Partnerships Program

Revised: Date of last revision, February 5, 2023

Key Messages:

- Data is a critical part of finding solutions to pressing challenges.
- Data analysis from programs across government tells us whether our programs are helping people.
- In the past, data was shared on an ad-hoc basis between ministries and it could take years to sign information sharing agreements.
- The Data Innovation Program (DI Program) puts public sector data to work for people by providing a trusted approach for safe analysis.
- The DI Program improves privacy protection and empowers data-driven decision making and policy innovation.
- This includes applying privacy and security protections, such as:
 - Applying transparent, consistent rules about who can access data and for what research purposes.
 - Removing or de-identifying sensitive

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information like names, birthdates, and street addresses.

- Ensuring all analysis takes place inside a secure environment that has strong technology, process, and legal controls.
- The program is being delivered in partnership with UBC's Population Data BC.
- The Data Science Partnerships Program (DSP) helps ministries analyze data to better understand complex challenges.
- Data Science Partnerships can evaluate how government programs impact British Columbians, such as supports for people with mental health or substance use challenges and services for children with special needs.
- This program adds data science capacity to government and supports data projects on challenges facing British Columbians.
- The province has also launched a Data Science Fellowship program to recruit new talent with high-demand skills.

Questions and Answers:

1) What data is the program using?

- The DI Program uses data provided by B.C. ministries and agencies.

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- This includes labour market program and work data; social development data; children and families data; health data; justice data; housing data; and education data.

2) How is government using this integrated data?

- Government and academic researchers can apply to the DI Program to begin a population-level research project.
- To be approved, projects must have a clear benefit to the public, a valid statistical purpose, sound study design and methodology.
- Integrated data projects typically explore complex issues

3) Who can access data through the DIP?

- Only approved government analysts and academic researchers can access the data.

4) How does government decide what projects to undertake?

- Data projects must be in the public interest, meaning there is an opportunity to improve wellbeing or reduce harm for people.
- BC Stats' Director of Statistics reviews all project proposals.

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- To be approved, projects must have a clear benefit to the public, a valid statistical purpose, sound study design and methodology.

5) How does this program benefit British Columbians?

- Through both the DI Program and Data Science Partnerships program, researchers can access the data they need to develop better policies and programs for British Columbians.
- To be approved, their projects must demonstrate clear public benefit and have executive-level ministry support.
- This ensures all projects are based on government priorities.

6) How are vulnerable populations of British Columbians protected from harms at the individual or community level?

- Protection of privacy for all populations is considered at each step. As the *Anti-Racism Data Act* is implemented and government undertakes an examination of racism in its programs and services, new protections for cultural safety will be developed with Indigenous Governing Entities and the Anti-Racism Data Committee.
- The criteria for data access and other controls and protections reduce any risk of data misuse, while promoting access to data to maximize benefits for British Columbians.
- Harms reduction measures are part of the program criteria

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and controls. For example, project teams must demonstrate community engagement in the development of their objectives and how outputs will be shared back.

7) Are you using cloud services? How much of this data is stored online?

- No. The data is stored in a secure facility located in B.C. It is only accessible through a secure platform.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: B.C. Progress Indicators

Revised: Date of last revision, February 9, 2023

Key Messages:

- We need to do more to understand how British Columbians are doing by establishing effective measures of progress in all areas of well-being.
- GDP or measuring economic progress alone does not paint a true picture of how people in British Columbia are doing.
- The pandemic showed us that people and communities throughout the province feel changes in the economy differently and we need to be able to understand those differences.
- Government's approach ensures we are properly measuring how British Columbians are doing.
- Today, BC Stats provides government with a more holistic view of progress - how life has changed for people in British Columbia on a variety of fronts.
- This is the role of a statistics organization, and one that is critical for us to better understand the impacts of the investments we make and the decisions we take.

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Questions and Answers:

1) Why are you not putting in place the genuine progress indicators that were required under the 2017 Confidence and Supply Agreement between the BC Green Caucus and the BC New Democrat Caucus?

- In 2019, my ministry began work to develop progress indicators for British Columbia covering a range of topics.
- We spoke with several experts and reviewed best practices from other jurisdictions – what we heard repeatedly is that this work can't be rushed.
- While this work was put on hold during the pandemic, my ministry, and specifically BC Stats, continues to ensure that government has access to the data and analysis it needs to make informed decisions.

Contact:

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	BC Stats	

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Including Indigenous Languages in Government Systems and Services

Revised: Date of last revision, January 27, 2023

Key Messages:

- Action 3.15 of the Declaration Act Action Plan commits government to adopt an inclusive font that enables use of Indigenous languages across government systems and services like driver's licences and birth certificates.
- Denying Indigenous People an Indigenous name is part of Canada's colonial legacy. Indigenous Peoples still live with that legacy today, unable to use Indigenous names on official government records, such as birth certificates, driver's licenses, or business licenses.
- Fixing this issue is a vital step towards reconciliation, and government is committed to taking action.
- There are significant technical, policy and legislative changes needed, along with co-ordination of changes as many systems have interdependencies. The scale of this change is significant and will span multiple years.
- Since official records are interconnected, this is no small task. If we accommodate an Indigenous name in one system but not the others, we risk cutting individuals off from crucial services. We must proceed carefully to ensure interdependencies are accounted for.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- **Priority areas for initial scoping include birth certificates, business registries and geographic place names. We need to understand risks and options, both short and longer term, to put forward possible solutions to Indigenous Peoples to make decisions together.**
- **There is a risk that implementing changes without engagement with Indigenous Peoples, or in a way that doesn't meet expectations, could cause harm (e.g., a person receiving a birth certificate with their Indigenous name but then not being able to use that identification to access other critical services such as passports, school registration, or health care).**

Questions and Answers:

1) The Province already has an inclusive font. Why can't you include Indigenous languages in government records and systems today?

- Changing or downloading a font that can recognize the characters used for different Indigenous languages is one small step in the process. The more complex changes involve government services that rely on each other, and the underlying records and data systems are interconnected.

2) How long will this take?

- This is a complex project and will require cross-government co-ordination and ongoing engagement with Indigenous Peoples. A plan is required to ensure any changes to government systems minimize harm and do not disrupt access to critical dependent services.

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- There are significant technical, policy and legislative changes needed, along with co-ordination of changes as many systems have interdependencies. The scale of this change is significant and will span multiple years.

Contact: ADM, ED, or Director

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Bosomworth	Director	Systems and Services	

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Provincial Data Plan

Revised: Date of last revision, January 23, 2023

Key Messages:

- The Provincial Data Plan is the first cross-government provincial data strategy that identifies data initiatives to support reconciliation, advance equity, enable evidence-based decision making, deliver the modern services government and citizens need, and strengthen our data competency and governance.
- Reliable, timely, quality data is needed to understand and identify real workable solutions to big issues in B.C., like homelessness, systemic violence against women and girls, the impact of climate change and reconciliation.
- Government collects a lot of data in its interactions with citizens and through service delivery. The challenge is not the quantity of data, but how we use that data and make the most of it to help people.
- Right now, government collects data in a way that fails to represent B.C.'s population. For example, we collect gender data as male/female, and often confuse gender with sex – we are implementing a new gender and sex data standard that recognizes gender diversity.
- Better data-sharing practices help us understand what, when, and how to provide services to people in need.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Questions and Answers:

1) How are you working with Indigenous Peoples on data?

- Under BC's Declaration Act commitments, we are working to support the establishment of First Nations governed and mandated regional data governance centre, support data sovereignty, and enable new data management arrangements.
- In addition, we are consulting and collaborating with Indigenous governments on data initiatives under the *Anti-Racism Data Act* and prioritizing data actions they identify as most important.
- In addition to ongoing partnerships with Indigenous leadership organizations, since Fall 2022 we began holding monthly virtual discussion circles with Indigenous governing entities.

2) Are we going to allow the private sector to access sensitive data?

- No; Citizens' Services delivers programs internally to government and academics that support analysis on de-identified data; it does not permit access by the private sector.
- Citizens' Services provides government's open data and licensed data through the B.C Data Catalogue where the private sector can access non-sensitive government data (e.g., natural resources, statistics on government programs).

3) How is the plan addressing the issue of data sharing across ministries while still respecting privacy?

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- Privacy considerations are always critical when sharing data. The Five Safes model for privacy will continue to guide how integrated de-identified data is used. Cultural safety practices will be developed, guided by the recommendations in the BC Human Right's Commissioner's Summary of recommendations to prevent harm to communities and using processes for consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Governing Entities and the Anti-Racism Data Committee as set out in the *Anti-Racism Data Act* (ARDA).
- The data plan includes data governance, policy, and technology initiatives to overcome barriers that currently exist for managing and sharing data and will be guided by directives developed under ARDA, and government privacy and security policies.

Contact:

Eowynn
Bosomworth

A/Executive Director

BC Data Service

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Alpha Launch of gov.bc.ca

Revised: Date of last revision, February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- My mandate letter sets out an expectation that we work with the public to “modernize government services” and “prioritize user experience.”
- That’s exactly what we’re doing with alpha.gov.bc.ca, a public test version of government’s flagship website, gov.bc.ca.
- The Alpha website offers a new look and feel, making government’s online information and services easier to find, understand and access for people in B.C.
- As part of this test phase, we are listening to people about how we can further improve the design. So far, this has meant analyzing nearly 2,100 responses gathered to date from in-person research and an online survey as well as web analytics data.
- We expect to continue testing and iterating the Alpha design for about six months and switching gov.bc.ca to the new look and feel in the Fall of 2023.
- Improving the look and feel of the site is just the beginning. Over the next few years, government will continue working to improve the website’s content functionality and user experience.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Questions and Answers:

1. Who is doing this work?

- The work is being done by internal staff who support the existing platform.
- The user testing phase will also help us establish a new baseline as we add more multi-language content. An internal staff team is working on this user testing phase as well.

2. What is happening to the B.C. government's main website?

- My ministry is working on updating the B.C. government's website's look and feel, making information easier to find.
- Since gov.bc.ca was first launched around 1996, it has kept pace with the ongoing evolution of people's needs and expectations for accessing information online.
- The new design is more streamlined, has a simpler layout and is optimized for mobile devices.
- While the content has remained mainly the same, you will continue to see plain language improvements over time. It's the look and feel that has changed already.
- The redesigned site has been live since October 2022 and will undergo another six months of user-testing. The Alpha site runs in parallel to the current gov.bc.ca site, allowing users to toggle between the two.

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3. Why another six months? That seems like a long time to user-test a new design.

- My mandate letter expects that we prioritize user experience and hearing from users directly is the best way to do that.
- British Columbians have many different perspectives and expectations when it comes to accessing government's online information. As technology becomes more ubiquitous along with government's investments in improving high-speed internet access for British Columbians, more and more people depend on government's online information in their daily lives.
- Another six months of user testing allows us to gather enough feedback to ensure we get this right.
- The test cycle includes both public and internal government ministry inputs through a feedback survey as well as public interviews through a tour of Service BC offices in Terrace, Kelowna, Nelson, Victoria and Maple Ridge.

4. Why are you making these changes?

- It's important that government's online information be as accessible as possible – and that information is easy to find, read, understand and act upon.
- This was underscored during the COVID-19 pandemic which showed that having clear, timely and relevant online information helped people take action to keep themselves healthy and safe.

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- It also reduced the volume of calls to overloaded call centres and eased the burden on frontline staff serving the public.

5. What's wrong with the current gov.bc.ca site?

- Our research suggests that users find the current website to be cluttered, overloaded with information, and repetitive – sometimes offering multiple ways to find the same information.
- Also, even though mobile device users now make up nearly half of all users of gov.bc.ca, the current experience is not optimized for mobile.
- The update to the website's look and feel will address some of these issues.

6. How long will it take for the new website to be fully implemented?

- The website's new look and feel should be ready around Fall 2023.
- Beyond that, any changes to content and functionality will be part of a new cycle of continuous improvement.

7. Will the new website be available in Indigenous languages?

- Government has introduced a font, BC Sans, for government websites that better supports Indigenous languages.

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- It has been deployed to all BC Public Service workstations and is being used increasingly across government's websites, including both gov.bc.ca and alpha.gov.bc.ca.

8. What about other languages?

- Using BC Sans, both gov.bc.ca and alpha.gov.bc.ca support virtually all modern languages including those that read right-to-left such as Arabic and Farsi.
- For example, Covid-19 information is available in 14 languages in addition to English at gov.bc.ca/covid.

9. What are you doing to improve the site's accessibility features?

- The B.C. government continues to grow its Accessibility Community of Practice, which provides information to ministries on how to make their pages more accessible.
- The Alpha site was designed with accessibility in mind, to be compliant with international (WCAG 2.1 AA) standards. It was also designed to be mobile first to improve accessibility on any device.

Contact:

Jeff Groot ADM Government Digital Experience Division

Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Supporting Government Priorities: CleanBC Web Presence

Revised: Date of last revision, February 3, 2023

Key Messages:

- Clear and easily accessible public information is fundamental to supporting citizens in lowering their own carbon footprint through rebates and incentives, and conveying the Province's plan to lower climate-changing emissions by 2030.
- The CleanBC Digital Experience team, part of the Government Digital Experience Division (GDX), was created to support partner ministries and deliver a cohesive digital experience between the multiple websites containing CleanBC information.
- In 2022, several websites that provide information about CleanBC programs, rebates and strategies were re-designed, tested with the public and launched to provide a better user experience for British Columbians.
- In 2022, there were 1.9 million page views across [BetterHomesBC.ca](https://www.betterhomesbc.ca), [BetterBuildingsBC.ca](https://www.betterbuildingsbc.ca), [CleanBC.ca](https://www.cleanbc.ca), and [GoElectricBC.ca](https://www.goelectricbc.ca).

Questions and Answers:

- 1) What is the purpose of the work being done to support the CleanBC digital experience?**

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- CleanBC is a cross-government initiative, and one that requires coordination across digital products and program communications.
- Prior to the team's creation, websites under the CleanBC umbrella had been built and managed by separate program areas in various ministries, including the ministries of Environment and Climate Change Strategy; Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation; and Finance.
- This work has delivered a cohesive digital experience and linkages between the CleanBC, Better Homes and Go Electric websites to help make sure that British Columbians can more easily access the information they need about CleanBC programs, rebates, and strategies.
- Each of the sites will be regularly updated, informed by user research and testing, and continually improved to meet desired outcomes for participating program partners and the public.

2) What kind of information are you providing on the websites?

- The available information includes:
 - Climate change information, including the drivers and impacts of climate change in British Columbia.
 - GoElectric program information, including rebates for electric vehicles for individuals and businesses as well as charging station rebates.

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- Better Homes program information, including rebates for energy efficient home retrofits such as heat pumps.

3) How do you ensure the information is easily accessible and understandable?

- My ministry's role in this work is to help ensure people can find and understand the information and services they need. The key strategies to manage this work include:
 - Applying web standards, like plain language writing, to make sure people can easily find, understand and access information and supports.
 - Establishing a high-performing centralized web team that works with multiple ministry program areas and Government Communications and Public Engagement staff to meet the established standards.
 - Continuous research and public testing of information and services to understand people's needs and challenges as they try to navigate government web presences. These findings are used to make improvements to web content. For example, five different rounds of user research and findings have been used by the GDX web team to improve content and develop the architecture to ensure users are able to access and find relevant information.
 - Ongoing collaboration to ensure alignment with multiple ministries involved in communicating about CleanBC programs, including the Ministries of Energy, Mines and

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Low Carbon Innovation; Environment and Climate Change Strategy; Finance; and Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation.

4) When did the work begin and what are the timelines for the work?

- The work started in September 2021 with extensive user research and jurisdictional scans of other related web properties.
- By November 2022, each of the three websites within the scope of the CleanBC had been re-launched after thorough user testing, re-design and considering additional information.
- Going forward, the work continues to both maintain and improve each of the sites as new strategies are launched and new functionalities to improve user journeys are explored.

5) Was there any marketing or advertising associated with CleanBC?

- A paid media information campaign to expand public awareness of government's CleanBC climate plan and demonstrate how the government is taking action on climate change and making cleaner energy choices more affordable, ran from September through November 2022.
- A similar CleanBC Better Homes campaign to increase awareness of the Clean BC program, educate homeowners on the benefits of heat pumps, and the rebates available to them,

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began in January 2023 and will run through mid-February 2023.

- These campaigns were led by Government Communications and Public Engagement and I would defer to my colleague responsible for further detail about them.

6) What is the budget for this work and how is it funded?

- The CleanBC Digital experience is funded through two MOUs, with the ministries of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, and Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, with a total value of \$805,000 for 2022-2023.
- GDX's contribution was received from Treasury Board for \$250,000 per year for three years for integrated web work.

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Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Multi-language Program

Revised: Date of last revision, February 24, 2023

Key Messages:

- My mandate from the Premier is to help ensure services are delivered efficiently, effectively, and in a way that maximizes benefits for British Columbians.
- Among other things, this means supporting ministries to provide information and services to people in the languages they expect to receive them.
- For example, as the pandemic moved out of its first year, government began significantly increasing our translation efforts led by my ministry's Government Digital Experience division and Government Communications and Public Engagement.
- In preparation for the initial vaccine roll-out, government began translating all COVID-19 information and vaccination information into 12 languages in addition to English: Arabic, Farsi, French, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, and Traditional Chinese. Russian and Ukrainian translations were added in the last year.
- Beyond simply translating web content, we tested its effectiveness with people in B.C. who spoke languages other than English and we used what they told us to make

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improvements to Government's website and translation process.

- For example, research showed that people trusted translated information online more when it mirrored to the exact design and layout of English information. As well people reported they could not find the translated content when buried at the bottom of the page. In both cases changes were made as a result.
- We are now in the process of expanding the Multi-language Program in order to better serve and inform more and more people in British Columbia. Specifically, over the next 18 months, we'll be working to improve multi-language content for people newly arriving in B.C.

If asked why the vaccine registration system wasn't translated:

- It was decided that the vaccine registration system would not be translated due to the complexity of the system's development and the rapid roll out that was required.

Translation statistics:

- COVID-19 and vaccine information has been viewed on gov.bc.ca 136.6 million times from the start of the pandemic through the end of 2022. Translated COVID-19 information on gov.bc.ca has been viewed 3.9 million times.
- The most commonly accessed languages are Hindi, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Korean and Japanese. The large majority of traffic for Hindi content is coming from India,

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whereas the other languages are primarily viewed domestically.

- **Five languages are translated in-house, and nine languages are translated by external vendors/companies.**
- **An Ipsos panel was conducted in June 2021 asking 1,200 people if they used the translated COVID-19 and vaccination content and how they would rate the quality. Seven percent of the panel indicated they had used the content and 83% of those reported that the content was of high quality and useful.**

Questions and Answers:

1) How did you decide on 14 languages?

- Twelve languages were selected based on Statistics Canada data and research completed by CITZ in 2019.
- The 12 translated languages represent 98% of all Service BC requests for verbal translation and are among the top languages for translation support on 8-1-1 (HealthlinkBC).
- Languages were chosen based on population size, as well as the high needs of specific language communities.
- For example, Traditional and Simplified Chinese readers form a large percentage of the multi-language community.
- Arabic-speaking refugees were identified as a high-need population during interviews with community organizations and settlement agencies.

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- During B.C.'s vaccine rollout, Japanese was also identified as a priority language considering community needs.
- Russian and Ukrainian were most recently added to support people arriving from Ukraine.

2) How is the program influencing other government products?

- GCPE now creates social media posts in four additional languages: French, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, and Traditional Chinese for all major topics for release.
- Other communications products like news releases are increasingly being translated into multiple languages. The number of translated news releases grew from 516 in 2020 to 2,773 in 2021 and 1,924 in 2022.
- There is a growing number of requests from Ministries to gather feedback from citizens on public engagements in multiple languages.
- The Multi-language Program also supports numerous non-COVID translations when capacity allows for critical events and topics like flooding, paid sick leave, decriminalization, anti-racism etc.

3) How are responsibilities divided between GCPE and CITZ?

- Responsibility for delivery of multi-language information is split between GCPE and CITZ.
 - CITZ is responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are written in plain language on gov.bc.ca,

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and that the technology for publishing the information can support multiple languages.

- GCPE is responsible for managing translations and coordinating media products like social media posts, news releases, marketing etc.
- CITZ is supporting the expansion of the multi-language program to continue to provide COVID communications in 12+ languages, and a second theme – focused on arriving in B.C. – in four languages (French, Punjabi, Traditional and Simplified Chinese).

4) If Pressed - How is this work funded and how much does it cost?

- CITZ is working with the Ministry of Finance to ensure adequate funding is available as this program is established.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Prioritizing User Experience to Build Best-in-Class Digital Experiences

Revised: Date of last revision, February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- Delivering inclusive digital, over-the-phone and in-person services and creating connected service experiences is key to meeting the needs of people in B.C.
- Government's main website, gov.bc.ca, gets around 200,000 views a day – and that continues to grow. Digital is our widest reaching, fastest way to connect with people.
- It is important to match our efforts to provide safe and affordable connectivity, with our efforts to make our digital experience accessible and easy to use.
- We use service design, public engagement, user experience testing, behavioral insights and other human-centered approaches, with direct input from users to best understand people's needs. Examples include:
 - We worked with the Ministry of Health to deploy a virtual chatbot available 24/7, for people to access information on vaccines and COVID-19.
 - We are testing a new design for government's main web presence, gov.bc.ca, now that more than 50% of people access our content with a mobile device. So far, we have

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received over 1,700 survey responses and we continue to gather in-person feedback throughout B.C.

- **We received close to 300,000 inputs from people throughout B.C. during public engagements in 2021/22, including almost 24,000 telephone townhall participants.**

Questions and Answers:

1) How does B.C.'s Service Reputation compare to the rest of Canada?

- British Columbia's service reputation score is identical to the jurisdictional average and is lower than the Best in Class.
- Last Citizens First survey was conducted in 2020, which gives jurisdictions across Canada a comprehensive look at how people view government services.
- This survey is sponsored by the Institute of Citizen-Centred Service.

2) Where in B.C. and with whom do we engage, co-design and test our services?

- We co-design and test with people around B.C., including in rural and remote regions, the lower mainland, and Vancouver Island.
- We work with all ministries to help audit, review, and improve their service delivery processes.

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- We meet with people around the province both virtually and at places like ServiceBC Centres, local libraries, recreation centres, and local businesses.

3) How do we make sure our services are inclusive and accessible?

- We ensure widely accessed services are provided in multiple languages.
- We support programs to create inclusive and accessible web content with a plain language writing course, web writing guides, and the Writing Guide for Indigenous Content.
- We support ministry clients to understand the diverse needs and lived experiences of the people they serve by engaging with them through interviews, focus groups, surveys, town halls, virtual sessions and workshops.
- We perform accessibility audits on government digital services to make sure there are no digital barriers, and they meet accessibility standards.

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Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: BC Cloud Initiative

Revised: Date of last revision, January 11, 2023

Key Messages:

- **Cloud technology represents the next great shift in supporting government to deliver better services to people in British Columbia.**
- **Adopting the cloud allows government to use modern tools and systems to improve how we deliver the supports and services British Columbians count on.**
- **The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in an increase in the use of cloud services due to the urgent need for online services.**
- **Many of the most common tools we use for communicating with people and for improving and streamlining government processes have already moved to cloud, or soon will.**
- **The province is taking a coordinated approach to cloud, empowering ministries, and organizations to work together.**
- **This will help us explore cloud solutions, when appropriate, with the necessary due diligence, and always with the needs of people at the core.**

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Questions and Answers:

1) How is the BC government enabling the use of cloud?

- The B.C. government is implementing a service model that enables ministries to build and launch applications using cloud services.
- The B.C. government worked with the federal government to order cloud services that comply with British Columbia's legislation and policy.

2) Why is the B.C. government working with the federal government?

- The B.C. government is using the federal government's existing compliance and contract work and learned from their experience of developing a Cloud Brokerage.
- Joining the federal Cloud Brokerage enabled the province to benefit from the procurement process and technical, privacy and security protections provided by the Government of Canada.

3) What cloud vendors are being used in the B.C. government?

- Ministries access cloud on a case-by-case basis and are engaging with a variety of cloud vendors.
- The B.C. government is widely using cloud-based collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams.
- The B.C. government is also implementing a service model to enable access to cloud services for hosting applications.

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- The first service order to support this was with Amazon Web Services (AWS), and further service orders with other cloud vendors are anticipated to be completed in the coming months.

4) How is the B.C. government ensuring the security and privacy protection of information when using cloud?

- Protecting people's personal information is a top priority.
- The province has rigorous privacy and security assessment processes and policies to ensure data is protected.
- This includes the processes to adopt cloud services.

5) When is cloud going to be available for all ministries?

- Ministries can access cloud on a case-by-case basis if their use is compliant with B.C.'s legislation and policy.
- The province worked with the federal government to order cloud services for hosting applications using a service model that complies with British Columbia's legislation and policy.
- Through learnings from early adopters, the province aims to increase corporate access to cloud services in the coming months.

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6) How do the November 2021 FOIPPA amendments protect British Columbians' personal information in the cloud?

- The amendment to FOIPPA's data residency provisions enable public bodies to keep pace with new technology and provide services people expect in a modern age.
- The amendment also brings B.C. in line with other jurisdictions by removing restrictions that could present barriers to using some digital tools and technologies.
- To ensure personal information that people entrust to government continues to be protected, public bodies must complete an additional assessment when sensitive personal information is disclosed to be stored outside Canada.
- The rigorous privacy management in ministries support keeping the personal information of British Columbians secure.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Digital Investment Portfolio

Revised: Date of last revision, February 06, 2023

Key Messages:

- People and businesses expect government to deliver services digitally.
- Whether it is improving access to primary care or addressing housing affordability, we use digital channels to deliver many of our services.
- Each year, government makes significant investments in information management and information technology (IM/IT).
- These investments support the services and programs that British Columbians count on.
- The IM/IT capital budget for government is managed by our Committee on Digital and Data.
- The Committee on Digital and Data is a committee of Deputy Ministers, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Citizens' Services, with representation from across government.
- Digital investments enable government to replace aging systems with improved technology.
- These systems help ministries deliver the services people need.

This material will be proactively released

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- **The IM/IT capital investment budget is roughly \$110 million per year.**
- **This budget funds diverse digital solutions to address government priorities. Examples include:**
 - **The Comprehensive Disclosure Solution, an integrated solution that addresses the current high cost, delays and inefficiencies of collecting, managing and disclosing digital evidence in the criminal justice system.**
 - **The Wildfire Program Modernization and Systems Consolidation, through the implementation of applications that support BC Wildfire System business processes and integrate decision-making across all emergency management pillars.**
 - **The Internationally Educated Nurse (IEN) project, creating a recruitment application that will complement the Health Employers Association of BC process.**

Questions and Answers:

- 1) How does government decide on the right value for the envelope?**
 - **The size of the envelope is established through an annual intake process.**
 - **This process identifies demand for IM/IT capital from across government.**

This material will be proactively released

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- Based on this demand, the Deputy Minister's Committee on Digital and Data provides a recommendation on the size of the envelope that is then set by Treasury Board.

2) Are all IM/IT investments funded through this envelope?

- All IM/IT investments under \$10 million in a single year and under \$20 million in total require the approval of the Deputy Minister's Committee on Digital and Data.
- Larger IM/IT investments require Treasury Board approval.

3) How has the size of the IM/IT Capital envelope evolved over time?

- The IM/IT Capital envelope has increased over the years. The largest recent increase was in 2019/20 when an additional \$20 million per year was approved.
- That increase reflected the growing number of new digital priorities across government.
- The ministry expects demand for IM/IT capital to remain at roughly \$110 million per year, reflecting the ongoing importance of digital services across government.

4) What is the status of the 2023/24 IM/IT Capital envelope?

- As of January 20, 2023, the OCIO has 70 projects slated for funding.
- Government is working to refine and potentially approve 49

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more projects that were submitted during this year's project intake.

5) How are you supporting government's emerging priorities with an envelope that is already mostly allocated?

- The Deputy Minister's Committee on Digital and Data sets annual investment objectives to invest in projects that help make B.C. Government services more inclusive, reliable, easy to use, and responsive to people's modern expectations.
- One of the investment categories is specifically to support ministry priorities and investments that help ministries transform their services and deliver on mandate commitments and legislated requirements. Ministries are able to prioritize their projects to respond to emerging priorities, such as housing affordability and primary care.
- The Deputy Ministers' Committee on Digital and Data closely monitors approved projects funded through the envelope and can re-allocate funds that become available to other top priority projects.

Contact:

Genevieve Lambert Chief Digital Officer Digital Office 250 217-6296

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Digital Plan and Government Modernization

Revised: Date of last revision, February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- Governments across Canada and around the world are embracing digital tools to better serve citizens.
- In this digital age, people expect government to provide fast and easy access to information and services.
- For government, the pandemic, flooding, and wildfires have reinforced the importance of providing simple, easy to access and reliable digital services to the people of British Columbia.
- A digital government uses modern technology to provide excellent services to people.
- It also incorporates the culture and practices of today to deliver services that are deserving of people's trust.
- The Government of British Columbia is investing in digital government to improve the services that people count on.

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Questions and Answers:

1) What is the Government of B.C. doing to modernize its services?

- With support and leadership from the Ministry of Citizens' Services (CITZ), the Government of B.C. is adopting digital tools and practices to modernize its services.
- We are making good progress. For example, we are increasingly providing further services online and investing in digital identity.
- That said, we are working to continuously improve digital services.
- CITZ has worked with partners across government and the broader technology ecosystem to develop principles for digital change.
- These principles are now embedded in policy and guide the work of all public servants involved in improving and delivering digital services.
- CITZ is also developing a new cross-government digital plan, which outlines measures government will take to modernize services to better meet peoples' needs.
- The digital plan is the successor to 2019's Digital Framework and represents our next step forward in service modernization.

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2) Why is government interested in modernizing its digital services?

- Digital approaches are critical to the success of every government initiative.
- People expect to access services online, as well as in person.
- With the Connecting BC program bringing high-speed internet to over 67,000 households in rural and underserved areas of BC, government can provide better access to services to more people through online channels.
- Using modern tools and ways of working allows government to be more responsive, adaptable, and effective in meeting the needs of the people of British Columbia as we tackle today's challenges.
- For example, digital tools help ensure child protection workers have the right information while working in the field or help mine inspectors upload compliance data from remote locations.
- Similarly, new digital tools allow people to securely access their own health records online.
- They also helped people evacuated during emergency events get the resources and support they need without waiting in line at evacuation centres.
- New digital tools are also strengthening the work of public servants. For example, every public servant now has access to modern digital tools to support their work, like the Virtual Private Network (which can support 40,000+ remote workers) and Microsoft 365

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(including Teams).

- There are many benefits associated with investing in digital government.
- They include improving people's experiences, reducing costs, supporting an active technology ecosystem within the B.C. economy, and managing the risks that can be associated with major technology projects.

3) How has digital helped government improve services?

- Over the past few years, the B.C. Government has used modern digital approaches to improve many services for the people of British Columbia.
- For example, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, many people could no longer access counselling and mental health supports. To address this issue, government partnered with Foundry BC to launch a new digital service that allows youth to connect to mental health and substance use services via mobile phones or computers. Available services include virtual counselling sessions, drop-in peer support sessions and informational guides.
- Previously, people who needed to register and manage their businesses, co-operatives and not-for-profit societies needed to use manual, paper-based processes. Today, people in B.C. can register and manage their organizations using modern, faster,

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and more convenient online services.

- To help people contribute to climate action and make their homes and vehicles more efficient, government launched a suite of connected digital services to help people learn about and connect with all available programs and supports.

Contact:

J-P. Fournier

Executive Director

OCIO Digital Office

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Cyber Security

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Key Messages:

- Protection of government data and networks is a top priority for this government, especially where it concerns British Columbians' personal information.
- Governments must take steps to protect themselves from online attacks no matter the source or the strategy.
- Effective cyber security requires ongoing vigilance and maintaining up-to-date technology.
- In 2021, we completed a significant modernization project that improved the protection and reliability of our security systems, and we continue to invest in improving security controls.
- In British Columbia, we have the Office of the Chief Information Officer, which provides government with strategy and leadership in IT security and 24/7 network protection.
- It is important for us to be vigilant, as government records hold sensitive information, including people's personal information.

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- **While this ministry works hard to protect this information, all British Columbians should be just as careful and aware of cyber threats and protect their online information.**
- **We continue to work on awareness and training in cyber security and information protection for all employees.**
- **By working together, we can help reduce cybercrime throughout the province.**

Questions and Answers:

1) How long has it been since the province experienced a cyberattack?

- Government has people, processes, and technology in place to prevent, detect, and respond to cyberattacks.
- Government prevents 496 million unauthorized access attempts per day.
- Government continues to invest and upgrade our cybersecurity tools to prevent, detect, and respond to cyber attacks.

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2) Public and private sector bodies are targeted with increasing scams and cyberattacks. What is government doing to prevent cyberattacks?

- Government has a dedicated team of professionals to combat cyberattacks.
- Each year the government invests and upgrades our cybersecurity tools to prevent, detect, and respond to cyberattacks.
- Government offers training in Security Awareness to staff and conducts regular security campaigns on the latest trends and prevention methods.

3) What support is government providing to assist the public sector and protect British Columbia's data?

- Government shares significant tools and resources to assist other organizations and individuals, so they know what to do to prevent cybercrime.
- Government updated the "Defensible Security" framework in 2022 to help organizations know what to do and how to do it.
- In addition, government holds conferences, publishes information and videos on the government website.
- Over \$25 million is spent directly on IT security across government every year.

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4) We have heard of other organizations in the province being subject to cybersecurity attacks. Is the Province at risk?

- Government has a dedicated team of professionals to combat cyberattacks.
- Each year the government invests and upgrades our cybersecurity tools to prevent, detect, and respond to cyberattacks.
- Government has people, processes, and technology in place to prevent, detect, and respond to cyberattacks.
- Government provides informational resources to public and private sector organizations throughout the province and provides access to additional resources for public sector organizations.
- Government is available for public sector organizations to call in the event of a breach for assistance and advice.

Contact:

Gary Perkins	Executive Director, Information Security	OCIO, Enterprise Services	250 387-7590
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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Supporting Remote Work for the Public Service

Revised: Date of last revision, February 23, 2023

Key Messages:

- Since March 2020, the ministry has been instrumental in supporting the BC Public Service to work and deliver services remotely.
- Prior to the pandemic, working remotely had not been broadly adopted across the BC Public Service. Most employees worked from a permanent office location.
- Prior to the pandemic, an average work week had fewer than 4,000 people using VPN, and, anecdotally, fewer than 1,000 people worked from home daily.
- After the BC Government declared a state of emergency on March 18, 2020, VPN was expanded to support secure connections for up to 35,000 employees daily.
- The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) continues to work with ministries to ensure that employees have the tools they need to safely serve the citizens of the province.
- Among others, this includes:

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- **Ministry of Justice:** The virtualization of courts so citizens have safe access to courts during the pandemic.
- **Ministry of Health:** Deployment of the Service BC Card validation process to manage citizens' secure access to COVID-19 test results.
- **Ministry of Children and Family Development:** The replacement of old equipment so child protection workers can work virtually with kids at risk.

Questions and Answers:

1) How much did government spend on enabling public servants to work remotely?

- As result of the upgrade to the Virtual Private Network and other technology requirements, the province incurred an estimate of \$1.77 million in additional costs to date.
- Existing infrastructure supported the province's ability to quickly react to the evolving needs of an expanded remote workforce.
- The province has, however, seen similar cost savings in 2022, due to employees working remotely and a significant decrease in printing.

2) How is government ensuring that public servants are accessing information securely while working remotely?

- The protection of government data and networks is a top priority for this government, especially where it concerns

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British Columbians' personal information.

- Government has a dedicated team of professionals to combat cyber-attacks and additional staff in ministries.
- Government employees receive mandatory training on their responsibilities to protect government information and have access to secure remote access tools.
- Government has implemented additional technical controls around strong multi-factor authentication practices and enhanced email protection, to further increase security and protect information.

3) What is this government doing to ensure public servants can work remotely during the pandemic?

- Systems have the capacity to handle thousands of remote workers at any given time.
- In May 2020, this service reached its peak of 24,000 connections in one week by employees.
- Employees use communication programs such as Microsoft Teams, Skype, and teleconferencing for meetings.
- Government offices are being upgraded with video-conferencing equipment so employees can better collaborate with those working in the office and remotely.

Contact:

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Overview of New Deal Management Office

Revised: Date of last revision, January 3, 2023

Key Messages:

- In December 2021 CITZ established the Deal Management Office (DLM) to lead procurement and end-of-term activities for four high-value IT contracts.
- Under the direction of an Executive Lead, the DLM is supported by a dedicated team that undertakes procurement and contract renewal projects.

The goal of the DLM is to establish contracts that provide value for government and modernize services.

- The office maintains a strong relationship with the OCIO's Enterprise Services (ES) Division, whose services to public servants are directly impacted by the deals being procured and negotiated.

Questions and Answers:

1) What are the four high-value IT contracts?

- Data Centre and Managed Hosting Services – approximately \$78 million per year
 - Secure facilities and hosting services for the infrastructure that supports government's 1600+ business applications.

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- Managed Print Services – approximately \$5 million per year
 - Multi-function devices that support core government offices and front-counter services.
- Service Desk Services – approximately \$10 million per year
 - A centralized single point of contact for all IT services delivered by the OCIO's ES Division.
- Managed Workplace Technology Services – approximately \$20 million per year
 - A full suite of device management and support services, from user account administration and software management to field services and laptop deployment/decommissioning.

2) What has the DLM accomplished so far?

- In November 2022, the DLM successfully completed the negotiations for a five-year contract renewal, from 2024 to 2029, with ESIT Advanced Solutions for Data Centre and Managed Hosting Services.
- Through a Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) process, Lead Proponents have been identified for Service Desk Services and Managed Workplace Technology Services and contract negotiations are underway.

3) What will be accomplished in 2023/24?

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- Procurement for Managed Print Services will be undertaken, and a new contract will be negotiated and in place by the end of the fiscal year.
- Contract negotiations for Service Desk Services and Managed Workplace Technology Service will conclude and new contracts will be in place by the end of the fiscal year.

Contact:

Stuart Restall

Executive Lead

Deal Management
Office

Government Financial
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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Facts and Figures (Procurement)

Revised: Date of last revision, February 15, 2023

BC Bid

- The number of suppliers who are registered with BC Bid provides a measure for the breadth of small, medium, and large suppliers who do business with government in communities across British Columbia.

Fiscal	Forecast or Target	Actual
2019/20	4,800	6,816
2020/21	5,575	6,890
2021/22	5,800	6,108*
2022/23	6,000	5,832 as of Jan 30, 2023**. This is a count of supplier users in the system. There are 4,574 active supplier companies registered in BC Bid.
2023/24	6,200	-
2024/24	6,400	-

* Note: There is a strong correlation between unique supplier subscriptions and the number of opportunities that are posted to BC Bid annually. Since 2020/21 there has been a 22% reduction in the number of opportunities. This is likely related to COVID-19.

**Note: The above numbers are for a portion of the current fiscal (missing two months of data). The methodology for managing registrations and users in the new system is different from the Legacy system and allows us to know the number of organizations and the number of users in each organizational account.

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- Additional data points to be considered for BC Bid are:

Fiscal	Number of Opportunities Posted in BC Bid by Ministries	Number of Opportunities Posted in BC Bid by the Broader Public Sector	Number of Broader Public Sector Organizations that posted opportunities in BC Bid
16/17	2,080	6,757	384
17/18	2,424	7,385	397
18/19	2,698	7,428	394
19/20	2,542	7,524	385
20/21	2,628	6,813	388
21/22	2,487	7,672	404
22/23*	1,654	5,187	395

*Note: The above numbers are for a portion of the current fiscal (missing two months of data).

Discovery Days

- 18 Discovery Day Sessions have been held since January 2019.
- 305 vendors have registered to participate in Discovery Day sessions, with 511 registrants in total.
- 29 Requests for Information (RFI) have been posted through this program and 18 have moved to procurement.

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Sprint With Us and Code With Us

- The program offers companies opportunities to bid on contracts of up to \$2 million. These procurements take as little as 17 days from start to finish.
- Issued more than 170 contracts to dozens of small- to medium-sized tech companies through the Sprint With Us and Code With Us programs.
- 33 contracts valued at \$17.6 million have been issued through Sprint With Us.
- 141 contracts valued at \$4.0 million have been issued through Code with Us.
- The total amount offered through both is \$21.6 million.
- The programs reduce the cost for businesses submitting a contract proposal to government from about \$15,000-\$25,000 to \$1,000-\$2,000.

Supporting Government's Response to COVID-19

Health PPE Portal

- As of January 23, 2023, 36,248 orders from 6,014 physicians have gone through the Health PPE Portal.

Government Laws and Acts

In 2022

- 550 regulations and 242 statutes processed and posted to BC Laws.
- OIC: Posted 698

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- MO's: Posted 405
- Bills: 43 Third Reading Bills processed and passed
- Gazette I: 52 weekly Editions published in Print and Digitally
- Gazette II: 23 editions for the year 2022 published in Print and Digitally
- Proclamations: 218 (219 with 1 replacement)
- Corporate Registries: 52 weekly editions
- Bulletins: 48 editions
- Acts Ministers: 6 Historical Archivals and 1 current collection

Support to Citizens

- In 2022, the Product Distribution Centre supported 10,700 medically fragile citizens with direct at home care supply of medical devices and products.

Mail Payment and Document Processing

- Serving 36 programs across four ministries, the volumes processed over the past calendar year are as follows:
 - Keyed 59,112 Returns
 - Created 761,733 Images
 - Processed 177,380 payments totaling \$8.4 billion
 - Processed 609,450 pieces of return mail
 - Managed 304,406 boxes for off site storage

Contact:

Teri Spaven	ADM	Procurement and Supply Division	Government Financial Information
Genevieve Lambert	Chief Digital Officer	OCIO Digital Office	250-217-6296

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Title: BC Bid System

Revised: Date of last revision, February 9, 2023

Key Messages:

- As part of our strategy to transform procurement we created a new BC Bid system.
- BC Bid is an online marketplace where public sector organizations advertise contract opportunities for a wide range of goods, services, and construction.
- Replacing a 25-year-old system has been a large, complex task that involved many partners and stakeholders.
- It was critical that we got this right.
- We've taken time to test the new system with those who use it and have adjusted it to meet their needs.
- I'm happy to say that the system has been launched.
 - With a great deal of work behind us, we have entered an exciting phase of working in the production environment
 - We have trained government buyers on using the new tool
 - We are hosted information sessions for suppliers and the broader public sector

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- **Buyers and suppliers have been registered and onboarded, as have users.**
- **The new BC Bid makes it much easier for people and businesses to work with government on a variety of projects.**
 - **A new public portal has improved navigation and makes it easier to find and keep track of opportunities.**
 - **It is also more secure, reliable, and will provide increased transparency on available opportunities.**
- **The BC Government spends nearly \$7 billion a year on a wide range of goods and services, supporting the delivery of high-quality programs that people count on.**
- **More people will have the opportunity to share in the economic benefits from over 420 BC public sector organizations posting opportunities through BC Bid each year.**

Questions and Answers

1) When did the new BC Bid application go live?

- **BC Bid was initially launched on May 30, 2022, followed by a second release on October 1, 2022.**
- **BC Bid is used by hundreds of publicly funded organizations,**

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such as Crown corporations, health authorities and municipalities.

- We have approximately 9,000 directly impacted users, as well as a variety of policy and decision-makers throughout government, broader public sector, and supplier communities.
- We chose to pace the project to ensure that those users would be ready when the system went live and that all the supports were in place to make going live a success.
- The old BC Bid system was retired on December 15, 2022 and all procurements are now done through the new system.

2) What is the value of the contract with CGI?

- The total value of the 5-year contract, awarded to CGI, is \$16.3 million.

3) What are some of the benefits with the new BC Bid?

- People are now able to access an open, transparent system and share in economic benefits from hundreds of public sector organizations posting opportunities through BC Bid each year.
- The new application improves the user experience for both buyers and suppliers. At go-live, we had a product that delivers the key benefits we targeted, including:
 - A reliable, modern experience for public, buyers, and suppliers.
 - Updated security.

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- New dashboards for suppliers to better manage and track opportunities.
- Improved navigation and search features helping the public to find opportunities.
- Discussion forums for procurement teams and suppliers to communicate within the application.
- Consistency in the way opportunities from government and broader public sector are posted.
- Although the initial scope of delivery for go-live does not include all the components identified in the contract, we made a thoughtful decision to release functions over a period of time to allow users to gain experience with this significant change and provide opportunity for feedback and ongoing improvements.

4) How does the new system support the Service Plan goal of increasing the number of suppliers registered with BC Bid?

- The new system includes many features that make it easier for suppliers to do business with government, including:
 - Easier navigation and improved search functionality to find opportunities that fit their business.
 - Online, self-serve access to subscribe to and renew eBidding accounts and opportunity subscriptions.
 - The ability to submit eBids for certain opportunities, directly within the system.

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- A dashboard to manage contracting opportunities and communication with government buyers.
- Prior to the go-live, all current registered suppliers received an invitation and instructions to on-board to the new application.
- As we approached the go-live, we worked to ensure that vendors, industry, and business associations across B.C. were aware of the benefits and were encouraged to use the system.

Contact:

Nadeem Javeri A/Executive Director Procurement and Supply 778-698-7459

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Indigenous Procurement Initiative

Revised: Date of last revision, January 27, 2023

Key Messages:

- Together with Indigenous partners, we are working to develop an approach that will support more Indigenous people in B.C. to participate in government procurement opportunities.
- In 2019, the ministries of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and Citizens' Services met with Indigenous partners, businesses, communities and organizations to:
 - Talk about the challenges they face.
 - And ask for their insights into how government can improve access to procurement opportunities.
- The province reviewed and compiled all the information gathered and publicly released a report on what we heard on March 6, 2020 along with the BC Procurement Strategy Update 2020.
- The people we engaged with and the report on what we heard were clear that continued engagement and collaboration between the Province and Indigenous People should be a foundation for the work ahead. And so, we committed in that strategy update to establishing an external advisory committee.

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- **After seeking the input and advice of Indigenous partners, we have now formed that committee.**
- **The committee and the report on what we heard will inform and guide our work to co-develop recommended short, medium, and long-term actions to help the province develop a coordinated approach to procurement with Indigenous businesses and to increase Indigenous Peoples' participation in government's procurement opportunities.**
- **In support of that goal, we have also:**
 - **Created a dedicated project office and hired staff to assist the committee and this work.**
 - **Rolled out Indigenous cultural competency training and content to B.C. Government staff who deliver procurement and contract management.**
 - **Established a streamlined process for ministries to contract with qualified Indigenous facilitators to help ensure government's engagements with Indigenous Peoples are culturally safe.**

Questions and Answers:

1) How many Indigenous businesses does the province currently contract with?

- **There is no comprehensive list of Indigenous businesses in B.C. and**
- **No commonly agreed upon definition of what an Indigenous business is, although we know, for example, the Ministry of Children and Family Development is using an interim definition while**

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consultations takes place to determine a government wide definition for use in procurement.

- As a result, it is not currently possible to know how many Indigenous businesses currently have contracts with the province.
- The province will work with the external advisory committee to determine if the province should have a definition of "Indigenous business", and, if so, what that definition should be, how it should be used, and how a list of Indigenous businesses could be gathered and maintained.

2) When will Indigenous businesses start seeing visible changes?

- It is imperative that Indigenous voices and perspectives are heard and involved in determining what changes the province should make and how to make those changes in an appropriate way.
- The formation of the external advisory committee was delayed to allow the Province and Indigenous partners to respond to and work towards recovering from the impacts of COVID-19.
- Now that the committee is formed, we are meeting regularly and will be co-developing an action plan of recommended short, medium, and long-term actions.
- The timeline for when those actions will result in visible changes will depend on the actions included in the action plan and the time necessary to appropriately implement them.

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Contact:

Geoff Haines	Executive Director,	Procurement and Supply Division	250-507-8739
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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Title: Procurement Strategy

Revised: Date of last revision, February 23, 2023

Key Messages:

- B.C.'s first-ever procurement strategy focused on providing best value, while also creating social, environmental, and economic benefits for people.
- Work continues to build on initial successes of the strategy to improve how government purchases goods and services.
- The strategy continues to ensure that all ministries conduct open, fair, and transparent processes when purchasing goods and services.
- Each ministry does their own purchasing and determines social criteria on a case-by-case basis.
- My ministry's procurement staff had training on how to put social procurement principles into practice.
- We have rolled out cultural competency training to B.C. government employees who deliver procurement and contract management.
- Achieving the goals of the BC Procurement Strategy is even more important as the province takes steps to create a resilient economy and a strong recovery after the global COVID-19 pandemic.
- A refresh of the strategy is planned for fiscal 2023/24.

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- The refreshed strategy will:
 - Evolve from transformation on four specific goals to a focus on three missions;
 - Address the impacts of public sector procurement on three key groups – suppliers, buyers, and citizens of BC;
 - Seek to collaboratively develop a suite of actions to advance the missions in a measured and thoughtful way.

If asked how new contracts align with the strategy

- Ministries are encouraged to include social, Indigenous, environmental and economic benefits where they make sense in their procurement processes for new contracts.
- My ministry is involved in the planning processes for several large re-procurements and advising how to apply the principles under the strategy.
- We continue to talk with stakeholders to ensure B.C.'s procurement approach works for businesses and organizations.

Social Impact Procurement Guidelines (see attachment)

- Government purchasing can have a range of impacts beyond generating revenue for government suppliers and getting the province what it needs to provide services for people.
- Social impact purchasing allows government to do more for people and communities when it spends public dollars.
- Social impact purchasing is about re-evaluating how government thinks about value for money – that is, basing

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purchasing decisions on more than just cost.

- The province's social-impact guidelines provide clarity on how government ministries can consider social value when purchasing services with a total value under \$75,000.
- For example, up to 10% of the score can be awarded to proponents that propose social-impact enhancements like skills training or new job opportunities for people who are underrepresented in the workforce.
- We are working to provide additional supports to increase opportunities for social procurement and for staff to implement social purchasing goals.

Questions and Answers:

1) What is procurement?

- Procurement is the process by which government acquires goods, services and construction from the vendor marketplace. It is a critical tool for the delivery of government services and fulfilling ministry mandate objectives.

2) How is procurement conducted in the BC Government?

- Canadian public-sector procurement must be fair, open and transparent. These requirements are created by a legal framework that includes federal and provincial legislation, national and international trade agreements, and Canadian contract law and jurisprudence.
- All procurement opportunities are posted publicly on BC

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Bid, the government's online sourcing platform; vendors may submit tenders in response to posted procurement solicitations.

3) What are the goals of the current procurement strategy?

- To realize best value and increased benefit to British Columbians by using procurement strategically and promoting innovation.
- To make it easier to do business with government with simpler, more intuitive processes.
- To create more opportunity for businesses of all sizes, adapting practices towards supporting, growing and sustaining a community of suppliers.
- To build greater capacity for procurement in the BC public service through enhanced training and support for practitioners.

4) How will the refreshed strategy differ from the current strategy?

- The refreshed procurement strategy will address the impacts of public sector procurement on three key groups – suppliers, buyers, and the people of BC.
- Three new missions, supported by a suite of actions, will guide this work and are aimed at:
 - connecting procurement with government's strategic priorities;

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- creating a strong and sustainable marketplace; and
- building greater internal capacity for procurement.

5) What progress have you made on the existing strategy so far?

- After seeking the input and advice of Indigenous partners, an external advisory committee has now been formed to make recommendations and advise the Province on the preparation of an Action Plan to increase Indigenous Peoples' participation in the Province's procurement opportunities.
- Members have extensive background and experience in promoting Indigenous People's participation in the economy and includes members from multiple Indigenous businesses, sectors, and communities in B.C.
- Discovery Day sessions launched as part of Requests for Information, to allow companies to gain a better understanding of government's needs and perspectives, resulting in improved bids on future procurements. It also allows government to become more informed of the solutions available in the market.
- In May 2022, launched the new, modernized BC Bid application with upgraded features and functions, including better search functions, easier navigation, and updated security.
 - *Refer to BC Bid Estimates Note for details.*
- Trained procurement staff in Citizens' Services on how to put social impact principles into practice.

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- Rolled out cultural competency training to BC Government employees who deliver procurement and contract management.
- The Province's online marketplace platform includes two programs, Code with Us and Sprint with Us, that have helped build an ecosystem of innovation and collaboration between technology entrepreneurs and government. Using the marketplace, ministries have procured 172 opportunities valued at \$34M.
- Helped the Ministry of Agriculture expand the scope, scale and reach of the Feed BC program; and,
- Working with Ministry of Children and Family Development to improve social services procurement processes.

6) You say that the Province spends billions of dollars on goods and services – what do you buy?

- Each year, the province spends billions of dollars on goods and services.
- Procurement is an integral part of public sector service delivery, supporting the provision of public services by all B.C. Government ministries.
- These purchases occur in every sector, and every ministry, and range from telecommunications to office products, to complex IT systems, to goods and services essential for wildfire and flood relief efforts.
- This does not include capital expenditures such as building new hospitals or schools.

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7) What are the social impact procurement guidelines?

- Purchasing has a range of impacts beyond generating revenue for government suppliers and getting the province what it needs to provide services for people.
- Social impact purchasing allows us to do more for people and communities when we spend public dollars.
- The province's social-impact guidelines provide clarity on how government ministries can consider social value when purchasing services with a total value under \$75,000.
- Social impact elements that may be considered, on a case-by-case basis in a procurement and measured through a contract, include supplier diversity and workforce development.
- This means creating opportunities for Indigenous Peoples, employment equity seeking groups, people with disabilities and offering apprenticeships, skills training and other developmental support to employees, contractors or volunteers, including diverse supplier group

8) The current BC Procurement Strategy talks about using procurement strategically to improve social and environmental outcomes. What does this mean and how are you measuring it?

- This is about making sure the money we are already spending on the goods, services and IT that government needs are being spent in ways that meet our business needs, provide value, but also improves social and environmental outcomes.

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- My ministry developed social and environmental guidelines to support ministries to embed these concepts into their procurements.
- Our procurement specialists are trained to put social procurement principles into practice and we have rolled out cultural competency training to B.C. government employees who deliver procurement and contract management.
- I continue to meet with the vendor community to learn how we are doing. We are not there yet – there is more we can do.

Contact:

Geoff Haines

Executive Director

Procurement and
Supply Division

250-507-8739

Attachment: Social Impact Procurement Guidance

Social purchasing

Social impact procurement guidance for BC Procurement Resources

This web page contains guidance for Province of BC Ministry purchasers to follow if considering social impact in points-based solicitations services with a total value under \$75,000. Government purchasers may want to bookmark this page for ongoing reference as it is subject to change as policy continues to develop in this area.

Purchasers wishing to consider social impact in any purchase of services over \$75,000 should contact [Legal Services Branch](#) and [Procurement Services Branch](#) to obtain advice regarding incorporating social impact elements into the specific procurement.

The Ministry of Citizens' Services has developed the information on this webpage in association with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction and the Ministry of Finance, Procurement Governance Office.

Social Impact Purchasing

Social impact purchasing can mean different things to different purchasers depending on whether the purchaser, like the Province, has certain trade and policy compliance obligations, or is a private sector purchaser that is not constrained in the same way. Likewise, it can mean different things to the vendor community. Some vendors expressly hold themselves out as social enterprises of various sorts while others may simply incorporate social impact measures into their operations without adopting a special designation or structure.

For the purposes of the Province, social impact purchasing, broadly described, is the use of purchasing power to create social value and support social policy objectives. For the guidance on this web page, social impact elements that may be considered, on a case-by-case basis in a procurement and measured through a contract, include supplier diversity and workforce development:

- **Supplier diversity** means creating opportunities for diverse suppliers such as Indigenous peoples and employment equity seeking groups which could include people with disabilities and other traditionally underrepresented groups.
- **Workforce development** means offering apprenticeships, skills training and other developmental support to employees, contractors or volunteers, including diverse supplier groups.

It is intended that, where appropriate, use of social impact purchasing will both reward vendors for actions that add social value, and encourage vendors to look for new ways to increase their social value to improve their ability to compete for future procurement opportunities that may include social impact criteria.

The Connection between Purchasing and Social Policy Objectives

The [BC Procurement Strategy](#) was launched in June 2018 and recognizes that government procurement in BC is based on principles that include value for money, transparency and accountability. The Strategy provides high-level direction from government on determining value for money:

Goal 1: To realize best value and increased benefit to British Columbians by using procurement strategically to improve social and environmental outcomes.

When including social impact criteria in an appropriate solicitation, in accordance with these guidelines, an assessment of value for money will include evaluating the vendor's willingness or ability to comply with the specific social impact elements that have been included in the procurement document and that become part of the resulting contract obligations.

All procurements, whether they include social impact criteria or not, must follow the Core Policy and Procedures Manual, including Chapter 6, which provides policy direction and reflects government's commitments to domestic and international Trade Agreements. Contact your [Ministry and Support Services Procurement Contacts](#) with questions.

When to Use these Guidelines

These pages provide guidance on incorporating social impact criteria into commonly used point-based solicitations for purchases under \$75,000. Point-based solicitations are typically used for procurement of services; points are awarded for value attributes: typically experience, price and approach, and may include, in accordance with these guidelines, social impact value attributes.

Purchasers wishing to consider social impact in any purchase of services over \$75,000 should contact [Legal Services Branch](#) and [Procurement Services Branch](#) to obtain advice regarding incorporating social impact elements into the specific procurement.

How to Consider Social Impacts in Procurement

The Province's standard government wide corporate solicitation templates that originate contracts include a section that allows for purchasers to describe the requirements and

desirable attributes that points may be awarded for in the evaluation process. Please note that:

- Social impact criteria are properly applied as desirable, and not mandatory criteria.
- It is recommended that no more than 5% of the total points be awarded to social impact, to ensure that quality and price remain the most important criteria.

Some or all of the following criteria can be included in the appropriate section.

[copy and paste the following example criteria into procurement document, as appropriate to the specifics of the procurement]

For the purposes of this procurement the following terminology applies:

- **Supplier diversity** means creating opportunities for diverse suppliers such as Indigenous peoples and employment equity seeking groups which could include people with disabilities and other traditionally underrepresented groups.
- **Workforce development** means offering apprenticeships, skills training and other developmental support to employees, contractors or volunteers, including diverse supplier groups.

To realize best value and increased benefits to British Columbians through this procurement, the Province will award points *[not to exceed 5 %]* to vendors that demonstrate that they have met or, if applicable, exceeded the social impact criteria to be evaluated as set out in the specific procurement. This could include any or all, of the following:

- The vendor can demonstrate a commitment to supplier diversity and workforce development as described above (identify vendor practices and procedures that support this criteria); or
- The vendor offers job skills training or employment opportunities in support of supplier diversity (identify types of training and/or opportunities, groups represented, current and planned activities); or
- The vendor purchases goods or services (such as janitorial services, catering, office supplies, etc.) from vendors that support supplier diversity and workforce development (identify types of goods or services purchased, and how the vendor's supply chain supports supplier diversity and workforce development).

Instructions to Proponent/Respondent:

With respect to each of the bulleted points above, describe how the Proponent/Respondent meets or exceeds the criteria.

Monitor and Measure

Evaluators should keep detailed records of all evaluation scoring, including social impact criteria, and be prepared to provide explanations for their rationale should they be required to conduct a debriefing. Records should be filed in the procurement file with all other documents.

Performance monitoring of all contracts is required by CPPM 6, Policy 52, 53 and 54. Monitoring social impact purchasing obligations is important to ensure that in addition to the satisfaction of deliverables generally, the social impact deliverables are also being met. It is recommended that, in addition to information provided in proposals, contractors provide a final report listing specific social impacts realized through the term of the contract.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Impact Procurement

Revised: Date of last revision, January 26, 2023

Key Messages:

- All government purchases have the potential for social, Indigenous, environmental, or economic impact.
- The BC Impact Procurement (BCIP) project is a multi-year pilot project started in 2022 that will test a broadened scope of government's social impact purchasing guidelines.
- The pilot project is intended to help inform the policies, standards, and guidance necessary to use purchasing power to improve social, Indigenous, social, environmental, and economic outcomes for British Columbians.
- By leveraging procurement to realize the best value for taxpayers, we're working to support a resilient vendor marketplace in BC and increase business opportunities to benefit individuals, families, and communities across the province.

Questions and Answers:

1) What is impact procurement?

- Impact Procurement, also called "value-added" or "social impact" procurement, refers to prioritizing social, Indigenous, environmental and economics values in purchasing activities.

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- By adding specific criteria to purchasing activities we can work towards realizing best value and increasing benefit to British Columbians by using procurement strategically to improve social and environmental outcomes and promote innovation.

2) How is impact procurement different from the social impact purchasing guidelines?

- This pilot project aims to broaden the scope of the current social impact purchasing guidelines to include purchases of all sizes and complexities.
- Current guidelines provide advice for adding social impact in points-based solicitations services with a total value under \$75,000.
- The pilot provides support and advice to government buyers who want to incorporate impact criteria into their procurements of any value or level of complexity.

3) What progress have you made on impact procurement?

- My ministry is in the initial stages of this two-year pilot program.
- Data collected through the pilots will contribute to the development of procurement tools, refinement of specific impact criteria, an improved understanding of the downstream effects of impact procurements, and reporting.

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4) Why are you doing this? Won't it impact government's ability to measure purchases based on price?

- Embedding government's values of anti-racism, equity, climate accountability, and meaningful reconciliation into the ways we do business is an important step toward a more sustainable and inclusive economy that will help build resilience and foster innovation.
- Impact Procurement is about additional value, not a replacement or diminishing of the measurements of quality and price.
- When we spend strategically, government dollars can be leveraged to build a better British Columbia for everyone.

Contact:

Geoff Haines	Executive Director	Procurement and Supply	250-507-8739
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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Supply Services Overview

Revised: Date of last revision, February 3, 2023

Key Messages:

- **Supply Services provides full-service inventory management and product distribution to and on behalf of ministries, Crown corporations and other government-funded organizations.**
- **Supply Services consists of five cost-recovery business lines:**
 - **The King's Printer**
 - **BC Mail Plus**
 - **Distribution Centre Victoria**
 - **Asset Investment Recovery**
 - **Product Distribution Centre**
- **These business lines serve the Provincial Government, the broader public sector, and the public.**
- **Services include supply chain/logistics, mail, scanning, office products, branded items, printing, digital publishing, and surplus asset disposal.**
- **Products and services are provided while maintaining government standards for procurement, privacy, and security.**

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- **Supply Services is seen as a trusted partner by ministries and other government sectors.**

Questions and Answers:

1) Did Supply Services have to shut down any services due to the pandemic?

- Approximately 75% of the staff in Supply Services continued to come to work at their normal location ensuring that the services they provide their customers continued without interruption.
- The only change in service was to close the Cash and Carry sales at Asset Investment Recovery operations due to pandemic restrictions. Two of our three locations have re-opened their Cash and Carry in 2022 and the third will re-open in 2023.

2) Why don't you let the private sector do the work Supply Services does?

- Over the years, all the lines of business within Supply Services have gone under review to ensure they provide best overall value to government.
- As these lines of business are fully cost recoverable, they are motivated to be innovative and provide best value, often in partnership with the private sector.

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- A simple example would be how the King's Printer uses its print and publishing expertise to coordinate the purchase of printing on behalf of government from the private sector.

3) What is Supply Services budget and how many staff does it have?

- Supply Services is a full cost-recovery operation except for a budget allocation (\$702,000) to cover the publication of legislative material on the BC Laws website.
- Operating on a cost-recovery basis, Supply Services had total recoveries of \$131.1 million (fiscal 2021/22) and a staff count of 320 employees.

Contact:

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Workplace Support Services Contract

Revised: Date of last revision, February 10, 2023

Key Messages:

- On June 17, 2020, we issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to extend our current Workplace Technology Services agreement with IBM until September 30, 2022, with the option of two six-month extensions (September 30, 2023). These extensions have been exercised.
- These extensions ensure there are no disruptions in services for British Columbians.
- The Ministry issued two Requests for Qualification (RFQ) on April 30, 2021.
- Vendors who successfully qualified through the RFQ process were invited to participate in a Negotiated Request for Proposal (NRFP) on January 7, 2022.
- The current contract has been separated into two procurements:
 - Service Desk services (SDS); and
 - Managed Workplace Technology Services (MWTS).

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Alignment with BC's Procurement Strategy

- **Our approach to procurement, including the division of the current contract into two bundles, aims to attract companies of all sizes to work with government.**
- **This approach will also help us better respond to the everyday Information Technology (IT) needs of the Public Service, providing them the services they need to assist the citizens of B.C.**
- **We're focused on providing the best value, while also creating inclusive, social, environmental, and economic benefits for people and communities.**
- **We will also vet and award government IT contracts in a way that achieves value for investment, increases innovation, and improves competition.**

Questions and Answers:

- 1) Why did the province split this procurement into two procurements?**
 - **Dividing the contract into two bundles promotes many benefits, including:**
 - **providing an opportunity for vendors who specialize in the particular bundles to compete.**

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- increasing competition (could attract businesses of all sizes) in terms of price, delivery models and approaches.
- Service providers may participate in one or both opportunities.

2) When will the new contracts be in place?

- Qualified vendors are currently negotiating contracts with the Province with contract finalization planned before the expiration of the current contract Sept 30, 2023.
- Managed Workplace Technology Services contract finalization is scheduled for May 2023.
- The Lead Proponent for Service Desk services withdrew on February 9th, 2023, in the final stage of negotiations.
- Service Desk services will begin negotiations with the Proponent in waiting late February 2023.

3) What is the impact to Information Systems Management Corporation (ISM) employee workforce?

- All participating respondents have been provided the BCGEU schedule as well Memorandum of Understanding 5.
- Proponents are negotiating and connecting with BCGEU regarding their proposed staffing plans.
- Throughout the process of the NRFP drafting, the BC Public Service Agency and BCGEU have been and will be

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kept informed.

- The Ministry of Citizens Services' and the current contract provider are very much aware of their obligations to the BCGEU members and are ensuring that all agreements are adhered to.
- Due to being in an active procurement for these services, we are unable to comment further.
- The BC Public Service Agency is engaging the BCGEU regarding these procurements and will apply policies outlined in the collective agreement.

4) Who is the current provider of Workplace Support Services?

- The current service provider is Kyndryl Canada Ltd. (formerly IBM Canada Ltd). In 2021 IBM Canada Ltd. restructured their organization and novated their contract to Kyndryl Canada on November 4, 2021, without disruption to services.
- The contract started December 2004 and was set to expire on September 30, 2022; however, two extensions have been exercised to accommodate procurement timelines and the contract is now set to end in September 2023.

5) What is the current value of the contract?

- The cost of the current contract is estimated at \$40 million annually.
- The total value of the contract from 2004 to March 31, 2022, is \$791 million.

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- Kyndryl uses a subsidiary workforce, Information Systems Management (ISM), with partners such as Microserve and Tecnet. In total, there are 44 B.C. companies engaged in providing the services.

6) Is the cost of Hardware also included in the future MWTS contract?

- In the future Managed Workplace Technology Service's contract hardware may be purchased from the service provider.
- Being able to purchase hardware through this future contract provides the flexibility required to meet government's business and financial needs.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Facts and Figures (FOI)

Revised: Date of last revision, February 8, 2023

Access to Information

FOI Volumes

- In a typical year, the province receives approximately 10,000 - 12,000 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
- Definition of "general request": A request that is for general government information such as briefing notes, have continued to be the highest level of request types being received by government.
- Definition of "personal request": A request related to an individual's own personal information. Personal requests include information such as child in care records, income assistance records.

Number of FOI Request Received			
Fiscal	General Requests	Personal Requests	Total
2016/17	4,905	4,405	9,310
2017/18	5,501	4,970	10,471
2018/19	7,622	4,633	12,255
2019/20	8,147	4,908	13,055
2020/21	6,467	3,798	10,265
2021/22	5,253	4,055	9,308

- B.C. has an active and informed stakeholder community that makes more requests per capita than in the three western Canadian provinces (AB, SK, MB) combined.

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Service Plan: Provide greater public accountability by improving access to government information, while ensuring the protection of privacy

- Objective to enhance public access to government records.
- Measured through the percentage of on-time responses to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
- Definition of "on time": A request is considered on time if the applicant receives a response within the legislated time limit for responding. All requests must be responded to within 30 days unless a time extension is permitted. For more information, see *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* s.7 and s.10.
- Timeliness was significantly impacted by government's ongoing commitment to respond to overdue requests. Because a request is not calculated into the timeliness measure until the request is closed, a focus on closing overdue requests will negatively affect the timeliness reporting for all requests closed in that fiscal year.

Percent of on-time Freedom of Information Requests		
Fiscal	Forecast	Actual
2016/17 Baseline	80%	80%
2019/20	85%	83%
2020/21	85%	85%
2021/22	85%	81%
2022/23	90%	TBD

Privacy Protection

Privacy Breach Reporting

This material will be proactively released

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- A privacy breach is an information incident involving personal information such as names, birth dates, financial information or health information.
- The majority of reported privacy breaches are accidental, minor in nature, and are quickly resolved.
- The reporting of privacy breaches has been steadily increasing since 2015 due to improved training, mandatory reporting requirements and the implementation of new tools and technologies across government. At the same time, the seriousness of privacy breaches has been declining.
- Breaches classified as moderate to serious accounted for 28% of the reports in 2017, 17% in 2022.

Actual or Suspected Privacy Breaches and Complaints Reported to Investigators	
Fiscal	Incidents Reported
2016/17	1,671
2017/18	1,803
2018/19	2,013
2019/20	2,234
2020/21	1,978
2021/22	2,487

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Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs)

- Privacy impact assessments (PIAs) are used by public bodies to review the level of privacy risk to a system, project, program, or activity. This step-by-step review process ensures government protects the personal information collected or used in accordance with the privacy requirements outlined in FOIPPA.
- Conducting a PIA helps protect privacy and builds public trust by ensuring government is collecting, using and storing personal information appropriately.

Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) Conducted	
Fiscal	PIAs Conducted
2016/17	654
2017/18	648
2018/19	896
2019/20	1,171
2020/21	972
2021/22	1,056

Budget Summary

- Administration of access to information and privacy protection are centralized through the Corporate Information and Records Management Office (CIRMO).
- CIRMO is the central agency responsible for developing corporate information management (IM) strategies, legislation, policies, and standards; and for delivering IM operations, training, and compliance reviews.

This material will be proactively released

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Fiscal	CIRMO Budget
2016/17	\$15.307M
2017/18	\$18.951M
2018/19	\$21.451M
2019/20	\$22.268M
2020/21	\$21.862M
2021/22	\$22.146M
2022/23	\$22.146M
2023/24	\$24.644M

- The Ministry of Citizens' Services committed over \$5.3 million to a multi-year project that will modernize the freedom of information process.

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CIRMO

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Improving Response and Processing Time for
Freedom of Information Requests

Revised: Date of last revision, February 8, 2023

Key Messages:

- My Ministry is committed to improving the Freedom of Information (FOI) system so people in B.C. have timely access to the information they need.
- This includes individuals who are requesting access to their own personal information such as child in care files, disability files and income assistance files.
- When it comes to improving our response times, this is complex work that takes time.
- For example, improving our FOI system includes resolving a backlog of complex, difficult files - frequently those of a personal or sensitive nature.
- However, as those overdue requests are closed, it negatively impacts the average processing days for closing all files.
- So, while we are making progress on resolving our backlog of complex files, the statistics against which our performance is measured does not reflect that progress.

Why do we have a backlog?

- The Province saw a more-than-40% increase in request volumes over a two-year period that reached an all-time high

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of over 13,000 requests in 2019/20, declining slightly in 2020/21 to 10,265, and to about 9,300 in 2021/22.

- Processing times during these years were impacted as requests also grew in size and complexity.

What we are doing about it?

- The improvements we have made to the FOI system have freed up resources to focus on the backlog, and so far, the Ministry has reduced the backlog by 22%.
- Even while focusing on reducing the backlog, the average processing time to respond to 97% of FOI requests was 41 days for 2021/22, an improvement of four days over the previous year.
- We are going to continue to look at how we can make further improvements to get people the information they need.
 - The Ministry has committed over \$5.3 million over three years to modernize the FOI process to manage the large volume of FOI requests the Province receives annually, resulting in faster, more secure delivery.
 - The FOI Modernization Project will improve business processes across government ministries and implement new technologies to increase efficiencies and improve the service experience for applicants.
 - We are working to reduce the backlog of overdue requests by focusing staff resources on the most overdue files.

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- **We are also working with ministries to find ways to make more records proactively available to the public without an FOI request.**

Questions and Answers:

1) What steps have you taken to improve timeliness of FOI responses?

- Government has been hard at work to improve the system and help people get their records faster.
- We are focused on reducing the backlog, and in particular for applicants seeking their personal information from the Ministry of Children and Family Development.
- This backlog contains larger, more difficult files – and frequently those of a personal or sensitive nature.
- Despite challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to provide excellent service to citizens.
- We are focused on closing the oldest and largest files in the MCFD backlog, processing over 900,000 pages of overdue material this fiscal year to date, prioritizing those who have been waiting the longest.
- My Ministry is exploring new technologies to make responding to FOI requests more efficient and secure.

Contact:

Charmaine Lowe

ADM

CIRMO

Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Digital Archives

Revised: Date of last revision, February 8, 2023

Key Messages:

- The *Information Management Act* (IMA) establishes digital archives to preserve and make available government's digital records of permanent value.
- The digital archives will complement and coordinate with the Royal BC Museum's archives, which will continue to hold and make available the permanent physical archival records of the Government of British Columbia.
- Digital archives holdings will be available to people and researchers across B.C. and around the world over the Internet.
- The digital archives are a key component of our work to digitize government services, making them more efficient and accessible.
- The digital archives will also help prevent electronic degradation, hardware and software obsolescence and the risk of natural and human-caused disaster.
- It will ensure that our heritage is preserved and made available to the public, in an accessible format, far into

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the future.

- Once created, the digital archives will make British Columbia a leading jurisdiction in preserving and providing access to its digital heritage.
- We have developed expertise and gathered information on the requirements for a successful digital archives.
- Starting in 2017 through to 2021, Ministry employees consulted with digital archives experts in other leading jurisdictions, including the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, the United States, and other Canadian provinces.
- Additional consultations have occurred with internal stakeholders, including the Royal BC Museum.
- A Request for Information was posted in January 2022 to explore the current technology market for digital archives.
- A Request for Proposals was posted in January 2023 to solicit a digital archives system.

Questions and Answers:

1) When will the Digital Archives be operational?

- CIRMO has done considerable research on modern approaches, standards, and technology for creating a

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

successful “trusted digital repository,” and has completed key planning and requirements documentation.

- We expect to procure a Cloud-based digital archives system this fiscal year.
- Throughout the 2023/24 fiscal year, we will configure and test the system, update policies and procedures, and will start to work with pilot ministries to load archival information into the system.

2) What is happening to these historically important records now?

- Digital records of permanent historical value remain in the custody of ministries at this time.
- Government’s records management policies and practices direct that these records be fully retained (not destroyed).
- Physical records of permanent historical value continue to be transferred to BC Archives (part of Royal BC Museum).

Contact:

Charmaine Lowe

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Digital Identity and Trust

Revised: Date of last revision, February 8, 2023

Key Messages:

- Canadians increasingly expect convenient and immediate access to digital services. At the same time, cyber-attacks are also increasing dramatically, and new digital tools are needed to help combat these threats.
- Further, research shows that Canadians expect governments to take the lead in protecting personal information in the digital world.
- Digital credentials and trust services reduce fraud, increase people's online confidence, and streamline and simplify service delivery.
- That makes digital trust a continuing priority for BC.
- The Ministers' Symposium on Digital Trust and Cybersecurity that BC hosted in January in Vancouver reinforced that digital trust is a common priority for all jurisdictions.
- We are united in the goal of empowering people and businesses to participate confidently and securely in the digital world.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Questions and Answers:

1) Why are we investing more in digital trust and digital identity solutions? Don't we already have existing solutions that work?

- BC has been delivering digital identity services to British Columbians for over twenty years. However, the demand from Canadians to do more impactful digital interactions, like applying for a mortgage, is increasing.
- Cybersecurity threats are getting more sophisticated, and we must evolve to combat them. We also need digital identities that work in both the public and private sector, so that the digital economy can benefit.
- Our new digital credentials and trust services leverage our foundational identity services to make those interactions possible.
- For example, people will be able to prove online they are who they say they are, with a high level of assurance. They can prove they're a lawyer, or a business owner, or the person with power of attorney over their elderly relative.
- And they can do this by presenting data from different credentials in their digital wallet, all in one simple step, in a way that's privacy-preserving and secure.
- Over time we want to provide trustable digital versions of all the things that government issues, unlocking new ways for people and businesses to participate confidently and safely in the digital economy.

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2) Will all British Columbians be required to have a digital credential at some point?

- There are no plans to require digital credentials.
- Not everyone has the means or the desire to go digital, and we will maintain alternative ways of accessing government services or communicating with the government.

3) Why did you release a BC Wallet app? Why not use existing solutions like Apple Wallet?

- The BC Wallet was developed to ensure that we can be confident that government's security, privacy, and usability needs are met.
- All our code is open-source and available for both public and private sectors to leverage.
- In the future, we would happily explore support for other solutions that meet our security and ease-of-use requirements.

Contact:

Jillian Carruthers

Senior Executive
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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Freedom of Information Fee Impacts

Revised: Date of last revision, February 8, 2023

Key Messages:

- B.C. is committed to providing timely and helpful FOI services to the people of British Columbia.
- People requesting their own personal information will continue to pay no fee at all, and Indigenous Governing Entities are not required to pay an application fee.
- The \$10 fee for non-personal FOI requests is in line with fees charged in other jurisdictions in Canada.
- Since the introduction of the application fee, the Ministry has been closely monitoring its impact.
- In January of 2022, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) released a report on the application fee.
- Government thanks the Commissioner for his report.
- As the Commissioner noted in his report, members of the public continued to submit high volumes of requests, even after the fee was introduced.
- While the fee does not appear to pose a barrier to making an FOI request, we will continue to monitor its impact and make

This material will be proactively released

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informed improvements to our services.

- **The reduction of general requests can be strongly attributed to two applicants, one media and one political party.**
- **The political party drop in requests made up 48% of the overall decrease in general FOI requests.**
- **The single media applicant made up 24% of the overall decrease.**

Questions and Answers:

1. Will you implement the OIPC's five recommendations?

- I want to thank the Information and Privacy Commissioner for his report
- For the most part, the B.C. government is already doing the things the report recommends. However, there is always room for improvement, and we will consider whether additional measures should be implemented to improve our services.
- Our aim is to continually improve the FOI system in B.C. to ensure people receive information as quickly as possible.

2. What conclusions do you draw from the OIPC's report?

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- The OIPC's report supports some of our own preliminary findings, as we noted in our FOIPPA Annual Report for 2021-22.
- As the OIPC observed, individual applicants – the second-largest group of users of the FOI system – continued to submit high volumes of requests even after the fee was introduced.

3. Will you scrap the FOI application fee?

- We will continue to apply the fee for non-personal requests.
- The new FOI application fee for non-personal requests is modest at only \$10 and is in line with other jurisdictions.
- As the Commissioner stated in his report: "it would not be prudent to draw definitive conclusions at this stage."
- While the fee does not appear to pose a barrier to making an FOI request, we will continue to monitor its impact and make informed improvements to our services.

4. Doesn't asking people to pay a \$10 fee for public information go against your claim to be an open and transparent government?

- The fee is in line with what other jurisdictions charge.
- People requesting their own personal information continue to pay no fee at all.
- Indigenous governing entities are not required to pay an application fee.

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- With the implementation of the fee, we have seen a reduction in broad, multi-ministry requests from a handful of high-volume requesters.
- This reduction has freed up resources to focus on processing requests from individual members of the public, many of whom are waiting to receive their own personal information, rather than disproportionately serving one or two high-volume applicants.
- We are also able to put more resources into proactive disclosures to increase the amount of information that's made available to the public on an ongoing basis without an FOI request.

5. Political requests have dropped significantly. Isn't it clear that the fee is preventing political parties from accessing information?

- There was a substantial decrease in FOI requests by political parties observed through all quarters of 2021-22, including the quarters before the fee was introduced.
- So far this quarter, political parties have accounted for 30% of general requests received, which indicates political parties have continued to actively file FOI requests. This is a return to a 2016 baseline when political parties similarly accounted for 32% of requests.
- It is too soon to draw any conclusions from this data. We need to gather more information before we can identify any long-term trends.

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6. Media requests have dropped significantly. Isn't it clear that the fee is preventing reporters from accessing information?

- Media have continued to submit requests and remain the third largest category by volume. It does not appear that the fee is preventing media from accessing the FOI system.
- It is too soon to draw any conclusions from this data. We need to gather more information before we can identify any long-term trends.
- A large reduction in media requests can be attributed to one applicant, who previously represented upwards of 76% of all media requests. This applicant has now reduced their volume to 23% of all media requests following the introduction of the application fee.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Children's Online Privacy

Revised: Date of last revision, February 8, 2023

Key Messages:

- Children are spending more time online than ever before, starting at younger ages, and may not understand how their personal information is being used.
- Government takes children's safety seriously and is considering opportunities to enhance their privacy while online.
- In B.C., the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) governs the way businesses, non-profits, political parties, and other organizations in B.C. use personal information.
- We are currently working across government to develop solutions that will work for B.C. and align with federal and international models.

Questions and Answers:

- 1) What recommendations have the PIPA Special Committee and Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner made regarding children's online privacy?
 - The recent PIPA Special Committee discussed the issue of special protections for sensitive categories of personal information, including information related to children and

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youth, but there were no specific recommendations to address children's online privacy.

- The Information and Privacy Commissioner did not make submissions to the PIPA Special Committee on children's online privacy, but since then has stated publicly that it is an emerging concern and is advocating for B.C. to implement 'codes of practice' to create a set of rules for how children's data can be used online.

2) What is a 'code of practice'?

- A 'code of practice' is a tool that can be used to specify privacy rules for a sector or clarify how organizations should treat more sensitive types of personal information.
- Multiple jurisdictions, including the UK, have codes of practice in their privacy laws.
- The UK introduced the Age Appropriate Design Code in 2020 for online services (e.g., apps, online games, social media sites) likely to be used by children. The code sets out standards to provide high default privacy settings and minimize data collection from children.

3) What is the federal government doing with regards to children's online privacy?

- In June 2022, the federal government introduced a bill to amend the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA) that provides more protections for children's personal information and includes a framework for "codes of practice" that can be used to protect children online.

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- The bill is expected to be debated in the 2023 session of Parliament.
- The province looks forward to more information from the federal government about ways to harmonize with their framework for "codes of practice" and the protection of children's personal information.
- We will continue to monitor the progress of the federal privacy legislation and assess how any changes may impact B.C. and PIPA.

Contact:

Charmaine Lowe

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Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Personal Information Protection Act

Revised: Date of last revision, February 2, 2023

Key Messages:

- Protecting the privacy rights of British Columbians is important.
- It is also important that people know there are rules and guidelines that protect their personal information.
- The *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) governs the way businesses, non-profits, political parties, and other organizations operating in B.C. collect and manage personal information.
- If someone has a complaint about how an organization has handled their personal information, they can contact the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

If asked about the PIPA Special Committee:

- The Special Committee to review PIPA completed its review and published its report on December 6, 2021.
- Government continues to carefully review their recommendations as we consider improvements and modernization of the legislation.

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If asked about federal changes:

- In June 2022, the federal government introduced Bill C-27 to amend the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*.
- B.C. will continue to monitor the progress of Bill C-27 and look for opportunities to harmonize with federal legislation, where possible.

Questions and Answers:

1) What is the purpose of PIPA?

- It recognizes and aims to balance the right of individuals to protect their personal information, and the need of organizations to collect, use, or disclose personal information for appropriate purposes.

2) When was PIPA last updated?

- Government has not made substantial changes to the Act since it was first implemented in 2004.

3) Does PIPA need to remain substantially similar to the federal act?

- The federal *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPEDA) sets national requirements for privacy in the private sector.

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- The federal government has deemed PIPA to be substantially similar to PIPEDA, meaning that PIPEDA does not apply to personal information collected, used, and disclosed entirely within British Columbia.

4) Recent and previous Special Committees of the Legislative Assembly reviewing PIPA have made several recommendations. What have you done to address these recommendations?

- Previous Special Committees reviewed PIPA in 2008, 2015 and most recently in 2021.
- The 2021 Special Committee made 34 recommendations, with 28 related to PIPA.
 - Items not directly related to PIPA include recommendations for the OIPC to take actions and for government to develop legislation for managing health information in BC, and to complete a review of the *Strata Property Act* for issues of potential conflict or confusion with the disclosure requirements of PIPA.
- Government is currently conducting an in-depth review of these recommendations.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner
(OIPC) Recent Reports, Orders and Recommendations

Revised: Date of last revision, February 24, 2023

Key Messages:

- The Information and Privacy Commissioner provides independent oversight and enforcement of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) and the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA).
- We are appreciative of the work that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has undertaken over the last year.
 - *If asked about a specific issue, investigation or report, please refer to the questions and answers below.*

Questions and Answers:

1) Recommendations: Data Linking

- Data-linking is defined in FOIPPA as the temporary or permanent linking of 2 or more data sets using one or more common keys, for example, personal health numbers.
- The 2016 report of the Special Committee to Review FOIPPA, primarily based on the advice of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, recommended that FOIPPA's data-linking provisions be amended to add clarity and broaden their scope.

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- In response, Government amended the data-linking provisions in 2021 to simplify the definition.
- In his submission to the 2022 Special Committee to Review FOIPPA, the Information and Privacy Commissioner recommended that regulatory rules be put in place to address transparency, privacy protections, and oversight for data-linking.
- ***Government is currently reviewing these recommendations and my staff will be engaging ministries and the OIPC in discussions as this work continues.***

2) Recommendations: Children's Privacy Codes of Practice

- In recent months, the Information and Privacy Commissioner has acknowledged that children's online privacy is an emerging concern that needs to be addressed.
- The commissioner advocated for B.C. to implement 'codes of practice' to create a set of rules for how children's data can be used.
- [See Children's Online Privacy note for further information.]

3) Special Report: Artificial Intelligence (Automated Decision Making)

- In June 2021, the B.C. and Yukon Privacy Commissioners and Ombudspersons jointly published *Getting Ahead of the Curve: Meeting the challenges to privacy and fairness arising from the use of artificial intelligence in the public sector.*

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- In June 2022, the federal government introduced Canada's first artificial intelligence legislation, if enacted it will establish Canada-wide rules for the development and use of artificial intelligence systems.
- ***We will continue to monitor the progress of the federal law and assess what needs to be done in B.C.***

4) Investigation Report: FOI Application Fee Administration

- In January 2023, the OIPC released a report investigating the implementation of the FOI application fee and its effect on request volumes.
- The report encouraged public bodies to clearly define and communicate their practices for application fees, and to offer a variety of fee payment options.
- The report did not draw any clear conclusions about the effect of the fee on request volumes.
- [See FOI Application Fee Impacts note for further information.]

5) Investigation Report: Provincial Public Health Information System

- In December 2022, the OIPC released a report investigating security protections in place for the Provincial Public Health Information System, also known as Panorama.
- Panorama is administered by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA).

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- The report recommended that the PHSA add more resources to proactively monitor for breaches, suspicious activity, software updates, and emerging cybersecurity threats.
- ***The PHSA is responsible for the management of Panorama and has committed to carefully reviewing the OIPC's findings.***

6) Compliance Report: Review of private liquor and cannabis retailers

- In June 2021, the OIPC issued an investigation report into the privacy practices of private liquor and cannabis retailers, who are subject to PIPA. The report included 18 recommendations.
- Six months after the initial report, the OIPC reviewed the retailers' progress on implementing the recommendations of the previous report.
- ***I am pleased that the compliance report was largely positive, finding that 70% of the OIPC recommendations had been fully implemented, and 22% had been partially implemented.***

7) Special Report: FOI Timeliness

- The OIPC is currently conducting a review of the timeliness of government responses to FOI requests.
- These are routine reports – the OIPC has conducted timeliness reviews every 2-3 years since 2009 with the most recent being published in September 2020.
- The OIPC was provided information to support this review in October 2022.

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- *Government is working hard to improve its FOI system and services.*
- *We are cooperating fully with the OIPC's review and will carefully review and consider all recommendations from the Commissioner in his forthcoming report.*

Contact:

Charmaine Lowe Assistant Deputy Minister CIRMO

Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Special Committee Recommendations

Revised: Date of last revision, February 8, 2023

Key Messages:

- My ministry is committed to improving the freedom of information (FOI) system so people in B.C. have timely access to information they need.
- We are dedicated to ensuring the freedom of information and privacy law in B.C. keeps pace with emerging technologies and enhances privacy protection – that's why the work of the Special Committees continues to be important.
- The legislation that was enacted in November 2021 was informed by a number of the recommendations made by past committees – as well as feedback gathered through consultations over the course of three years.
- Recommendations by privacy experts, including the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) and Special Committee, are integral to our work.
- We are reviewing the 34 recommendations made by the Special Committee as part of their June 2022 *FIPPA for the Future* report as we continue to look for opportunities to improve and modernize access to information and privacy protection in B.C.

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Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Questions and Answers:

1) What progress has government made on the 34 recommendations from the 2022 Special Committee report?

- Government continues to look for opportunities to improve and modernize access to information and privacy protection in B.C.
- For example, in alignment with recommendation 12 to modernize the freedom of information system, we have invested over \$5.3 million in a multi-year project to modernize and improve the FOI system across government to ensure people get the information they need, faster.
- We are also committed to the practice of proactive disclosure and will continue to work to identify other categories of records that may be appropriate for proactive release.
- And we continue to look for opportunities to align our work with the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

2) Why did Government proceed with the 2021 amendments before the Special Committee completed its review?

- Until last fall, the Act had not been updated since 2011, which meant that not one, but two sets of Special Committee recommendations had gone unaddressed.
- Updating the Act when we did, allowed the new Special Committee to focus on forward-looking issues with an Act that is more modern and responsive to the needs of people in B.C.

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3) What previous Special Committee recommendations were addressed when FOIPPA was amended in 2021?

- The amendments made to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) in 2021 addressed several of the Special Committee recommendations, including:
 - making it mandatory to report a privacy breach,
 - making it an offence to destroy documents to evade access,
 - making it mandatory to put in place a privacy management program,
 - increasing maximum penalties for privacy-related offences, and
 - enabling the addition of subsidiary corporations and other entities as public bodies.
- Other recommendations were addressed through policy and those related to records management were satisfied through the introduction of the *Information Management Act*.
- (*If asked*) Of the thirty-nine recommendations contained in the Special Committee's 2016 report:
 - Nine recommendations were addressed through the 2021 amendments.
 - Eight recommendations were addressed through other means such as the *Information Management Act* or government policy.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Contact:

Charmaine Lowe	Assistant Deputy Minister	CIRMO	Government Financial Information
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Ministry of
Citizens' Services

Report on the administration of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act **2021/22**

November 23, 2022

The Honourable Raj Chouhan
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Suite 207 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to present this report on the administration of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* for the 2021/22 fiscal year. Outlined in this report are steps my ministry has taken in support of my November 2020 mandate letter:

- » Continue to improve government's public sector data security and privacy practices to ensure that British Columbians' personal information is safeguarded.
- » Continue to provide British Columbians with timely access to information and ensure the system provides public accountability.
- » Continue to improve access to information rules to provide greater public accountability.

There has been considerable progress made in 2021/22 to improve government accountability and transparency through increased privacy protections and the proactive disclosure of information. Government has also undertaken initiatives to modernize freedom of information (FOI) processes and launched free, interactive online training to help B.C. public bodies understand their privacy and access to information obligations.

This work would not be possible without the dedicated people across the public service who are committed to access to information and the protection of privacy.

Sincerely,



Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Citizens' Services

pc: Kate Ryan-Lloyd
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
2 | 2021/22 Report on the administration of FOIPPA

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2021/22 FOIPPA Overview

Enacted in 1993, B.C.'s *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) balances government's accountability to the public through access to information with a person's right to privacy.



Modernizing the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

In November 2021, government modernized FOIPPA to help B.C. keep pace with technology, ensure timely access to information, and strengthen privacy protections.

Highlights include:

- » New provisions that enable public bodies to use modern tools while continuing to protect the personal information people trust government with.
- » New requirements for public bodies to conduct assessments of any sensitive personal information, such as personal health or financial information, being disclosed for storage outside of Canada.
- » Strengthened privacy protections and increased accountability through the introduction of mandatory privacy breach reporting and increased penalties for offences.
- » New protections for Indigenous peoples sensitive cultural information in support of government's commitment to reconciliation.
- » Removal of non-inclusive and outdated language in support of diversity and inclusion.

Government also began work, in collaboration with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, to develop: 1) regulations on how to notify individuals of privacy breaches that could cause significant harm; and 2) a ministerial directive on the essential components of a privacy management program. These requirements are expected to be brought into force in early 2023.

Information Access

FOIPPA makes government open and transparent by providing a mechanism for the public to request information about themselves (personal requests) and government business (general requests) from the more than 2,900 public bodies in B.C. FOIPPA also sets a requirement for public bodies to make information available to the public through proactive disclosure.

2021/22 Highlights

FOI Modernization Project

Following establishment of the project team in April 2021, work began on the over \$5.3M FOI Modernization Project to improve government FOI processes. This three-year project will introduce new technology and business processes to support the large volume of requests received each year while also improving the citizen experience by making processes more transparent and easier to use.

In July 2021, the project team delivered a software tool to facilitate the identification and removal of duplicate records in a FOI request. This new tool is estimated to save over 500 hours annually for government teams as well as provide more streamlined packages for people who submit FOI requests (applicants). Additionally, in November 2021, the project team improved the FOI request form to make it easier for applicants to submit their requests to relevant ministry public bodies.

In the spring of 2022, a pilot of the new government FOI system was launched to enable five government ministries to manage FOI requests within a unified electronic service in partnership with government's FOI office (Information Access Operations - IAO). This new unified electronic service decreased the average hours to process an FOI request, primarily by streamlining communications between IAO and pilot ministries. The pilot is considered a success and additional ministries are planned to be onboarded over the next two years.

MCFD FOI Service Delivery Project

FOI requests to the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) are often for an individual's own personal records, such as for information about former youth in care, and represent over 20 percent of all FOI requests.

In the spring of 2021, IAO partnered with MCFD to improve service delivery for personal FOI requests; ensuring applicants receive the information they require in a timely, accessible, and efficient manner. MCFD and IAO are working collaboratively to improve user experience, streamline communications, and modernize the FOI application form.

Increasing Transparency

2021/22 improvements to government accountability and transparency include:

- » Increased ministerial power to add subsidiary corporations or entities as new public bodies under the Act.
- » Increased authority for public bodies to disclose information to Indigenous governing entities.
- » New requirements for public bodies to seek consent from Indigenous governing entities before disclosing potentially culturally sensitive information in response to an FOI request.
- » New offences for wilfully evading FOI requests.

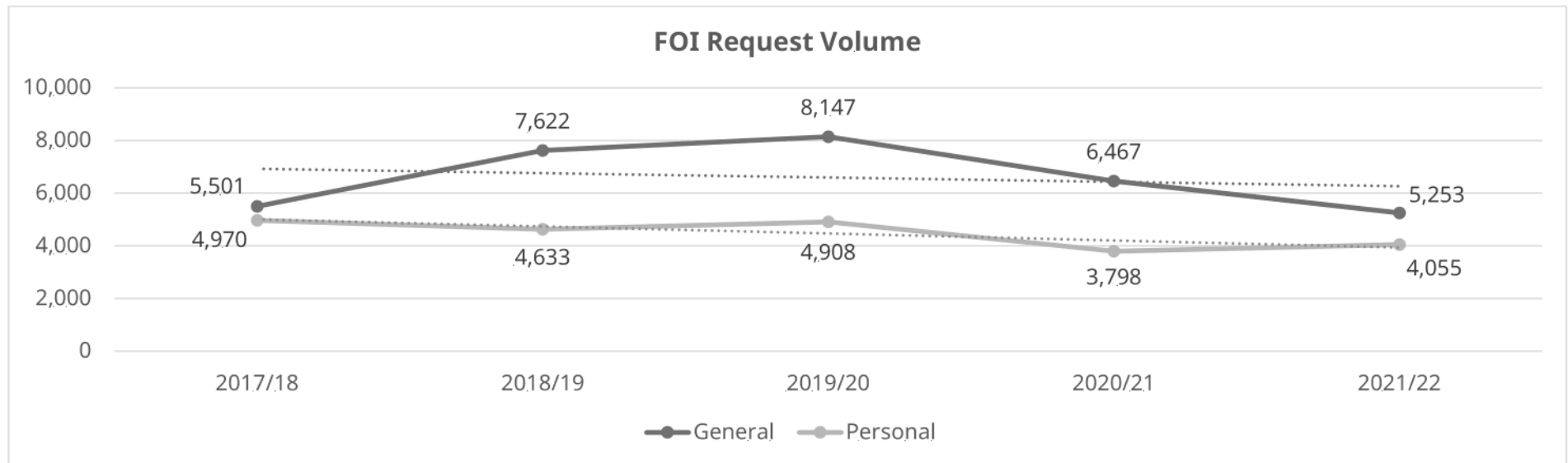


Key Figures

FOI Requests by Year

An FOI request is a formal process to request records from a public body. Personal requests are when an individual requests their own information held by government such as child in care records, income assistance records, B.C. government staff employment records, etc. General requests are requests for all other government information such as briefing notes, reports, etc.

Since 2017/18, the average volume of personal requests has remained relatively steady with a slight decline in recent years. Where we see some year over year variance is in the general requests with a peak in 2019/20 of 8,147 requests.



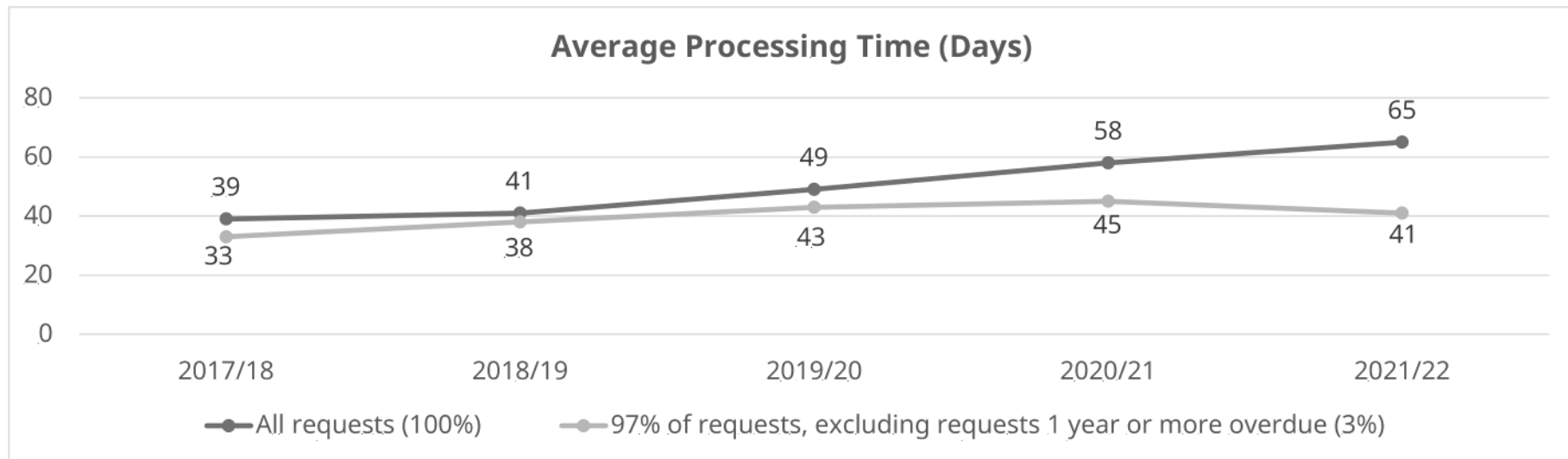
Processing Time

FOIPPA states that a public body must respond to an applicant who makes a formal FOI request within 30 business days. The Act provides for the ability to extend this time period if certain conditions apply, or with the permission of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Part of IAO's commitment to improve service delivery was to prioritize British Columbians who were waiting for access to their personal information. For example, IAO has undertaken a collaborative project to improve service delivery for MCFD clients which prioritizes overdue personal FOI requests and has resulted in almost 600,000 additional pages of personal information processed for 2021/22.

The average processing time for responding to an FOI request in 2021/22 was significantly impacted by government's ongoing commitment to respond to overdue requests. Because the processing time for responding to a request is not calculated into the average processing time measure until the request is closed, a focus on closing overdue requests will negatively affect the average processing time for all requests closed in that fiscal year.

When complex requests that were overdue by a year (approximately 3% on average of all requests) are excluded from the total number of requests closed, the average processing time to respond to 97% of FOI requests was 41 days for 2021/22. Continuing to modernize the FOI process as well as processing the backlog remain key priorities to ensure people receive their personal information on time.



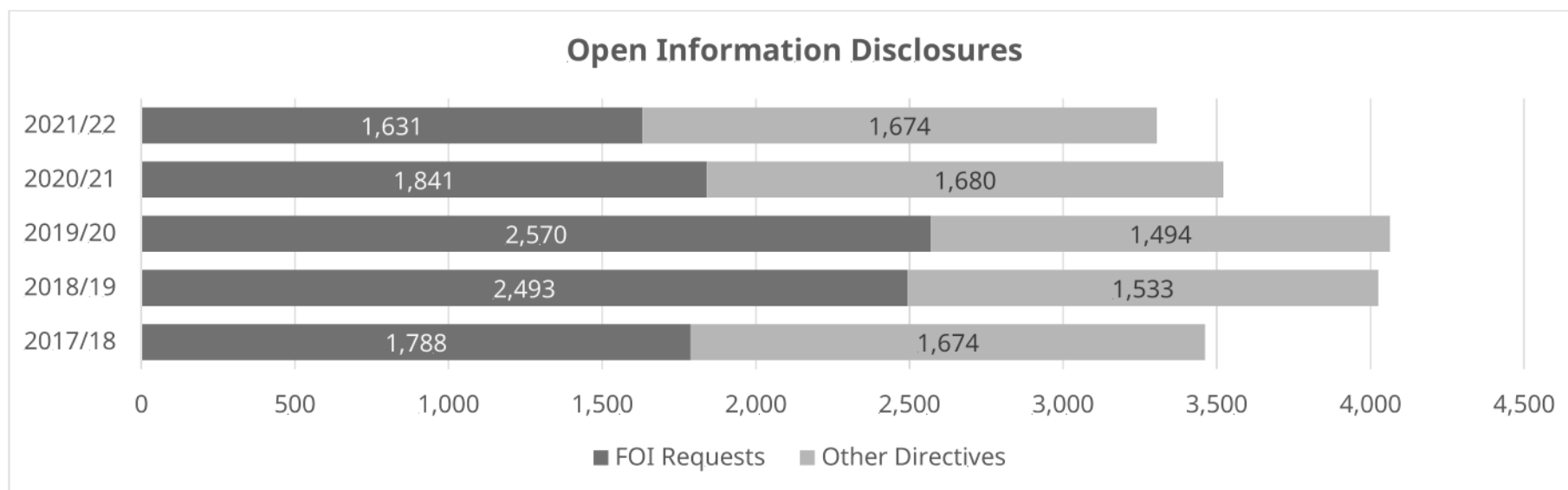
Proactive Disclosure

Proactive disclosure is the release of government information to the public without a formal FOI request. The practice of disclosing information on a proactive basis is the best way for government to improve access to information, transparency, and accountability.

There have been 75% more proactive disclosure directives¹ since December 2020. As well, government continues to review opportunities to make high-value records available to the public through [Open Information](#).

Ministries disclose a great deal of information through online repositories and interactive tools such as [BC Data Catalogue](#), [DriveBC](#), and the [BC Economic Atlas](#). The more than 3,000 data sets on the BC Data Catalogue increases transparency on government services.

Section 71.1 FOIPPA allows the minister responsible for the Act to establish categories of records that ministries must proactively disclose and to issue directions that detail those disclosures. One new ministerial directive came into effect March 1, 2022: Disclosure of Summaries of Ministerial Briefing Notes, which brings the total to 14 categories of records that are proactively released to the public. Examples of other categories include Ministers' and Corporate Transition Binders as well as Estimates Notes.



¹ There are two categories of proactive disclosure directives: FOI Requests and Other Directives.

Privacy Protection

The government of B.C. is responsible for protecting privacy and personal information whenever citizens interact with us. The Privacy Management and Accountability Policy (PMAP) supports ministry compliance with FOIPPA and strengthens government's ability to protect the privacy of individuals' personal information. It includes direction on the Province's privacy management program, including privacy management accountabilities, as well as privacy tools, agreements, and processes that support privacy protection in ministries.

There are 13 Ministry Privacy Officers (MPOs) who are accountable for privacy management programs within each ministry or sector. MPOs have the necessary knowledge and experience with ministry portfolios and privacy expertise to support robust, tailored programs for their ministries, which focus on supporting employee education and awareness, delivering sound privacy advice, and designing privacy into new ministry initiatives.

2021/22 Highlights

Increasing Indigenous peoples information protection

In support of government's commitment to reconciliation, new protections were added to Indigenous peoples sensitive cultural information. Previously, FOIPPA did not sufficiently describe all aspects of information related to Indigenous knowledge or cultural heritage – for example, information related to intangible aspects of Indigenous culture such as language, resource cultivation practices, and traditional visual and performing arts.

In addition, the 15-year limitation for disclosing information related to Indigenous government relations or negotiations has been removed to ensure the information is protected and the risk of harm is reduced for as long as necessary.

FOIPPA Foundations

Launched in April 2022, [*FOIPPA Foundations*](#) is a new, free online course that supports learners to understand their privacy and access obligations in B.C.

This engaging and interactive course provides learners with an overview of:

- » The fundamentals of FOIPPA
- » Their responsibilities under FOIPPA
- » How FOIPPA applies to their work
- » Their privacy and access obligations

Target audiences for the course include public body employees in the broader public sector, contracted service providers, and B.C. government employees.

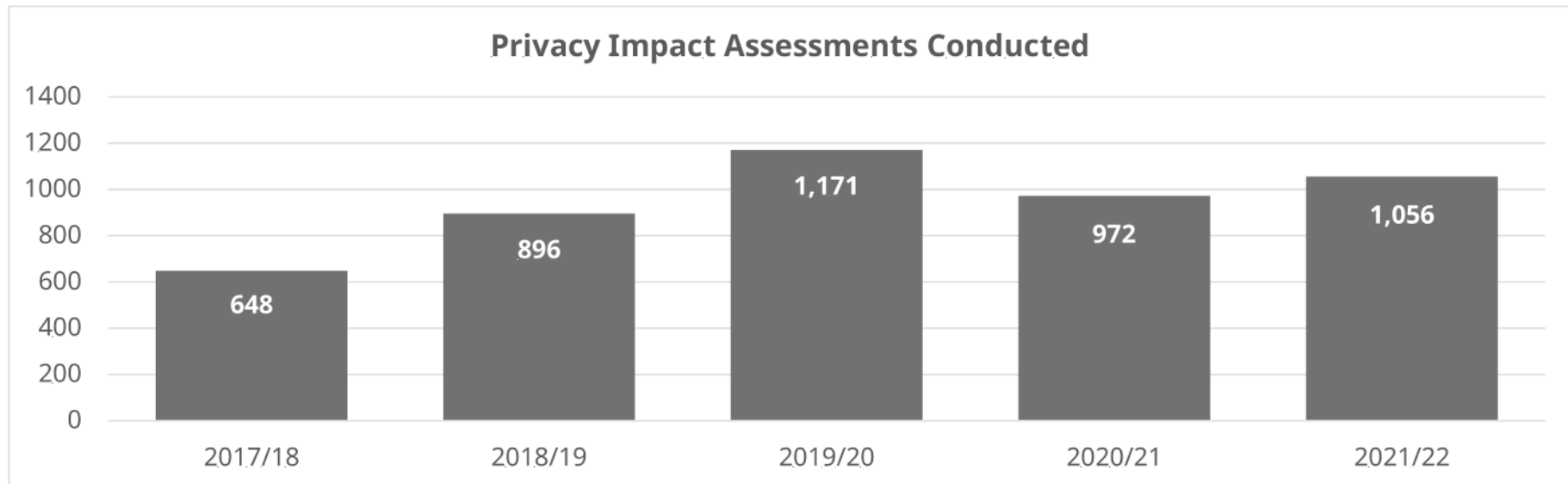


Key Figures

Privacy Impact Assessments

Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) are used by public bodies to review the level of privacy risk to a system, project, program, or activity. This step-by-step review process ensures government protects the personal information collected or used in accordance with the privacy requirements outlined in FOIPPA.

Conducting a PIA helps protect privacy and builds public trust by being clear about what information government is collecting, who has access to it, and how it is stored.

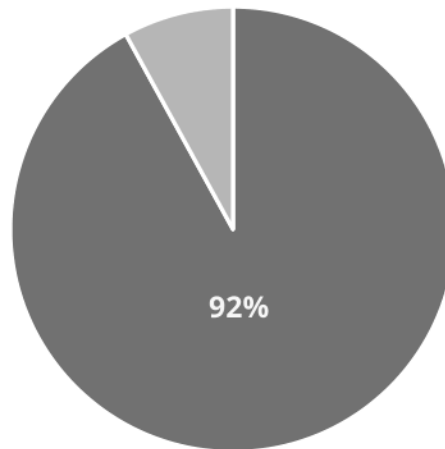


Privacy Protection Training

Ensuring government employees are trained in information management is critical to managing and protecting the personal information entrusted to government. This is done, in part, by requiring every government employee to take a comprehensive information management course which focuses on privacy, information security, access, and records management (Information Management 117 – IM117).

The IM117 course was refreshed in April 2021 to include a wider range of teaching methods to support adult learning through quizzes, scenario-based learning, and other interactive components.

92% of ministry employees completed IM 117 in 2021



Looking Ahead

Digital Privacy Impact Assessment

A project will be launched in the fall of 2022 to create a new digital tool which will improve the PIA process and change from the current linear, one-size-fits-all process to one where the privacy review is commensurate to the potential privacy impacts of the initiative.

Goals of the project include:

- » Designing an approach for the development and review of PIAs that is flexible and proportionate to the potential privacy impacts of the initiative.
- » Rebuilding the Personal Information Directory to provide better service and transparency for the public while also allowing for a better understanding of PIA patterns.
- » Creating a system to better track performance measures and PIA trends, while supporting a responsive and timely PIA drafting and review process.
- » Improving the user's experience by streamlining the PIA drafting processes.

FOI Modernization Project

In the coming year, the FOI Modernization project team will continue to enhance the new enterprise FOI system used by ministries and IAO to manage government FOI requests. The project will also onboard more ministries to the new system over the next two years.

Additional enhancements underway include the development of:

- » Improvements to the upload, deduplication, and storage of records responsive to requests.
- » Improvements that speed up the review and redaction of records by IAO analysts, including making it easier for analysts to find and consistently redact content within records packages.

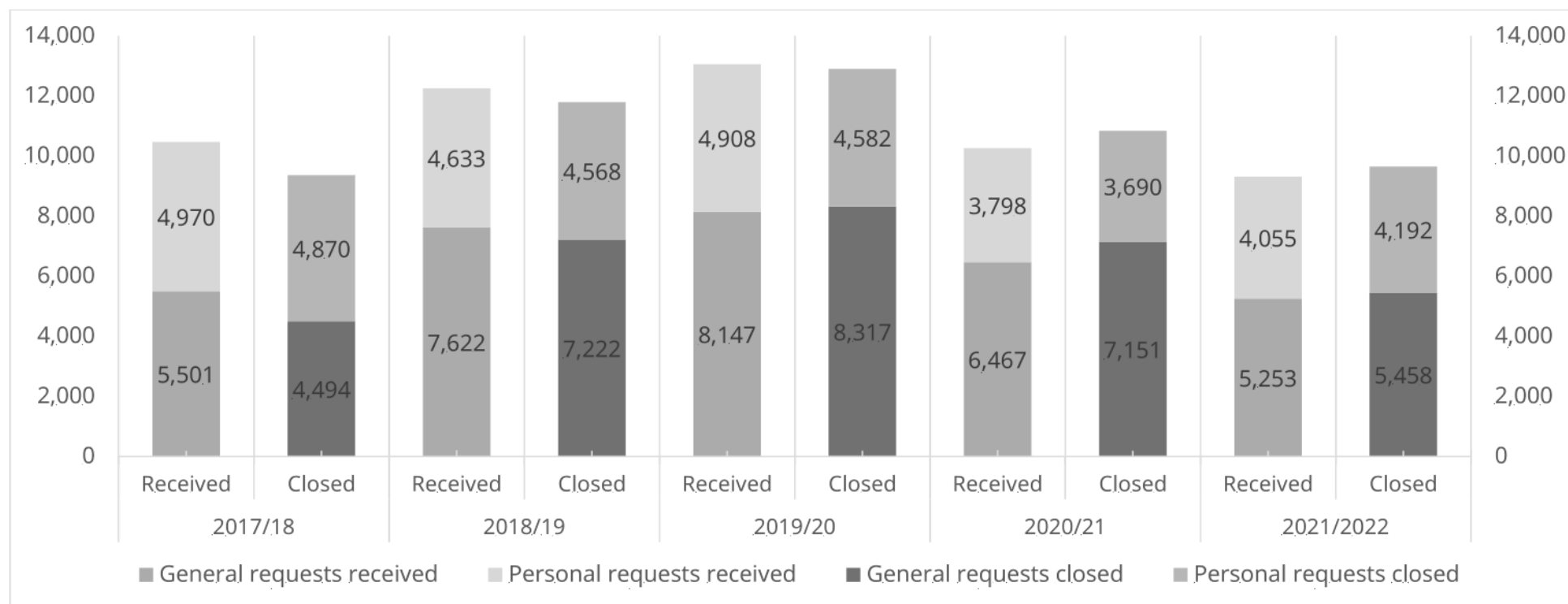


Appendix – FOIPPA by the numbers

Freedom of Information

FOI Requests

Personal requests are when an individual requests their own information held by government such as child in care records, income assistance records, B.C. government staff employment records, etc. General requests are requests for all other government information such as briefing notes, reports, etc.



Cross-government Requests

A request is considered "cross-government" when it is made to four or more ministries. Cross-government requests can have significant impacts on timeliness as searches must be conducted across multiple ministries.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total	2,117	3,129	2,933	2,323	1,371

Requests Received by Ministry

	2020/21		2021/22	
	General	Personal	General	Personal
Advanced Education & Skills Training	144	8	137	2
Agriculture & Food*	190	0	187	0
Attorney General	251	80	220	80
Children & Family Development	189	1,852	160	2,058
Citizens' Services	254	3	191	0
Education & Child Care*	195	8	164	15
Energy, Mines & Low Carbon Innovation	202	0	145	1
Environment & Climate Change Strategy	334	10	243	6
Finance	1,061	286	610	307
Forests*	471	7	499	13
Health	632	56	919	39
Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation	168	0	94	1
Jobs, Economic Recovery & Innovation	231	9	139	0
Labour	150	11	116	12
Land, Water & Resource Stewardship*	--	--	13	0
Mental Health & Addictions	149	0	67	0
Municipal Affairs	195	13	96	15
Office of the Premier	643	2	289	5
Public Safety & Solicitor General	408	655	462	662
Social Development & Poverty Reduction	163	800	95	832
Tourism, Arts, Culture & Sport	141	0	103	3
Transportation & Infrastructure	296	0	304	4
TOTAL	6,467	3,800	5,253	4,055

* Ministry changes in February 2022.

General Information Requests by Applicant Type

	Individual	Political Party	Law Firm	Researcher	Media	Interest Group	Business	Other Public Body	Other Gov't	Indigenous Governing Entity*
2017/18	838	1,652	274	1,143	971	272	325	21	5	--
2018/19	819	4,922	300	107	795	278	311	18	72	--
2019/20	946	5,836	213	68	536	195	302	17	34	--
2020/21	896	4,033	214	87	760	210	238	12	17	--
2021/22	1429	2,091**	243	91	908	163	286	15	19	8

* Indigenous governing entity applicant type was introduced in November 2021. Total reported reflects 4 months of reporting.

Personal Information Requests by Applicant Type

	Individual	Political Party	Law Firm	Researcher	Media	Interest Group	Business	Other Public Body	Other Gov't	Indigenous Governing Entity*
2017/18	3,666	1	1,185	2	2	77	8	14	15	--
2018/19	3,607	0	913	0	5	81	7	11	9	--
2019/20	3,873	1	916	0	4	60	10	19	25	--
2020/21	2,854	0	864	0	0	52	7	19	2	--
2021/22	3,089	0	873	0	1	52	9	20	5	6

* Indigenous governing entity applicant type was introduced in November 2021. Total reported reflects 4 months of reporting.

Open Information Disclosures

	FOI Requests	Other Directives	Total
2017/18	1,788	1,674	3,462
2018/19	2,493	1,533	4,026
2019/20	2,570	1,494	4,064
2020/21	1,841	1,680	3,521
2021/22	1,631	1,674	3,305

Disposition Refusals

Applicants can be denied access to all or part of a record in accordance with mandatory or discretionary exceptions as outlined in FOIPPA. In some circumstances, the mere knowledge that a record exists will cause harm to law enforcement or will unreasonably invade the personal privacy of a third party. Therefore, the head of a public body may refuse to confirm or deny the existence of such a record, as outlined in [section 8\(2\)\(a\) and \(b\)](#).

	Access Denied	Refuse to Confirm or Deny
2017/18	255	20
2018/19	327	79
2019/20	271	59
2020/21	234	77
2021/22	182	62

Disposition Other

	Abandoned	Withdrawn	Correction	Cancelled	Outside the Scope of the Act	No Responsive Records Exist / Located
2017/18	637	516	1	38	9	1,224
2018/19	898	1,375	0	35	8	1,802
2019/20	1,199	480	3	64	25	3,108
2020/21	1,437	336	0	34	44	2,198
2021/22	739	330	0	31	12	1,311

Disposition Releases

Releases identify the extent to which information formally requested under FOI laws is released to an applicant. This includes FOI responses where ministries respond by providing full disclosure; providing partial disclosure; indicating records may be routinely releasable; indicating records are in another ministry or organization; transferring the request; or deferring access as the information is to be publicly released within 60 days.

	Full disclosure	Partial Disclosure	Routinely Releasable	Information to be published within 60 days	Records in another Min/Org	Transferred
2017/18	1,273	5,011	51	10	104	213
2018/19	1,291	5,567	46	7	213	141
2019/20	1,313	6,096	70	10	53	148
2020/21	1,056	5,114	85	28	60	138
2021/22	1,035	5,465	96	3	161	222

Fees for Access to Information

Section 75 of FOIPPA enables a public body to charge a fee for some aspects of an FOI request.

Processing fees may include:

- locating and retrieving the record;
- producing the record;
- preparing the record for disclosure, except for time spent severing information from the record;
- shipping and handling the record;
- providing a copy of the record.

Starting in November 2021, a \$10 application fee was applied to all general FOI requests. The fee must be paid before the request will be processed and applies to every ministry public body included in a request. Indigenous governing entities are exempt from paying application fees.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total FOI Requests	10,471	12,255	13,055	10,265	9,308
General Requests	5,501	7,622	8,147	6,467	5,253
Number of Requests Where Processing Fees Paid	157	151	145	144	143
Sum of Processing Fees Paid (nearest thousand)	\$60,000	\$63,000	\$44,000	\$51,000	\$50,000
Percent of General Requests Where Fees Paid	3.49%	2.08%	1.74%	2.01%	2.70%
Average Processing Fee for all FOI Requests	\$6	\$5	\$3	\$5	\$5
\$10 application fees paid for General Requests	--	--	--	--	\$11,950*

* A \$10 application fee for general requests was introduced in November 2021. The value reported reflects 4 months of reporting.

Privacy Protection

Privacy Impact Assessments Conducted

Operational PIAs are conducted on any new or updated system, project, program, or activity. Legislative or Regulatory PIAs (LPIA/RPIA) are conducted on new or amended legislation or regulations.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Operational PIA	503	695	946	740	823
LPIA/RPIA	145	201	225	232	233
Total PIA	648	896	1,171	972	1,056

Privacy Breaches

The Information Incident Management Policy requires that any employee who becomes aware of an actual or suspected information incident report the incident to the Ministry of Citizens' Services. Investigators assess each report and determine whether an investigation is warranted. An investigation may not be conducted if it can be quickly determined that no violation of FOIPPA has occurred or if the incident is outside of the Ministry's investigative mandate or jurisdiction. Where an investigation is conducted, investigators seek to determine whether a violation of FOIPPA has occurred and, if so, what factors may have contributed to the incident or privacy breach.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Reported (Privacy Breaches & Complaints)	1,803	2,013	2,234	1,978	2,487
Investigations Conducted	1,638	1,736	1,889	1,621	2,043
Violations Occurred	1,528	1,615	1,405	1,455	1,897
Instances Where Breach Notification Required (% of violations)	113 (7.4%)	87 (5.4%)	115 (8.2%)	124 (8.5%)	100 (5.3%)

Privacy Breach Volume by Tier

Investigators assess and categorize each incident using a five-tier system, in which the assigned tier reflects the potential risk of harm, the sensitivity of the information involved, and the type of investigative and/or other activities needed to respond.

- » Tier 1 and 2: Minor to moderate incidents involving personal or confidential information with negligible risk of harm to individuals or government.
- » Tier 3: Moderate/major incidents (including complaints) involving sensitive personal or confidential information, inappropriate or wilful conduct and potential jeopardy for the individuals involved. Usually require more in-depth investigations.
- » Tier 4: Major, complex and/or high-profile incidents involving highly sensitive personal or confidential information, may impact public confidence in a ministry or government, notification likely due to high potential for a significant risk of harm.
- » Tier 5: Major incidents requiring the involvement of an external investigator due to an actual or perceived conflict of interest for IAO, the Investigations Unit, or its executive.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Tier 1	1,138	1,384	1,519	1,369	1,825
Tier 2	386	255	241	247	254
Tier 3	107	97	129	113	84
Tier 4	7	0	0	0	0
Tier 5	0	0	0	0	0

Volume of Complaints Received

An individual can make a complaint about the handling of their personal information by government and is entitled to receive a response. Government investigates privacy complaints to determine whether they can be substantiated and, where they are substantiated, issues recommendations to program areas as to how to strengthen their information management practices and prevent similar privacy breaches from occurring in the future.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Complaints Reported	69	62	74	71	57
Complaints Substantiated	44	43	24	29	27

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Facts and Figures (Services to People in B.C.)

Revised: Date of last revision, January 30, 2023

All stats reflect January 1 - December 31, 2022

Service BC Centres

- 65 Centres throughout the Province.
- Citizen Satisfaction Rate (2021 bi-annual survey results): 93%.
- Provides 300 services on behalf of 40 partner ministries and agencies.
- Average of two million transactions for 2022.
- New programs onboarded to Service Centres: 10.
 - CITZ/IDIM - BCeID Email Triaging
 - CITZ/IDIM - BC Token
 - CITZ/REG - BC Registries Sole Proprietorship and General Partnership Registrations & Filings
 - CITZ/SBC - Mobile Outreach
 - CITZ/SBC - Notary Services added in Valemount
 - ENV - Rodenticide Exams
 - FEDERAL - Service Canada Outreach
 - HLTH - Vaccine Callback - Flu Shot/Booster Campaign
 - MCFD - Admin Services in Hazelton
 - MUNI - Community Gaming Grants

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

BC Services Card

- More than 5 million physical cards issued (5,025,464).
- More than 1.8 million BC Services Card app activations, individuals verifying their identity remotely via video (with less than 2% of individuals verifying in-person)BC Services Card Apple App Store rating of 4.5 out of 5.
- Number of programs onboarded as of December 31, 2022: 63.
- The BC Services Card is the one of the most trusted forms of digital identity in Canada, achieving level 3 assurance designation from the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada.

Contact Centre

- Inquiries answered by Provincial Contact Centre: more than 3.3 million.
- Citizen Satisfaction Rate 2022: 85%+.
- Translation services: Over 140 languages.
- Service channel offerings: telephone, email, webchat, and text channel services and online and website.
- Calls per month: 264,000.
- Contact Centre program expansions to date: 33.

BC Registries

- Bi-Annual Business Satisfaction 2020-2021 rating: 87%.
- Corporate Registry transactions processed for 2022: 790,616.
- Calls answered in 2022: 118,280 total.
 - Registries:76,735.

This material will be proactively released

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- BC Online: 41,545.
- Current number of entities supported in 2022: 1,462,131
Corporations: 547,328.
- Societies: 1,119.
- Cooperatives: 681.
- Sole Proprietorships: 690,725.
- General Partnerships: 140,466.
- Benefit Companies: 587
- BC Online Accounts: 44,868.
- Personal Property Registry Transactions in 2022: 945,844.
- Manufactured Home requests (including search requests) in 2022: 43,272.
- Total name requests received for examination: 298,361.
- Total name request transactions: 142,628.
- Modernization initiative programs launched:
 - Cooperative Associations can now complete all filings online making for a more seamless and secure service.
 - Businesses can request a business name using a modern program that improves the service experience and assists businesses in understanding business naming rules.
 - In January 2022, a new Personal Property Registry was launched that provides an improved user experience and ensures greater security for our users.
 - Since October 2022, sole proprietorships and general partnerships can now complete all filings online.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Service Plan

Objective 3.2 – Government services are accessible, effective, and efficient

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
3.2 Citizen satisfaction with Service BC Centres and Contact Centre. ¹	90%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2022/23	At least 90%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2024/25	At least 90%

Data source: [BC Stats](#).

¹ The margin of error is $\pm 1\%$ at the 95% confidence level. Citizen satisfaction is calculated as a weighted average of the in-person and telephone survey results based on the volume of citizens served by each channel.

- The Citizen Satisfaction rate 2020/21 for Service BC Centres is 93%.
- The combined results, including the Service BC Provincial Contact Centre are 85%.
- Service BC offers access to government services through multiple channels – in-person, telephone, email, webchat, and text channel services and online and website.
- Connecting British Columbians to 300 services on behalf of 40 partner ministries and agencies.

Objective 1.2 - Enhance the experience for businesses when interacting with government

Performance Measure	2011/12 Baseline	2019/20 Actuals	2020/21 Target	2020/21 Actuals	2021/22 Target	2022/23 Target
1.2 Satisfaction with services to businesses provided by Service BC. ¹	89%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2020/21	At least 90%	87%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2022/23	At least 90%

- The 2020/21 Business Satisfaction rate was 87%

This material will be proactively released

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- Specific services were assessed:
 - Corporate Online (Results 90%)
 - Name Requests Online (Results 83%)
 - OneStop Business Registry (Results 83%)

Citizen and Business Satisfaction Rates

- Services provided to British Columbians and businesses is a priority for our Ministry and is especially important during these past two years.
- A biennial survey is conducted to help Service BC assess the quality of their existing services as well as to focus future service delivery improvements.
- The citizen satisfaction measure is the percent positive result for the statement – “I was satisfied with the overall quality of the service delivery”.
- The most recent series of Service BC surveys conducted between January and March 2021, focused on the satisfaction of when people access government programs and information.

Service Improvements Introduced Since Last Satisfaction Survey

- Service Centres, our in-person channel for British Columbians, developed multiple alternate channels to make it easier for British Columbians to access government services:
 - Developed Appointment Online for booking appointments in advance, over 120,000 used the application.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- Enhanced this service to include a text back option to notify citizens of their upcoming appointments.
- Started a digital channel for providing feedback. Over 2,000 feedbacks received through this channel.
- Increased the use of telephone service, from 20,000 calls in 2019 to 480,000 calls in 2021.
- Increased use of online channels to communicate service impacts due to staffing levels and severe weather.
- Provided outreach services for Ukrainian newcomers.
- Provided mobile outreach services for underserved communities throughout the province.
- Created a virtual CSR service to support citizens' where they are.

Contact:

Sheila Robinson	ADM	Service BC	604-908-1401
Geoffrey Wiggins	Executive Director	Service BC	Government Financial Information
Leanne Thain	Director	Service BC	778-835-8993

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: BC Services Card

Revised: February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- The BC Services Card ensures British Columbians can access in-person and online services from government in a secure, timely way.
- People can combine the BC Services Card with their B.C. driver's licence to reduce the number of cards in their wallet.
- There are approximately 5.02 million active cardholders, and more than 1.81 million people have activated their BC Services Card App as of December 2022.
- People can use the BC Services Card App to access a variety of online government services, including health records - lab results, medication and immunization records, Student Financial Aid, ICBC for online auto insurance renewals and claims, and federal services such as the Canada Revenue Agency's My Account portal.
- We are continually expanding the use of the BC Services Card and App, so people can conveniently access a wider range of government services in-person and online – all with one secure card.

If asked about security and privacy:

- The BC Services Card has robust security features to protect the data and personal information of British Columbians.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- **The BC Services Card and App have achieved level 3 assurance, which means they are among the most trusted forms of identity in Canada.**
- **Each service provider only has access to the minimal information needed to deliver their specific service.**

Questions and Answers:

1) People can use the BC Services Card App to access a variety of online government services – what are some of the new services that British Columbians can access through this app?

- **Ministry of Health - Provider Identity Portal:** Portal website where health providers can create a trusted digital identity with the BC Services Card app and enroll for access to participating health systems across the sector.
- **ICBC Online:** ICBC customers have the convenience of quickly and securely renewing their ICBC auto insurance online, obtaining temporary operating permits, and submitting online claims.
- **Ministry of Attorney General - Court Services Online:** Citizens can access online services such as searching public information from the Provincial and Supreme civil court, traffic or criminal court files.
- **Ministry of Attorney General – eFiling Hub:** Supports BC citizens to complete court forms electronically and submit them for filing as well as update and retrieve them later. Citizens can submit multiple forms without having to attend a

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

counter in person.

- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General – Emergency Management Evacuation Registration & Assistance (ERA): Evacuees impacted by an emergency crisis can self-register by using their BC Services Card app to log into the ERA to apply for and receive direct support from the Emergency Management BC agency.
- Land Title and Survey Authority (LTSA) – MyLTSA: Provides property owners access to LTSA's search, filing, and other services.
- Ministry of Energy, Mines, and Low Carbon Innovation – CleanBC Go Electric Vehicle Rebate Program: Applicants will register and agree to consent to the disclosure of personal information with the CRA to verify income to receive a rebate on the purchase of a new electric vehicle.
- Ministry of Education - MyEducation BC: Access for students and parents to high school educational records and the ability to collaborate with schools, school staff and teachers in the delivery of educational services.
- Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills - EducationPlanner BC: EducationPlanner BC allows students to plan, search and apply for admission to all post-secondary institutions in BC.

2) How secure is the BC Services Card?

- The BC Services Card has robust security features to protect data and personal information.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- The BC Services Card App is one of the most trusted forms of digital identity in Canada, achieving level 3 assurance designation from the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada.
- The BC Services Card App requires a user to unlock their mobile device using TouchID, PIN, FaceID or other standard processes. This is known as two-factor authentication and provides stronger security than common user ids and passwords.

3) How do British Columbians activate their BC Services Card app, to access online services?

- The Verify by Video service, launched in June 2019, eliminates the need to visit a Service BC centre in person. British Columbians can securely use the app on their iOS or Android mobile device and interact with a Customer Service Representative in real time or send a video at a time and location that is convenient to them.
- With the launch of the BC Services Card app and remote identity verification options, the number of in-person verifications decreased significantly and remains at less than 2% of verifications. The Verify by Video feature which became especially important during the pandemic continues to be a desirable option for those who do not live near a Service BC location.
- Approximately 1,810,000 people have activated their BC Services Card App.

4) Why do you need to have a smart device to use the BC Services Card App?

This material will be proactively released

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2023/24 Estimates Note

Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- Service BC is committed to ensuring all British Columbians have equal access to government services both in-person and online.
- People have growing expectations of being able to conduct their personal business digitally. Government meets that expectation with the BC Services Card App.
- Individuals that do not have access to a mobile device, smartphone or tablet can now use the BC Token.
- In late 2022, the BC Token was launched for individuals that do not have a smartphone or tablet but still wish to access government services online with a personal computer. A small device, available by visiting a Service BC centre, enables secure access online along with a username and password.
- At this time in-person identity proofing is required to be issued a BC Token, at a Service BC location. There is no option to verify one's identity for a BC Token or receive it remotely.

Contact:

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A/Executive
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Service BC

Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Creating Accessible Multi-Channel Services

Revised: Date of last revision, February 6, 2023

Key Messages:

- The province is committed to providing people in B.C. with improved access to the supports and services they count on.
- This includes looking at the various ways people interact with us – by telephone, online and in-person – and seeing where we can improve the quality of the overall service experience.
- For example, Service BC has implemented new communication channels, including video chat and text at the Provincial Contact Centre.
- Service BC has also launched a convenient and easy-to-use service for booking online appointments at any of our 65 Service BC Centres throughout the province.
- With increased demand for online self-service, our government is committed to building greater trust in online interactions. We are doing this through online verification of individual identity. The mobile BC Services Card, our most advanced identity service, enables easy access to multiple online services.
- We expanded our identity verification channel – Verify by Video mobile card activation service – with the launch of Send Video to meet the increased demand of digital users due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- **Send Video allows you to submit a short video and photo to Service BC at a time and place of your convenience.**
- **In support of businesses in our communities, BC Registries and Online Services is undertaking a phased, multi-year, modernization initiative to replace and improve the service experience for businesses including moving away from paper filings to online services.**
- **Registries is leveraging the investment already made in the BC Services Card to verify and authenticate those accessing our new online services.**
- **These continuous improvements and initiatives mean we are well positioned to meet the expectations of the people and businesses we serve well into the future.**

Questions and Answers:

1) How has Service BC, through BC Registries, supported the business community with self-service?

- **The province is committed to providing people in B.C. with improved access to the supports and services they count on.**
- **This includes looking at the various ways people interact with us – by telephone, online and in-person – and seeing where we can improve the quality of the overall service experience.**
- **BC Registries has supported the shift online through several initiatives, including:**

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- Enabling businesses with electronic meeting attendance, temporarily pausing companies' dissolution status for failure to file annual reports and supporting filing of electronic affidavits.
- Undertaking a phased, multi-year modernization initiative to replace and improve the service experience for businesses, including moving away from paper filings to online self- service filings.
- Cooperatives can now complete all filings quickly and easily online, replacing paper-based and other manual processes to manage their cooperative associations.
- In January 2022, BC Registries also launched a new Personal Property Registry. This service improves the user experience for customers and provides a much easier process for registering and searching on the registry thereby creating greater transparency.
- In October 2022, BC Registries released a new way for small businesses to register and maintain a business online. Previously they were able to register online but making changes was done by paper. Now, businesses can update their information online.
- In October 2022, BC Registries launched a new Business Search, providing self-serve access to filings, summaries and registration documents.

2) What about people who cannot access services online?

- The province is committed to providing people in B.C. with

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improved access to the supports and services they count on.

- Service BC offers access to government services through multiple channels. Our primary channel is in-person, through our 65 Service BC Centres located in rural and urban communities across our Province. We also provide telephone, email, text and webchat channel services through our Service BC Provincial Contact Centre, and online and website channels.
- Over 300 government services can be accessed in-person at our 65 Service BC Centres.
- The Service BC Provincial Contact Centre handled over 3.3 million enquiries over the last year, providing information and navigation support for more than 300 government services.
- Most government programs offering online services also have other options for accessing the service in-person and through contact centre channels.

Contact:

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Executive Director, Service BC
BC Registries

Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Indigenous ID as a Secondary ID

Revised: Date of last revision, February 15, 2023

Key Messages:

- Ensuring every citizen has easy access to Provincial services, both online and in-person, is central to our work at the Ministry of Citizens' Services.
- Indigenous peoples can currently use the Secure Certificate of Indian Status card issued by the federal government of Canada as primary ID and the Certificate of Indian Status issued by the Federal Government as secondary ID.
- The Ministry of Citizens' Services is working with its partners in the Ministry of Health and ICBC, via the BC Services Card Program, to build a framework to evaluate and approve identity documents for acceptance as Secondary ID.
 - The BC Services Card Program is working with BC Data Service's Equity working group and Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR), to engage Indigenous Governing Entities to better understand their ways of identity proofing, for consideration within the framework.
- Once the framework is ready, the BC Services Card Program will then invite Indigenous Nations that wish to have their identity cards evaluated through the identity framework to be accepted by the BC Services Card Program as Secondary ID.

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- **The inclusion of Indigenous Nation's citizenship cards for evaluation and approval as Secondary ID, in addition to the Indian Status cards already accepted, advances the work toward fulfilling our commitment to reconciliation under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA).**
- **A longer-term outcome is to expand the framework to also assess Primary ID.**
- **We are grateful to Indigenous Nations for working so closely with the province to make this important step possible.**

Questions and Answers:

- 1) **Will citizenship cards from all Indigenous peoples in BC be accepted as Secondary ID by the Province?**
 - Identity proofing requirements for the BC Services Card Program are defined through CITZ Minister's Directions to the Provincial Identity Information Services Provider (PIISP), ICBC, and the Medical Services Commission (MSC).
 - Recognizing the scope and volume of this work, an ID framework is in development to assess the attributes and issuance process of each proposed additional secondary ID document.
 - Once the framework is established, CITZ will work with the BC Data Service's Equity working group and MIRR on a phased approach to secondary ID intake and assessments for Indigenous ID cards. Nation have already had a successful review of their identity documents as Secondary ID and expect to be added to the list of acceptable Secondary ID in 2023.

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2) What if a community is not accepted as secondary ID? Is there an appeal process?

- In some cases, recommendations could be made for adjustments to the issuance processes or card security feature enhancement to align with privacy and security practices.

3) How long does it take from start to finish to be assessed for use of Secondary ID?

- Until the framework is in place and the evaluation process clearly defined, the review process cannot be forecasted to a specific length of time.
- Due to the varying ways that identity cards are issued and the nuance of each practice of identity proofing and card production, some may take longer than others.

4) Will Indigenous identity cards be accepted as Primary ID by the Province?

- At this time, the Province is reviewing identity cards as acceptable Secondary ID, as a first step in formalizing this review process.
- Primary ID involves adoption of Pan Canadian identity standards and is a more complex process given national and international standards for issuing Primary ID that BC must comply with, however, we remain committed to continuing to work with other jurisdictions on this issue.

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Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Indigenous Names in BC Registries

Revised: Date of last revision, February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- Ensuring business and society names reflect Indigenous people's language and culture is an important part of reconciliation and supporting the diversity of our province.
- We are committed to working with Indigenous peoples to understand how best to collect and manage data in a culturally appropriate way.
- This starts with having data standards that are built with Indigenous people, as well as technologies that work with Indigenous characters.
- BC Registries is exploring changes that can be made to be more inclusive of Indigenous languages in business name registration.
- Corporate business registries are integrated with other provinces' registries and private systems across Canada. This integration limits our ability to expand on standard naming.
- BC Registry's system is currently limited in the kind of text characters it can process.
- Any changes require in-depth discussion with other levels of government and agencies across Canada, and with private sector organizations like banks and legal firms.

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If asked why new BC Sans font isn't applied for all government systems:

- **We are committed to being more inclusive of Indigenous languages and have introduced a font for government website content, forms and services that supports Indigenous languages in B.C.**
- **The font is available for download and has been deployed to all BC Public Service workstations.**

Questions and Answers:

1) What is BC Registries doing to support Indigenous names for companies?

- BC Registries is modernizing its applications to accept Indigenous character names.
- A complicating factor that limits our ability to expand on standard naming, is business registries are integrated with other provinces' registries, national registries, and private systems across Canada.
- Further conversations are required to support businesses that need to engage with other programs/services as not all programs recognize Indigenous characters, such as Canada Revenue, and Provincial Sales Tax.
- BC Registries is working with other areas of the ministry at a CITZ led cross-ministry and broader public sector equity

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working group to champion the implementation of data standards and processes to support equity focused initiatives, including the adoption of an inclusive digital font that allows for Indigenous languages to be included in communication, signage, services and official records.

Contact:

Kaine Sparks

ED, BC Registries

Service BC

Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: SBC Supporting Equity of Access

Revised: Date of last revision, February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- Service BC is committed to ensuring government services remain accessible to all people of British Columbia, understanding the diverse accessibility needs of British Columbians is a vital component of ensuring service excellence.
- Our focus is to maximize satisfaction through modernization, offering people choice and convenience, increasing accessibility, and reducing efforts required to access government services while keeping personal information protected.
- Service BC employees receive diversity and inclusion training to provide better services for all people of British Columbia.
- All 65 Service BC Centres are equipped with hearing loop technology to serve the hard of hearing and hearing impaired.
- Additionally, the Service BC Provincial Contact Centre utilizes a relay service for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have trouble with speech, and offers translation services in over 140 languages to better serve the people of our province and respond to the diverse communities we serve.

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- **Service BC is supporting people in British Columbia to access digital government services through online channels such as verifying people's identity via video through the BC Services Card app, eliminating the need for an in-person office visit.**
- **These modern channels of service enable Service BC to promote and inform the adoption of digital programs by supporting and serving British Columbians through the channel they choose or need.**
- **In circumstances where individuals do not have access to a smartphone, or tablet to use the BC Services Card app to access online services, they can now use the BC Token.**
- **The BC Token is for individuals that do not have a smartphone or tablet but still wish to access government services online with a personal computer. A small device, available to obtain by visiting a Service BC centre, enables secure access online along with a username and password.**

Questions and Answers:

- 1) What is Service BC doing to ensure all British Columbians can access services?**
 - **Service BC is committed to providing all people with access to excellent service by working to offer choice and convenience; reducing the effort required to access government services; and keeping personal information protected.**

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- Service BC offers access to government services through multiple channels. Our primary channel is in-person, through our 65 Service BC Centres located in rural and urban communities across our province. We also provide telephone, email, and text channel services through our Service BC Provincial Contact Centre, and online and website channels.
- Over 300 government services can be accessed in-person at our 65 Service BC Centres.
- The Service BC Provincial Contact Centre handled more than 3.3 million enquiries over the last year, providing information and navigation support for more than 300 government services.
- People can use the BC Services Card App to access a variety of online government services, including health records - lab results, medication and immunization records, Student Financial Aid, ICBC for online auto insurance renewals and claims, and federal services such as the Canada Revenue Agency's My Account portal.
- An important part of improving access is removing barriers and addressing challenges to accessing services. For example, Service BC is making it possible for people to get what they need without visiting a government office in-person by supporting access to digital services with the BC Services Card app.
- Understanding the diverse and changing needs of the people who look to us for assistance is key to Service BC's commitment to providing service excellence.

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2) With the increased drive to online services, if residents don't have Internet, how do they access Service BC?

- People who cannot access services online, can visit one of our 65 Service BC Centres located in communities around our province or call the Service BC Provincial Contact Centre for assistance.
- Service BC is also developing a mobile service to meet the needs of communities for which geography or circumstances create barriers to service (i.e. wildfires, floods).

3) How can people who don't have a smart phone or tablet set up their BC Services Card app?

- Individuals do not have access to a smartphone or tablet can now use the BC Token.
- In late 2022, the BC Token was launched for individuals that do not have a smartphone or tablet but still wish to access government services online with a personal computer. A small device, available to obtain by visiting a Service BC centre, enables secure access online along with a username and password.

4) How can people that are not eligible for a BC Services Card, access services online?

- Service BC is currently piloting a new feature within the BC Services Card app, where individuals that are not eligible for a BC Services Card can use the app to access online services.

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- B.C. students who are studying in other provinces or countries, military members, and some federal employees, can make use of this feature.

5) How does Service BC support people who are deaf or hard of hearing to access government services?

- All 65 Service BC Centres are equipped with hearing loop technology to serve people who are hard of hearing or hearing impaired.
- The Service BC Provincial Contact Centre offers both Telephone Device for the Deaf and Video Relay Service for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or have difficulties with speech.
- The BC Services Card identity verification process has improved accessibility by accommodating the use of an individual's handwritten communication, American Sign Language, and the use of communication tools such as text to voice devices and supports minimal third party (advocate) assistance.

6) How does Service BC support people who do not speak English who are trying to access government services?

- The Service BC Provincial Contact Centre offers translation services in over 140 different languages.
- Service BC also makes every effort possible to assist British Columbians who need a translator to help them during an in-person visit to a Service Centre. This includes leveraging the skills of employees who are fluent in other languages or by

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facilitating a connection to the Contact Centre for translation services to support the in-person service request.

7) How is Service BC responding to the new *Accessible BC Act* passed in June 2021?

- Service BC is committed to identifying barriers to service and addressing them through continuous improvement.
- We undertake regular surveys to understand the overall satisfaction with our services and key drivers for improvement (i.e. issue resolution, going the extra mile, timely help, ease of access)

Contact:

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Government Financial
Information

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Mobile Outreach

Revised: Date of last revision, February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- The province is committed to providing people in B.C. with improved access to the supports and services they count on.
- This includes looking at the many ways people interact with us – by telephone, online and in-person – and seeing where we can improve the way we connect with the communities we serve.
- For example, Service BC is exploring ways of transforming its service delivery model to reach communities facing barriers or that require a different, scalable, and flexible engagement model to access government services through mobile outreach.
- Service BC's goal is to provide services to those that are underserved or may be facing barriers to service that range from geography to natural disasters to cultural barriers.
- Mobile Outreach also aims to address service inequities faced between rural and urban communities, and is designed to meet people where they are and serve them in the channel they want or need.
- Service BC frequently works with other service partners and community organizations such as Service Canada and United Way to provide comprehensive service delivery.

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Questions and Answers:

1) How many Mobile Outreach events have been held as of December 31, 2023

- Answer: 30 Events (21 Ukrainian Newcomers, 4 Community Outreach, 4 Mobile Outreach, 1 Disaster response)

2) Where have these events taken place?

- Events have been held in Kamloops, New Westminster, Richmond, Victoria, Penticton, McBride, Fraser Lake, Macleod Lake, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Vernon

3) How are locations and dates for Mobile Outreach services determined?

- Events are determined by opportunities to work with service partners such as Service Canada and local service groups.
- Service BC is working on developing a strategy on how to determine the community, the frequency of the outreach, and the operational requirements for future Mobile Outreach events.

4) What services are delivered at Mobile Outreach events?

- Mobile Outreach aims to mirror services available at a Service BC centre. The Mobile Outreach program is still under development, including technical solutions needed to achieve this goal.
- Service BC often works with community organizations and government agencies to better address what services may be

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required in a community, examples of this are Service Canada and United Way.

5) Can Mobile Outreach support disaster response?

- Yes, this model strengthens Service BC approach to business continuity. In situations where people cannot access a Service BC centre due to a natural disaster or extreme weather event, Mobile Outreach can be set up to support people by providing access to government services.

Contact:

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: BC Registries Modernization

Revised: Date of last revision, February 3, 2023

Key Messages:

- We are updating our business registry services to keep pace with technology and an increasing demand for online programs and services.
- The modernization of these services will provide a more seamless service experience, while improving the security and privacy of our users.
- Moving more government services online safely and securely provides people with improved response times, more service selection and greater, more convenient access when needed.
- Users can leverage the BC Services Mobile App – one of the most trusted forms of online identification. Users can also provide a notarized affidavit with a BCeID login and a one-time passcode.
- Users who have a BC Services Card and don't have a mobile device can set up a username and password with a BC token, obtained free of charge at a Service BC Office.
- Our identification requirements help other businesses and agencies, such as banks and other government programs, trust the BC Registry's information and the identities of those

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representing a business.

Questions and Answers:

1) What work has BC Registries completed to date in their modernization journey?

- BC Registries has completed the following:
 - Cooperative Associations can now complete all filings online making for a more seamless and secure service.
 - Businesses can request a business name using a modern program that improves the service experience and assists businesses in understanding business naming rules.
 - In January 2022, a new Personal Property Registry was launched that provides an improved user experience and ensures greater security for our users.
 - Since October 2022, sole proprietorships and general partnerships can now complete all filings online.
 - Users can search for businesses registered in B.C. and purchase and download copies of business documents.

2) Why is verifying identity necessary?

- Online transactions can be used to fraudulently undermine a person's identity.
- Our government is committed to ensuring the integrity of online filings.

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- For the corporate registry, verifying the identity of the person improves corporate transparency and provides greater assurances to the business community as to who the directors of an organization are.
- The people of this Province have a right to know who owns a business operating in this Province.
- That's why many businesses are required annually to file any changes to the directors who have a controlling interest in a company.

3) How can people who are not eligible for a BC Services Card get access to BC Registries online services?

- The Province's Identity Information Management program is responsible for providing identity and authentication services to support British Columbia resident's transactions with government services.
- BC Registries, in collaboration with the Identity Information Management program, has developed a solution for non-BC residents.
- This solution includes having a notary provide a notarized affidavit of the person. This solution continues to build and support identity verification while meeting privacy and security requirements.
- Users can also use the BC Services Card mobile app by providing 2 pieces of appropriate government-issued ID.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Contact:

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Beneficial Ownership Registry

Revised: Date of last revision, February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- The requirements for private companies to hold, in their records office, a list of beneficial owners came into force October 1, 2020.
- As recommended by the Cullen Commission, BC Registries will establish a Beneficial Ownership Registry for private incorporated companies to mitigate the risk of money laundering, tax evasion, and other illegitimate activity - ultimately protecting the integrity of Canada's financial system.
- Consulting on legislation for the Beneficial Ownership Registry is currently underway.
- Leveraging existing investment for Registries Modernization and Common Components, this will be a new registry and expand capabilities to include regulatory oversight, enforcement and multi-jurisdictional collaboration.
- As a strong advocate in addressing anti-money laundering initiatives, BC would be a Canadian leader in the development and implementation of a registry that could be internationally recognized as a "best practices" beneficial ownership registry.

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Questions and Answers:

1) Why is this a priority?

- More than 200 jurisdictions have signed up to implement the 40 recommendations on anti-money laundering and protection against terrorist financing.
- This system meets the recommendation of the Cullen Commission to address the risk of money laundering and terrorist activity financing in British Columbia.

2) How many businesses will be impacted?

- It is estimated that 1 million incorporated BC companies (excluding sole proprietorships) will require registration via the Beneficial Ownership Registry.
- Registries is targeting 80% compliance in year one, and 98% compliance by the end of year 2, after release.

How much will it cost?

- Registries has secured \$8M of capital funds from the Digital Investment office over 36 months starting FY 22-23 to build a Beneficial Ownership Registry, and thereby meet the recommendations laid out in the Cullen Commission to combat money laundering, tax evasion, and other illegitimate activities.
- Costs will be minimized by building functionality into BC Registries' recently modernized platform.

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- Operating costs can be offset by Registries operating revenues with no impact to government's fiscal plan.

3) How much work has been done?

- BC Registries and the Ministry of Finance are working together to identify the requirements and governance of a BC Beneficial Ownership registry.
- The Ministry of Finance has submitted a request for legislation and is developing a Beneficial Ownership policy.
- BC Registries is establishing a development team and has started the service design process.

4) Will it be integrated with the federal registry or other jurisdictions?

- BC is working with the Canadian Federal government to ensure project alignment and future data sharing possibilities.
- BC's Beneficial Ownership Registry will include requirements to allow for multi-jurisdictional data sharing, including Land Title and Survey Authority and Ministry of Finance.

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Facts and Figures (Government Buildings)

Revised: Date of last revision, March 3, 2023

Real Property Division Portfolio

- Real Property Division (RPD) provides everything needed to design, set up, and manage a government workplace.
- RPD's client base, as defined under the *Public Agency Accommodations Act*, includes the ministries (mandated) as well as the broader public sector (voluntary customers).
- RPD's portfolio of facilities includes government occupied office space, Service BC front counters, and special purpose buildings such as courthouses, laboratories, and correctional centres.
- School, post-secondary, municipal, and hospital facilities are not included within the RPD portfolio.
- As of September 30, 2022, RPD's real estate portfolio was comprised of:

	Buildings (#)	Area (m²)	Proportion of Space (%)
Owned	460	757,978	47.9
Leased	590	583,788	36.9
Maintained	506	239,637	15.2
Total	1,556	1,581,403	

- Additionally, RPD manages 229 land parcels, totaling 615.8 hectares.
- 93 percent of the total space with RPD's real estate portfolio is serviced by CBRE Ltd.

This material will be proactively released

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Budget Summary

- RPD's capital plan directly supports government's Budget 2023 priorities, as follows:
 - capital investments that support the province's priority commitments, such as CleanBC, ministry client programming requirements (e.g. PSSG, MAG), Future Workplace Strategy initiatives.
 - maintaining infrastructure that supports the delivery of critical government services.
 - investments that provide a foundation for the economy, jobs, and communities.
- Operating costs have been managed within the budget to an extremely small difference (under one percent) between the allocated budget and total expenditures.
- Total capital budget changes are outlined in the table on the next page.

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Real Property

(\$millions)	22/23 Budget	23/24 Budget	Change
Nanaimo Correctional Centre	\$80.03	\$60.94	(\$19.09)
Legislative Precinct District Energy System		\$19.00	\$19.00
Strategic Acquisitions of Buildings		\$8.01	\$8.01
TI's for Buildings acquired under Strategic Acquisitions	\$6.69	\$7.92	\$1.23
Energy Smart Program (Clean BC)	\$8.88	\$15.53	\$6.65
Electric Vehicle (ZEV) Charging Stations	\$0.99	\$0.48	(\$0.51)
Courthouse Improvements	\$1.83	\$13.86	\$12.03
Vancouver Law Courts Renovation	\$0.10	\$12.56	\$12.46
Port Coquitlam Law Courts Renovation	\$0.05	\$19.53	\$19.48
BC Corrections Segregation Strategy Renovations	\$14.82	\$2.93	(\$11.89)
BC Corrections Accommodation Strategy	\$6.41	\$8.72	\$2.32
MCFD MYAP - Duncan	\$2.81	\$0.46	(\$2.35)
SDPR Risk Review Related TI's	\$0.72	\$5.59	\$4.86
Camosun Lab Relocation	\$5.82		(\$5.82)
PSSG Land Acquisitions	\$0.80	\$0.68	(\$0.12)
Kamloops Option to Purchase	\$9.95	\$1.55	(\$8.40)
Office Furniture	\$1.67	\$1.50	(\$0.17)
Routine Capital	\$70.40	\$80.35	\$9.94
	\$211.97	\$259.61	\$47.64

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Priority Capital Projects

- Two significant priority capital projects have recently been constructed or are under construction:
 - *Recently constructed: Abbotsford Law Courts (\$152.3 million)*
 - A Public Private Partnership model was used to garner the best value and leverage industry expertise.
 - This project consolidated multiple justice-related program areas into one location and provides the community with easier access to a broad range of services.
 - An emphasis was placed on technological innovation and robust information management and information technology infrastructure.
 - *Under construction: Nanaimo Correctional Centre (\$180.6 million)*
 - A design-build model is being used to leverage design innovation with cost and construction delivery effectiveness.
 - Once complete, the new facility will provide enhanced safety and security services to accommodate remanded individuals from central and northern Vancouver Island.
 - Set in a campus-style environment, the replacement facility will support a more therapeutic and normalized living environment within a culturally responsive design.

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Strategic Acquisitions

Properties acquired in the last five years are outlined in the table below:

2018/2019	Accepted Offer (\$M's)	Transaction Closing Date
North Vancouver 902 W 16th Street	3.79	March 14, 2018
Williams Lake 280A North Third Ave	1.89	March 26, 2019
2019/2020		
Surrey 13545 64th Ave	4.33	February 3, 2020
Vancouver 2810 Grandview Hwy	10.03	February 18, 2020
Prince George 490 Brunswick Street	1.50	March 5, 2020
2020/2021		
Kelowna	2.00	November 30, 2020
West Kelowna	1.40	March 15, 2021
2021/2022		
None		
2022/2023		
Kamloops 447 Columbia Street	9.95	April 18, 2022

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Nanaimo 3960 Biggs Road	.76	December 20, 2022
GRAND TOTAL	35.65	

Enabling Public Service Renewal - Workplaces

- A Future Workplace Strategy (FWS) was developed to modernize government buildings, address 50%+ office vacancy due to a growing uptake in flexible work, and accommodate a more distributed public service workforce throughout British Columbia.
- Regional hiring as a default under “purpose driven flexibility” and a “guided” approach to hybrid work is driving a significant change
- The FWS calls for the consolidation of office space, and investments in additional ShareSpace facilities in strategic urban, suburban, and regional locations.
- Modernizing workspaces to support hybrid work requirements includes limiting dedicated workpoints in favour of establishing up to 70% of space to support mobile employees.
- The resounding success of a ShareSpace pilot in Langford has confirmed the general viability and uptake of ShareSpace to meet targeted government office space requirements based on the following metrics:
 - 60% peak utilization. Industry headquarters locations are seeing less than 17% utilization.
 - A reduction of approximately 7,200 vehicle trips, contributing to CleanBC commitments by decreasing an estimated 65.4 tons of CO2 emissions.

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- 98% of ShareSpace users feel they're productive when they work at these locations.
- The ShareSpace Community Managers welcome on average 30 new users per month.
- A 92% positive rating on office experiences reported through the space booking software used at these locations.

Facilities Management Services

- In 2019, the province entered into a five-year agreement with CBRE Ltd.
- Service commenced under the CBRE agreement in April 2020.
- The CBRE agreement is valued at \$1.069 billion over five years, including management and technician fees, project fees and costs, operations and maintenance costs, and utilities costs.

Stewarding Government Building Assets (including Accessibility)

- A Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) is used to gauge the integrity of the government real estate portfolio.
- The FCA generates a Facility Condition Index (FCI), a metric which highlights the ratio of building needs to a building's total replacement cost that is used to inform short, medium, and long-term investments.
- Investments are prioritized under a Pairwise methodology that considers multiple criteria to evaluate competing investment requirements objectively and equitably.
- In 2022, the aggregate FCI for the building portfolio was 0.55, an increase from 0.53 in 2021.

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- Generally speaking, with current funding levels, we anticipate the portfolio FCI to continue increasing year over year; ideally, this indicator should be decreasing.
- Accessibility is an integral consideration in investment planning and scoping of routine capital projects. Over the past fiscal year and including this upcoming fiscal year, approximately \$20 million has been planned for accessibility improvements.
- Climate action investments under the CleanBC Government Buildings Program in FY 2022/23 amounted to \$8.9 million and an additional \$15.5 million is earmarked for FY 2023/24.
- The accelerated implementation of an Electric Vehicle Charging Station network at government facilities is underway with a target of over 700 stations installed across the Province by the end of 2023/24.

Property Dispositions

- Real estate that is surplus to government needs is sold at best value to generate revenue for the province.
- Gains from the previous seven years include:

Year	Gains
2022/23	\$27.4 million
2021/22	\$46.7 million
2020/21	\$39.4 million
2019/20	\$42.3 million
2018/19	\$26.7 million
2017/18	\$45.8 million
2016/17	\$61.7 million

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- Forecasted net proceeds for the next three years are:

Year	Proceeds
2023/24	Government Financial Information
2024/25	
2025/26	

Contact:
Sunny Dhaliwal Assistant Deputy Minister Real Property Division 250 380-8311

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Nanaimo Correctional Centre Project

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Key Messages:

- I'm happy to see the Nanaimo Correctional Centre replacement project move forward.
- The new correctional centre will have modern spaces for education and vocational training, rehabilitative programs, and specialized areas for food services, health care and working with those with complex mental health and other needs.
- This project also brings major economic benefits to the region, including 1,000 direct and indirect jobs.
- Construction is underway and project completion is anticipated for 2024.

If asked about the procurement process:

- Stuart Olson Construction Ltd. was awarded the contract following a competitive process where the company met all the requirements of our Request for Proposals.
- All phases of the procurement were competitive, open, and fair, including the Requests for Qualifications and Request for Proposals.

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If asked about community consultation:

- The project team consulted with the City of Nanaimo and the Snuneymuxw [Snah-nay-mo] and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations, as well as a host of others with interest in the facility.
- Stakeholder engagement will continue throughout the redevelopment of the Nanaimo Correctional Centre.

Questions and Answers:

- 1) **What is the total project cost and how much of that is related to construction?**
 - Construction makes up \$169 million of the total project cost of \$181 million.
- 2) **What are some of the major improvements of the new facility compared to the old one?**
 - The new facility maintains the capacity of the current centre and adds a new 12-room unit, for short-term custody for women from Vancouver Island.
 - The new facility also includes a wider range of security levels to accommodate individuals from central and northern Vancouver Island who are being held on remand while awaiting a court appearance.
 - Safety and security are enhanced through purpose-built and modernized spaces for educational, vocational,

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certified trades and rehabilitative programming. In addition, specialized areas are provided for food services and health care, and for working with those with complex mental health and other needs.

- Through collaboration with the Snuneymuxw [Snah-nay-mo] and Snaw-Naw-As First Nations on related programming and design elements, the new facility also provides a more therapeutic and normalized living environment along with culturally responsive programming and spaces.

3) What are the benefits of a correctional centre looking more like a college campus, than a traditional prison facility?

- A campus-style facility allows each space to be purpose-built to offer unique and tailored programming to individuals with various security clearances (open, medium and secure/remanded).
- The design of the centre will also support a more therapeutic and normalized living environment.

Contact:

Sunny Dhaliwal	Assistant Deputy Minister	Real Property Division	250-380-8311
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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Modernization of Government Offices – Hybrid Work Model

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Key Messages:

- The uptake in remote working due to the global pandemic, along with continued advancements in technology, has created opportunity for workplace transformation.
- While the BC Public Service (BCPS) has been evolving over the last decade with the adoption of Leading Workplace Strategies (LWS) and an increasingly mobile workforce supported by new tools, this moment with remote work uptake, can be further leveraged to create new flexible modern workplaces that support an engaged and productive workforce, and we are planning to do the same by modernizing our offices to meet the requirement of a hybrid workforce, create more capacity in our regional offices and right-size our portfolio.
- A “hybrid workplace model” that provides employees with a choice of work location and flexible office workplaces has become the new normal in large organizations, and offering remote & hybrid working is becoming critical to attracting and retaining talent.
- A newly endorsed Hybrid Workplace Strategy, developed by my Ministry, aims to address the changes required in our

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workplace model and support the evolving function of the future workplace.

- **The primary focus of this new Hybrid Workplace Strategy is not only to support the way work has changed for the BCPS, but being more adaptable to new ways of working into the future.**
- **The primary goals of the Hybrid Workplace Strategy are to:**
 - **Upgrade and modernize our workspaces to better support a hybrid workforce**
 - **Modernize and consolidate space in across the province.**
 - **Create new alternative shared coworking hubs in urban, suburban and regional areas where our employees live.**
 - **Implement workspace booking software.**
- **There are many benefits of shifting to this new model for the BCPS, including:**
 - **Firmly positions the BCPS as a modern, competitive employer**
 - **Supports employee attraction and retention.**
 - **Decentralizes and effectively supports more remote work allowing for regional hiring of a distributed workforce**
 - **Supports other government priorities including regional housing affordability and reduced GHG emissions.**

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- **My Ministry is currently working on a comprehensive implementation plan for rollout of this strategy under an accelerated timeline.**
- **The strategy will deliver on citizens' high expectations of the public service while maintaining or improving productivity and engagement and will take into consideration the best interest of employees and BC taxpayers, ensuring a continued focus on delivery of services to our citizens.**

Questions and Answers:

1. Why are you not actively reducing your lease portfolio?

- We are quickly mobilizing to consolidate and modernize 21 office locations in 9 communities across the province in the short-term. At the same time, we are also consolidating some offices without major investments to improve the utilization of these existing spaces.

- Government Financial Information

- We are also actively partnering with ministries to re-evaluate workspace requirements under a new hybrid model and identify additional opportunities across the province to consolidate and modernize the real estate portfolio.

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2. Will there be savings to government with this change?

- While long-term lease savings will result, an initial capital investment will be required to change office layouts to better support hybrid work, ensure that the workplace is well utilized, and support the activities of employees and teams when they are at the workplace.
- Yes, there will be savings to the government on account of a reduced portfolio.
- Government Financial Information
-

3. How is your ministry facilitating remote work with supportive technologies?

- With widespread adoption of mobile devices and technology, we have demonstrated government's ability to adapt to remote work with minimal impact. With these tools and secure Virtual Private Network (VPN) connections ministry staff can access government's network and conduct their business.
- With the successful adoption of MS Teams to keep government connected, further IT tools will need to be

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developed or procured to support future work methods including additional collaborative tools that support teams with a distributed model.

- As part of the Hybrid Workplace Strategy, we will several new workspace management technologies across the BCPS that will help facilitate higher utilization of our spaces and a better user experience for staff when working at the office. These include items such as a corporate workspace booking, occupancy sensor technology and centralized access controls.

4. What other factors led to the decision to move forward with Hybrid Work Model now?

- This is a policy decision for the PSA refer the question to that Minister.
- If pressed:
 - The positive effect on employee attraction and retention.
 - The significant opportunities to realize carbon and financial savings and provide economic support for rural and remote locations of BC through regional hiring.

5. What are you doing with vacant space?

- We are actively working on a number of projects with the aim of modernizing and consolidating our office portfolio.

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- Our aim is to maximize space utilization and also provide flexible work options for our employees.
- Additionally, we will be modernizing our workplaces to make them more suitable for the hybrid way of working.

Government Financial Information

Contact:

Sunny
Dhaliwal

Assistant Deputy
Minister

Real Property Division 250-380-8311

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: CleanBC Government Buildings Program

Revised: Date of last revision, February 16, 2023

Key Messages:

- The province is working hard to build a low-carbon economy by changing how we live, work and commute, via the CleanBC Plan.
- To support this important work, my ministry launched the CleanBC Government Buildings Program in 2019.
- Under the program, we're working to make government buildings more energy efficient, and we're reducing greenhouse gas emissions through retrofits, innovative building design, and by switching to clean energy sources.
- The CleanBC Government Buildings program has been a catalyst for energy and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction projects across the ministry's building portfolio.
- Under the guidance of this program, we have achieved a 44% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, as compared to 2010 standards and we are on track to achieve the 2030 reduction targets.

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- **Some of our work to date includes:**
 - **Completing the first net-zero energy building of the government portfolio in Williams Lake – an office space for the Ministry of Children and Family Development.**
 - **Installing 200 electric vehicle charging stations at government buildings throughout the province, with many more planned for coming years.**
 - **Implementing energy upgrades at 52 government buildings throughout the province, including lighting, improved heating systems, and better insulation. Examples include:**

Building	City	Building Type	Energy Project
800 Smithe St.	Vancouver	Courthouse	Low carbon heating system
9000 17th St.	Dawson Creek	Office	High efficiency heating system
2000 Ospika Blvd.	Prince George	Office	High efficiency heating system
4780 Roger St.	Port Alberni	Health Centre	Lighting upgrade
3793 Alfred Ave	Smithers	Courthouse	Improved insulation

- **Modernizing the building controls in more than 90 buildings, which allows for optimal energy consumption and reduced energy waste. Examples include:**

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Building	City	Type of Building
205 Industrial Rd.	Cranbrook	Office
640 Borland St.	Williams Lake	Office
1229 Oceanview Dr.	Queen Charlotte	Office
851 16 th St NE	Salmon Arm	Health Unit
583 Fairview Rd	Oliver	Office
2455 Mansfield Dr.	Courtney	Office

- **Completing climate risk assessments at various buildings throughout the province, which will be used to inform future investments.**
- **Developing a three-year Climate Risk Management and Adaptation Program to advance climate adaptation initiatives by building capacity within the ministry, adapting existing business processes to improve climate resilience of the government building portfolio, and planning how to prepare government buildings for climate-change impacts.**

Questions and Answers:

1) Is Citizens' Services on track to achieve the legislated greenhouse gas emissions targets?

- Yes, we are on track to achieve the legislated greenhouse gas emissions targets.

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- The CleanBC Government Buildings Program is driven by the *Climate Change Accountability Act (CCAA)*, which replaced the 2007 *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*.
- CCAA legislates provincial targets of 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2007 levels by 2030, a 60% reduction from 2007 levels by 2040, and an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050.
- The provincial CleanBC plan requires that public-sector buildings achieve a 50% greenhouse gas emissions reduction relative to 2010 by 2030.
- Through the work done under the direction of this program, my Ministry's government buildings have achieved a 44% reduction in GHG emissions for the 2021 reporting year, as compared to 2010 emissions, and are on track to meet the 2030 targets.
- The CleanBC Government Buildings Program uses six pathways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption in government buildings.
- For the 2022 reporting year, emissions are expected to be measured, reported, and published in June 2023 as per the *Climate Change Accountability Act* and the Carbon Neutral Government Regulation.

2) What is the budget associated with the program?

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- In early 2019, CITZ was provided with \$57.5 million over five years (2019/20 to 2023/24) for the CleanBC Government Buildings Program, which formally launched in June 2019.
- Investments are made from a triple bottom line lens to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while also encouraging a lifecycle return on investment and increased occupant comfort.
- The type of projects includes lighting upgrades, Heating Ventilation and Cooling upgrades, building automation system upgrades, and building envelope upgrades, among others.

3) How does your ministry plan and prioritize projects for the CleanBC Government Buildings program?

- My Ministry conducts several energy and greenhouse gas emissions reduction studies every year to assess opportunities across the provincial portfolio to implement energy projects.
- Opportunities are further assessed and prioritized using a triple bottom line perspective.
- Pilot and demonstration projects are also included in the plan to build capacity and knowledge, such as the Net Zero Energy retrofit project in Williams Lake.
- We also work with our client ministries to determine the requirement of investments, such as those required for electrical vehicle charging stations.

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4) How does the ministry plan to spend the CleanBC budget in the future?

- Since the program launch, my ministry has allocated funding to projects such as energy retrofits, electric vehicle charging stations, lighting upgrades, and building automation upgrades, among others.
- Moving forward, we plan to not only continue with such energy upgrades, but also continue to invest in preparing for climate change by conducting climate risk assessments and assessing opportunities for low carbon energy use at provincial buildings.

5) How many electric vehicle charging stations has CITZ installed?

- Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) are identified as one of the six pathways of the CleanBC Government Buildings Program.
- CITZ is continuing to install charging stations for both government fleet use, as well as for employees and public that visit government buildings.
- Installation of EVCS at CITZ managed buildings began in 2018. Since then, approximately 200 charging stations have been installed at 68 sites. 129 spaces have been designated for employee and visitor use and 71 spaces for fleet vehicles.

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- These charging stations are deployed portfolio wide across CITZ managed portfolio including government offices (41), correctional centres (8), and courthouses (13).

6) How many EVCS does CITZ plan to install in the future?

- Currently, there are 66 employee and visitor stations at 19 sites, as well as an additional 120 fleet charging stations across 43 sites under construction.
- For the upcoming fiscal year, CITZ is planning an additional 80 employee and visitor charging stations across 20 sites and 240 fleet charging stations across 67 sites. Through this work, more than 700 charging stations would have been installed at government buildings by the end of next fiscal year.
- Also, CITZ has secured a new end to end EV charging program with its existing facilities management service providers, to support the annual deployment of hundreds of charging stations in coming years to support government's fleet greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

EVCS Projects	Employee/Visitor	Fleet	Total*
Installed To Date	129	71	200
Projects Underway	66	120	186
Projects Planned for FY23/24	80	240	320
Total			706

*Numbers last updated in Jan 31, 2023

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7) Does CITZ charge EVCS users for utilizing the stations?

- Currently, there is no additional fee to use the charging stations. Users are only charged regular parking rates (if applicable). The ministry reviews this decision annually based on industry developments.

8) What is the budget for the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations program?

- Since the launch of the CleanBC Government Buildings program, CITZ has spent \$3 million on all Electric Vehicle Charging Station projects to date, including assessments, procurement, and installations; or an average of approximately \$15,000 per charging station.
- The demand for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations is assessed annually and ongoing funding is sought based on strategic planning and client demand. For the upcoming year, CITZ has allocated approximately \$3.2 million for installing charging stations.

10) Why was Williams Lake retrofitted to be a net zero energy project?

- When we purchased the building at 280A 3rd Ave North, Williams Lake, B.C., it provided a great opportunity to showcase public sector leadership to demonstrate that government is on the path to fight climate change and support a low carbon economy.

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- The building was designed and built to be net-zero energy by using technologies such as enhanced envelope upgrades, geothermal heating and cooling, and solar photovoltaics.
- Construction for the energy measures began in the fall of 2020 and the project was completed in the fall of 2021.
- This building is sub-metered, so that individual building systems such as lighting, heating, cooling, and solar panels have a dedicated electrical meter. The meters gather real-time power data that will allow us to gain understanding of the effectiveness of the different technologies installed. Learnings from this pilot project will be applied to future projects.

11) What is CITZ doing to make government buildings more resilient to climate change?

- Climate change has major implications for provincial buildings; advancing the resiliency of government buildings will help protect both people and critical public infrastructure during extreme weather events.
- In 2019, Citizens' Services launched the CleanBC Government Buildings Program to support the government's CleanBC goals.
- This program outlines the government's strategy to reduce energy and greenhouse gas emissions from government facilities and one of the pathways of this strategy is Climate Adaptation.

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- Under the Government Buildings Program, we've completed climate risk and vulnerability assessments at more than 50 buildings and more climate risk assessments are underway.
- As well, we're developing a three-year Climate Risk Management and Adaptation Program to advance climate adaptation initiatives by building capacity within the ministry, adapting existing business processes to improve climate resilience of the government building portfolio, and planning how to prepare government buildings for climate-change impacts.
- Part of this work includes the development of a geographic information system (GIS) platform to screen buildings and sites for climate hazards such as floods, extreme heat, wildfire smoke.
- In 2021-22, CITZ also partnered with the B.C. Climate Action Secretariat to develop minimum climate resilience standards, including requirements for new and existing buildings to be applied when systems are being renewed, repaired, or replaced.

Contact:

Sunny Dhaliwal Assistant Deputy Real Property Division 250-380-8311
Minister

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Accessibility

Revised: Date of last revision, February 28, 2023

Key Messages:

- **My ministry is committed to providing universal access, diversity, equity, and inclusiveness in B.C. government buildings.**
- **This includes working with the Parliamentary Secretary for Accessibility to ensure government's digital tools and services are accessible.**
- **In addition, my ministry has developed a Social Stewardship Policy which articulates how social stewardship is reflected in real estate services through programs which support health and safety, accessibility, diversity and inclusion, and Indigenous reconciliation.**
- **We define a barrier as anything that stops people with disabilities from being included. For example, some barriers can stop people from independently accessing buildings or using computer programs; even people's attitudes towards disability can be a barrier.**
- **For the last decade, my ministry has developed a Barrier Free Program – focused on removing barriers to ensure public sector employees and the public have better access to our buildings.**

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- **Part of my ministry's Barrier Free Program also includes efforts to ensure universal and gender-inclusive access to washrooms in government facilities. Public-facing washrooms are being addressed as a priority.**
- **We partnered with the Rick Hansen Foundation to improve building access to a standard beyond the BC Building Code.**
- **The Rick Hansen Foundation assessments have helped inform improvements and changes to guidelines, standards, and investment decisions to improve access to government facilities and enhance services for citizens.**
- **Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification standards are now incorporated in the technical standards the Ministry uses for all new building construction and major retrofits. My team has also created new guidelines for washroom construction to make our spaces more accessible and inclusive for the people who work in and visit our buildings.**

Questions and Answers:

1) What has CITZ done to make government buildings more accessible?

- **My ministry is responsible for advancing health and safety, accessibility, diversity and inclusion, innovation, customer service, and Indigenous reconciliation in government operations. This includes everything from real estate, procurement, IM/IT, and front counter services.**

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- CITZ has been working for many years to make government buildings more inclusive and accessible. Since 2012, my ministry has delivered the Barrier Free Program, which focuses on removing barriers to ensure public sector employees and the public have better access to our buildings.
- POLICY: To strengthen this work, my ministry has created and applies a Social Stewardship Policy to all its work. We endorsed the policy in 2020.
 - This policy formalizes and enables our commitments to advance Social Stewardship in government buildings. It creates structure and oversight to address social stewardship in balance with environmental and financial responsibilities.
- PARTNERSHIP: In 2017, my ministry partnered with the Rick Hansen Foundation so that we could improve building access to a standard beyond the BC Building Code. The Rick Hansen Foundation framework defines meaningful accessibility in buildings in their entirety, not separate elements like doors or washrooms.
 - CITZ conducted Rick Hansen Foundation assessments in 73 government buildings. The assessment results are applied to decision making criteria, investment plans, and guidelines and standards for real estate projects in CITZ.
- PROGRAM: In 2020, my Ministry took the Barrier Free Program one step further and developed the Buildings for People Strategy. It articulates our plan to improve accessibility beyond

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the BC Building Code and align with the *Accessible British Columbia Act* (Accessible BC Act).

- The strategy is based on three pillars: building improvements, developing standards, and verifying performance, and culture change and awareness to support the program goals.
- **ACTIONS:** Together, the Social Stewardship Policy and Buildings for People Strategy structure decision-making around real estate services. Specific outcomes include:
 - Formalizing accessibility as a strategic driver in our investment plan for 2023/2024 (added to the existing building condition driver), enabling the prioritization of accessibility in real estate projects.
 - Collaborating with client ministries to apply Rick Hansen Foundation information and support ministry-specific plans for accessibility and inclusion.
 - Creating guides and strengthening the standards for projects in government buildings, e.g., Real Property Division's Technical Standards, signage guidelines and washroom facilities standards, so that all projects consider accessibility, even if it is not a strategic driver.
 - Creating and applying accessibility evaluation criteria to procure leased and owned spaces.
 - Including access to universal and gender-inclusive washrooms in real estate projects, with public-facing washrooms a priority.

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- **PROJECTS:** Examples of projects completed or underway under the Buildings for People Strategy, include:
 - Wood Innovation and Design Centre in Prince George. We increased signage, installed guardrails, and increased visual contrast for navigation. The building received Accessibility Certified Gold; the highest level of certification available through the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification program.
 - North Vancouver Courthouse. We spent approximately \$1.2 million upgrading washrooms at the North Vancouver Courthouse. Upgrades included one new universal and accessible staff washroom, eight washrooms upgraded to meet accessibility requirements, and relocation of water fountains to more accessible locations for all.
 - 865 Hornby Street in Vancouver. We created a designated area of refuge and installed an evacuation chair for staff and citizens with mobility impairment to evacuate safely in case of emergencies.
 - Victoria Courthouse. Approximately \$1.2 million is being invested in accessibility upgrades, including upgrading the emergency systems (accessible pull stations, audio and visual fire alarms, and smoke detectors), accessible signage, and two accessible and gender-inclusive washrooms – one for staff and one for citizens.

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- Similar accessibility projects and upgrades will also be included when we are doing any major renovations to our buildings.

2) How much has CITZ spent on building infrastructure to support accessibility?

- Since 2012, my ministry has made ongoing investments to improve the accessibility of our buildings in the owned and leased portfolio.
- For the 2023/24 investment plan, \$4.6 million has been allocated to accessibility improvements in government buildings.
- The funding is allocated to building element upgrades such as doors, elevators, and railings (\$1.8 million), washroom upgrades (\$1.7 million), emergency system upgrades (\$815 thousand), and signage and wayfinding (\$325 thousand), aligning with the priority areas outlined in our Buildings for People: Barrier Free Program.
- 76 percent of these improvements will be made in courthouses and correctional facilities.
- Eight single stall universal washrooms will be created with this plan – making the portfolio more inclusive and accessible.
- In 2022/23, my ministry invested approximately \$16.9 million in accessibility, with particular focus on emergency system upgrades (\$8.6 million), washroom upgrades (\$2.4 million), and signage and wayfinding (\$1 million).

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- 55% of this investment was in courthouses and correction facilities.
- 28 single-stall washrooms have been created with this investment.
- Funding for these projects comes from our existing budget.

3) What work is underway in CITZ to support accessibility?

- My ministry has several initiatives underway to support accessibility:
 - The Government Digital Experience Division:
 - has an online Accessibility and Inclusion Toolkit that shows public servants how to create accessible digital content like websites, reports, and presentations.
 - offers digital accessibility audits for things like websites and mobile apps, and offers digital accessibility training for public servants.
 - offers web style guidelines and plain language training to help ministries plan, design and improve their web content with universal access in mind.
 - sets the digital accessibility standard for government websites and online tools to meet industry standard and the internationally recognized guidelines for web accessibility.

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- offers accessible web platforms like gov.bc.ca and engage.gov.bc.ca to all government.
- In the Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Connecting British Columbia program helps pay for infrastructure required to deliver high-speed internet connectivity to rural and remote areas of the province, including supporting digital readiness, for local governments, Indigenous and rural communities.
- Service BC has improved accessibility of the BC Services Card App with Send Video which enables people to verify their identity without making an in-person visit.
- The shift to video provides equitable access to those from urban, rural, or remote areas and means we are better able to accommodate more individuals.
- We now offer additional communication options such as screen readers, text-to-speech, sign language and handwritten responses to assist those who have visual, hearing or speech impairments, and caregivers are able to provide assistance in order to complete the identity verification.
- The Procurement and Supply Division has several initiatives underway. King's Printer can offer Braille Printing for people with visual impairments. The BC Bid Replacement Project ensures public-facing pages are compliant with accessibility standards and guidelines. In addition, our solicitation templates are now using BC

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- The Real Property Division (RPD) has developed the Social Stewardship Policy and Barrier Free Program in cooperation with the Rick Hansen Foundation to remove barriers in government buildings and increase inclusivity.
- RPD continues to grow Social Stewardship work in government buildings with the development of two new programs focusing on Indigenous Reconciliation and Diversity & Inclusion.

4) How do you plan for and prioritize accessibility projects?

- My ministry's Barrier Free Program identifies three pathways to achieve accessibility objectives and move towards the long-term vision of access for everyone to government buildings in B.C.
 - Building Improvements: Using technical standards to ensure inclusive and accessible elements are incorporated from building design to implementation.
 - Standards and Verification of Performance: Partnering with service providers and leaders like the Rick Hansen Foundation to inventory accessibility opportunities.
 - Culture Change: Educating staff and citizens with awareness communications to support the goals of the program such as implementing gender-inclusive washrooms.

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- While all government facilities are compliant with the BC Building Code, there are several examples where government spaces need to go beyond code requirements so that they better meet the accessibility needs of employees and citizens. These include front counter height adjustments, access to gender-inclusive washrooms, and emergency systems that will adequately notify all patrons in case of an emergency evacuation.
- Based on research and a pilot project in partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation where a sample of government buildings were assessed for accessibility, improvement efforts currently focus on the following areas:
 - Washrooms
 - Signage, Wayfinding and Communications
 - Emergency Systems
- My team is developing a methodology to prioritize accessibility projects to ensure a coordinated and defensible approach to improving access to government buildings.
- For the 2023/24 investment plan, \$4.6 million has been allocated to accessibility improvements in government buildings.
- Most of the funding is allocated to building element upgrades such as doors, elevators, and railings (\$1.8 million) and washroom upgrades (\$1.7 million). The remainder is allocated to emergency system upgrades (\$815 thousand) and signage and wayfinding (\$325 thousand), aligning with the priority

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areas outlined in our Buildings for People: Barrier Free Program.

- 76 percent of these improvements will be made in courthouses and correctional facilities.
- Eight single stall universal washrooms will be created with this plan – making the portfolio more inclusive and accessible.
- The money for these projects comes from our existing budget.

5) How are funds used to improve accessibility allocated?

- The funds for accessibility projects come from our existing budget. We advance accessibility across the building portfolio using the routine capital budget and by incorporating accessibility upgrades into existing facility improvement projects.
- We work closely with its primary service provider, CBRE, and Ministry clients to assess the current level of accessibility across the building portfolio and to determine where investments should be made.
- We determine how to allocate our funding to improve accessibility in three ways:
 - ONE - We determine which buildings are a high priority for accessibility investments. We apply prioritization criteria like building function, building condition, and location to make this decision.
 - TWO - We focus on investing in three priority areas identified in the Rick Hansen Foundation assessments.

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These are the elements of our buildings that frequently require the most significant investment to improve accessibility. The priority areas are: Sanitary Facilities (e.g., washrooms, shower or change facilities), Signage and Wayfinding, and Emergency Systems. We include these elements in our building condition assessments.

- THREE – As a project develops, we identify opportunities to improve accessibility outcomes within the existing budget and project scope. We also direct project partners to apply our building and design standards (e.g., RPD Technical Standards, which incorporate the Rick Hansen method to determine meaningful accessibility, Sanitary Facilities Guidelines, design guidelines for signage). We ensure project managers implement our priorities.

6) How much will this work cost? No budget has been allocated for this work. How does the government plan to fund this work?

- My ministry recognizes the importance of accessible government services; while efforts are made to ensure a baseline of accessibility across our service offerings, it is anticipated that required funding to meet new legislated accessibility requirements will be substantial, in the multi-million-dollar range.
- In alignment with the Accessible BC Act and government's accessibility plan, we will continue to advance prioritized accessibility opportunities across the portfolio within existing budget envelopes, and coordinate with other ministries to seek additional funding to support this work in the years ahead.

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- My ministry will be investing \$4.6 million in accessibility upgrade projects over the 2023/2024 fiscal year.

7) How does the Accessible BC Act impact the Barrier Free Program?

- The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction directs the work associated with the Act via the Accessibility Directorate. The Act is expected to set an even higher standard for public buildings. Government's accessibility plan will assist with the delivery of the Barrier Free Program and my ministry will work closely with the Accessibility Directorate to ensure our program reflects and leads the new standards.
- Planning is underway to determine the most efficient and effective way to address areas of improvement identified by the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification pilot across the portfolio. This plan will ensure we are ready to implement additional requirements and targets set by the legislation.
- As outlined in the Accessible BC Act, the Province is committed to the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that hinder the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in society. The Barrier Free Program will be updated every three years until we achieve this success.
- Improving accessibility and inclusivity is an ongoing and continuous process. Working with partners and stakeholders, the Barrier Free Program is an important first step to acknowledge the rights of every British Columbian to have an

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equitable, welcoming, and safe experience when they work in or visit a government building.

- The Social Stewardship Policy and the Barrier Free Program will be updated to align with government's accessibility plan to implement standards set out by the legislation and ensure we are on track to be a truly accessible and inclusive province.

Contact:

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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Asset Management - Phase 1 Audit

Revised: February 6, 2023

Key Messages:

- The Internal Audit and Advisory Services branch, within the Ministry of Finance, is conducting a multi-phase audit focused on physical security and the safeguarding of cash across government.
- Service BC was selected for Phase 1 of the audit given its large geographically dispersed operations.
- Overall, the audit found that Service BC has well established policies and procedures that align with Government's Core Policy and Procedures and other relevant standards.
- Audit recommendations focused on further strengthening existing controls.
- The audit did not identify any significant deficiencies or areas of non-compliance.

Questions and Answers:

1) What were the results of the audit?

- Overall, it was concluded that Service BC has a comprehensive control framework around physical security and cash management.

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- The recommendations focused on opportunities to further strengthen existing controls none of which were deemed as significant deficiencies.

2) What are the next steps in the audit process?

- A detailed action plan has been developed to further strengthen existing controls.

3) Why was an audit conducted? Were there any concerns that drove the decision?

- This audit was part of a larger multi-phase audit focused on physical security and the safeguarding of cash across government.
- The objectives were to assess the policy, procedures, and internal controls of Service BC as they relate to cash management and physical security at regional offices.

4) How many offices were reviewed?

- Five of the sixty-five offices were reviewed, the observations and recommendations are being considered for all Service BC locations.

Contact:

Keith Parker Executive Director Service BC 250-217-1807

REPORT ON:

Asset Management – Phase 1

IAAS | INTERNAL AUDIT &
ADVISORY SERVICES



Ministry of
Finance

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Executive Summary and Overall Conclusion

The Government of British Columbia (Province or Government) owns assets in excess of \$100 billion, including financial assets such as public monies, accounts receivable and inventories, as well as capital assets. Each ministry is responsible for effectively managing the assets under its custody or control through robust administration, accounting, and protection measures.

Internal Audit & Advisory Services (IAAS), Ministry of Finance, is conducting a multi-phase audit of asset management practices across government. Service BC Division (Service BC or Division), within the Ministry of Citizens' Services was selected for Phase I of this audit.

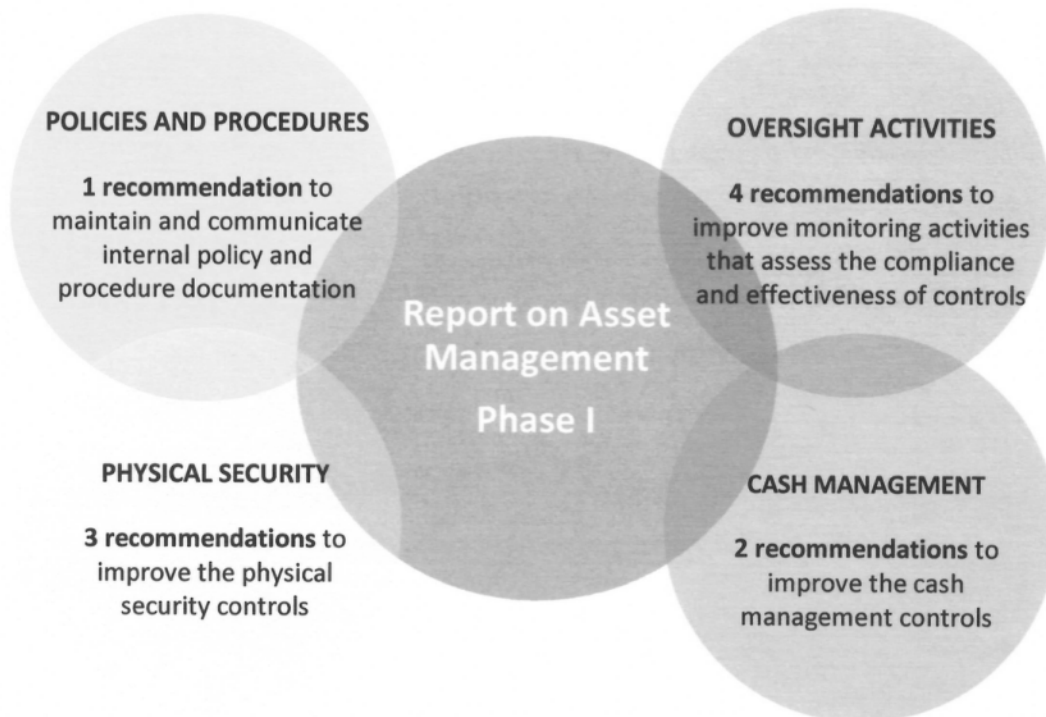
Service BC provides front line support for many programs and services such as paying property taxes, obtaining a marriage certificate, or collecting disability assistance. Services are provided via multiple channels, including online, over the phone, or in-person. There are 65 Service BC centres (or offices) throughout British Columbia where over one million transactions are conducted annually.

IAAS performed this audit to assess the policies, procedures, and internal controls of Service BC as they relate to cash management and physical security at regional offices. We selected five of Service BC's centres for our audit.

Overall, we found that Service BC has well established policies and procedures that align with Government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual, and other relevant standards. Our audit did not identify any significant deficiencies or areas of non-compliance.

In the offices we visited, most of the processes and controls for cash management and physical security were implemented and operating effectively. However, we did identify instances where current practices did not follow Government or Service BC's internal policy. Additionally, there were instances where we identified opportunities to strengthen existing controls to better align with good practice.

Key themes and recommendations of the Report on Asset Management – Phase I



While this review focused on a selection of Service BC centres, the applicability of observations and recommendations in this report should be considered by all Service BC centres. Where gaps in processes or controls are noted, centres should consider making improvements based on their offices' specific operational circumstances.

Future phases of this audit may focus on the cash management and physical security practices of other government organizations.

* * *

We would like to thank the management and staff of Service BC, who participated in and contributed to this audit, for their cooperation and assistance.

Alex Kortum, CPA, CA
Executive Director
Internal Audit & Advisory Services
Ministry of Finance

Introduction

Asset management is the process of creating, managing and sustaining assets in an effective and cost-efficient manner. For the Government of British Columbia (Province of Government), this requires each ministry to establish appropriate safeguards based on asset value and susceptibility to loss.

Many government offices handle cash as part of the services they provide to the public. Cash is an inherently high-risk asset due to its susceptibility to loss, including theft. Therefore, entities handling cash must have sufficient **internal controls** in place to mitigate these risks as part of their overall asset management practices. Internal controls for these offices may include specific cash management processes such as dividing work duties among different people to reduce the risk of error or inappropriate actions. There are also physical security controls expected in offices, related to appropriate facility design and management, to reduce exposure to accidental losses, malicious threats, and criminal acts.

Internal Controls are processes put into place by management to help an organization operate efficiently and effectively to achieve its objectives.

Government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual (CPPM) sets out broad policy principles for asset management and physical security which is supported by operational standards and guidelines. Each ministry and its staff are responsible to ensure these policies and standards are being followed.

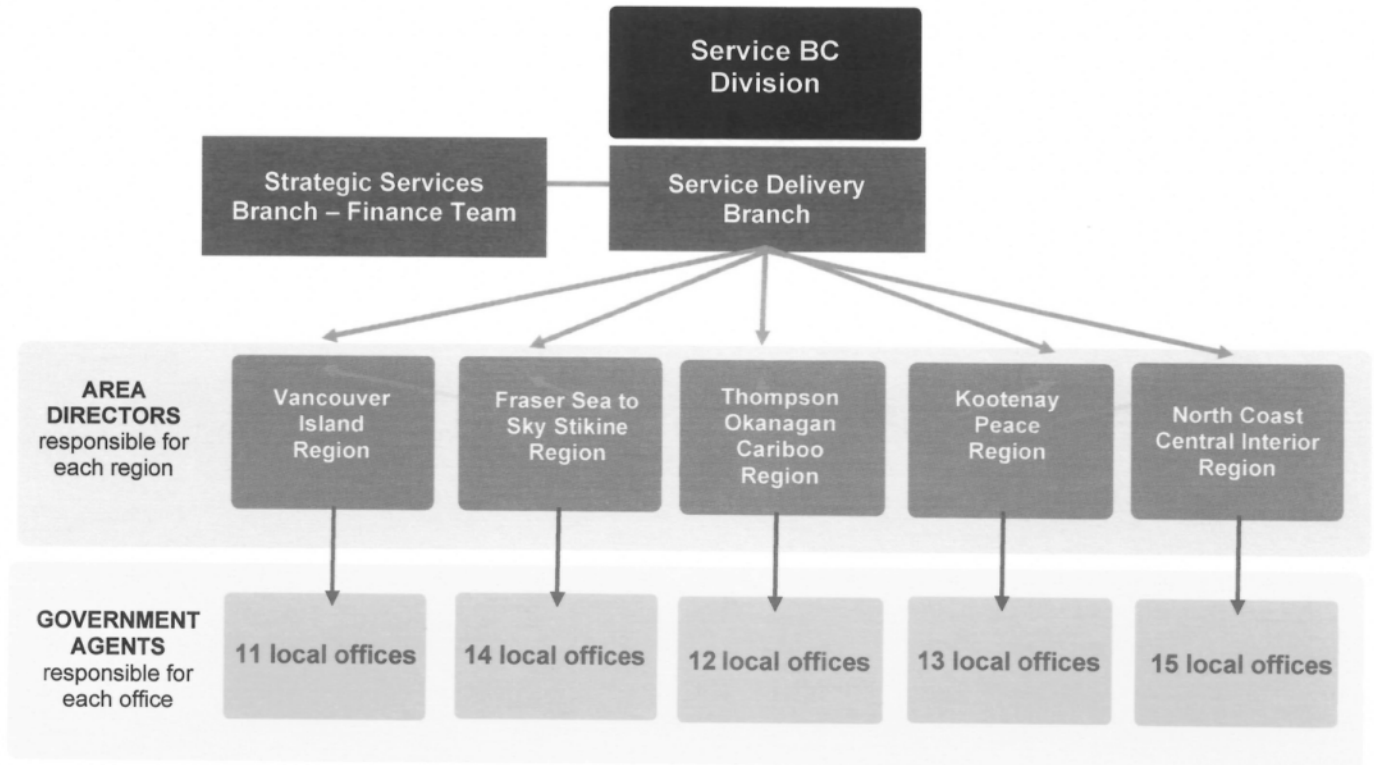
Service BC Division

Service BC Division (Service BC or Division), within the Ministry of Citizens' Services, is the Government's primary provider of services to people and businesses in British Columbia via multiple channels, including online, over the phone and in-person. While the Division is comprised of several branches, this audit focused on the activities of the Service Delivery Branch and the Strategic Services Branch's Finance Team.

The Service Delivery Branch is a team of over 400 employees, responsible for providing British Columbians access to over 300 government services on behalf of more than 40 ministries and agencies through a provincial network of 65 in-person Service BC centres (or offices). Centres collect payments on behalf of other government organizations for fees such as property taxes, marriage, hunting or driver's licenses, among many others.

As shown in Figure 1 below, each of the centres is managed by a Government Agent who is responsible for the operation of the office. Area Directors provide high-level oversight for all the offices in their region. In addition, the Division's central Finance Team provides overall governance and administrative support to the centres.

Figure 1: The Organizational Structure of Service BC Division



Source: IAAS, adapted from Service BC data

Purpose, Scope and Approach

Internal Audit & Advisory Services (IAAS) is conducting a multi-phase project to audit select asset management practices across Government. Service BC was selected for Phase I of this audit.

The purpose of our work was to determine whether Service BC has appropriate cash management and physical security controls in place to safeguard its assets. We evaluated the Division's compliance with relevant policies and standards and identified areas for improvement.

Our audit approach involved:

- reviewing government and entity-specific policies, standards and procedures;
- site visits for five of the 65 Service BC centres to interview staff and perform walkthroughs of processes and related internal controls; and
- testing a sample of internal controls.

This audit was conducted by IAAS, Ministry of Finance and fieldwork was completed in March 2022.

Service BC is required to develop and submit an action plan in response to the recommendations provided, including the timeframe for implementation. IAAS will conduct an annual follow-up process to assess Service BC's progress to address its action plan in response to the recommendations given.

1.0 Policy Administration

Government creates frameworks of policies and procedures to support the activities of ministries and organizations. Clear, principle-based policy supports government in carrying out its service objectives, contributes to effective management and assists staff in making sound decisions. Effective communication of policy sets clear expectations, creates consistency throughout the organization, and reduces organizational risk.

Service BC has established the Government Agents Revenue Policies and Procedures (GARPP) which outlines policies and procedures as they relate to revenue and cash management within Service BC Centres, in addition to aspects of office security. The GARPP is intended to reflect the underlying principles of the CPPM.

1.1 Service BC Policies and Procedures

We reviewed the GARPP to determine whether it aligns with the CPPM and assess how it is maintained and communicated to staff. Overall, we found that the content within the GARPP and the CPPM is generally consistent. However, we did identify opportunities for more effective policy management of the GARPP.

During our review of the GARPP, we noted that it outlines detailed guidance for staff to facilitate understanding and encourage adherence to policies and procedures. Service BC has also provided additional support for staff through embedding links in the GARPP for various templates, job aids, internal webpages and other relevant policies and procedures.

In some instances, we found that:

- templates were outdated;
- reference documents could not be accessed due to broken links; and
- templates did not align with the policy requirements stated within the GARPP.

These could lead to centres following inconsistent or incorrect policies and practices. To help prevent this, the GARPP, including any embedded links, should be reviewed annually for accuracy and consistency, and updated when appropriate.

Effectively notifying staff of policy changes is an important administrative practice—methods of communication may include email, intranet, and discussion. We found that Service BC typically notifies Government Agents of changes to the GARPP through verbal communication at meetings. While this is good practice as it allows for questions and open dialogue, it creates a risk that some staff may be unaware of changes and therefore may be following incorrect or outdated practices. Moreover, Government Agents we interviewed were unclear about recent GARPP updates. To enhance their communication practices, Service BC should supplement their verbal updates with written communication.

Furthermore, to support awareness of changes and reinforce their importance, Service BC should track and document policy updates within the GARPP. This could be accomplished through adding an amendments page to the GARPP that identifies policy changes and the date of revisions.

Recommendations:

(1) Service BC should:

- periodically review the GARPP to ensure it is up to date;
 - notify staff of policy updates through written communication; and
 - create a formal record and timeline of policy updates within the GARPP.
-

2.0 Cash Management

Safeguarding cash is important to reduce the risk of theft, loss and misappropriation of funds. Entities that process cash payments must have sufficient internal controls in place to reduce this risk.

Service BC centres handle cash daily. While the amount of cash processed in the centres has declined in recent years due to increased use of electronic payment methods, there is still a considerable amount of cash handled in the offices, particularly during the annual property tax season.

2.1 Cash Management Practices

We reviewed the cash management activities for five of Service BC's 65 offices¹ for 2021. Using the GARPP standards, we selected and evaluated several cash management controls.

Our sample testing focused on the effectiveness of controls in the following key areas:



Cash administration processes: Cash is properly handled, tracked, deposited, and recorded, with accountability for each step.



Segregation of duties: The physical custody of cash, the record keeping, and the authorization to acquire or dispose of cash is split among different people.



Dual custody of cash: Two individuals perform a task together, such as counting the daily collected cash amount, where applicable.



Cash security measures: Steps are taken to protect cash such as requiring a lockbox and transferring cash to a secure place at the end of day.

In small offices, it may not always be possible to ensure controls such as dual custody of cash and segregation of duties. The GARPP provides flexibility in these cases, permitting offices to vary procedures slightly for feasibility and operational effectiveness. In these cases, the GARPP requires compensating measures, such as a greater degree of presence by the Government Agent.

¹ While the Service BC internal policy establishes the operational controls for its centres, the application of policy can vary by location. As a result, our observations for the five sampled offices may not be representative and applicable to all Service BC centres.

Overall, we found that most of the processes and controls for cash management were implemented and operating effectively. In particular, Service BC's controls around the processing and refunding of cash as part of customer transactions and payments were found to be effective.

We did identify instances where current practices did not follow the GARPP. However, due the overall strength of Service BC's control framework and other compensating measures, these instances were not deemed significant deficiencies.

Our audit also identified opportunities for Service BC to strengthen its cash management activities to better align with good practices.

Accountable Advances

Cashiers are provided a nominal amount of money (a "float") for processing transactions, collecting money from customers, and providing change.

Floats are classified more broadly as **accountable advances**. Per the GARPP, these funds must be periodically verified through unannounced counts to confirm there are no discrepancies. We noted instances in two offices where the surprise cash count was not completed as required.

Accountable advances
Accountable advances are funds issued temporarily, including petty cash and cashier floats, to facilitate operational requirements.

To maintain accountability for these funds, each float is assigned directly to a cashier who is responsible for maintaining the appropriate float balance for the duration of their employment. When staff leave the centre for either a short duration or permanently, the GARPP outlines steps for floats to be formally transferred to another employee. We found that float transfer procedures were generally completed as expected for these types of leaves.



GOOD PRACTICE

- In addition to short duration or permanent leaves, Service BC centres should complete float transfers for extended leaves, such as temporary assignments and long-term disability.
- In one office, we observed that float transfers were not completed for extended leaves. As a result, floats were not recorded in the correct staff members' names. Consistently following this practice for all types of leave will help maintain accurate records of floats and ensure accountability.

Periodically, staff need to make change for floats to ensure they contain varied denominations. To align with the practice of dual custody, a second person should review this process to reduce the risk of error or misappropriation. While we found that staff usually ensure there is a secondary review, we noted in three offices that head cashiers make change for floats on their own.

Cash Outs

Service BC centre staff must complete a daily cash out process to reconcile cash, debit, and credit transactions. This is a typical business process which properly accounts for all transactions and helps avoid discrepancies.

The GARPP requires that all cash outs are verified by a second person to ensure segregation of duties, and to reduce the risk of undetected mistakes or misappropriation. In most of the cash outs that we sampled, this control was effective. However, we observed instances in three offices where the head cashier's cash out did not receive a secondary review.



GOOD PRACTICE

- When staff conduct their cash outs, the process includes counting all the cash in their register. In one centre, we observed that cash outs are done at workstations, while the centre is open to the public. While staff made efforts to be discrete, cash outs should be done in an area not visible to the public, to minimize risk of theft.

Bank Deposits

Service BC centre staff must prepare daily bank deposits. The GARPP requires that all deposits are placed in a locked safe until taken to the bank to reduce the risk of theft or misappropriation. In most offices, we found that deposits were safely secured in lock boxes or safes within a vault room. Staff require access to this room during the day, so it is open during business hours and locked in the evening. We observed instances in one office where deposits were not appropriately secured within a lock box or safe in the vault room, creating unnecessary risk.

The GARPP requires that offices record serial numbers for a selection of bills ("bait bills") for all floats and every deposit involving cash. This practice is important as it allows money to be traced in the event of theft. While we found that all the sampled cashier floats contained bait bills, we observed instances in two offices where bait bills were not used for all bank deposits.

Government Agents should conduct a monthly review of bank deposits to verify they were completed properly and ensure discrepancies are identified in a timely manner. We found that the monthly review was not completed consistently in three offices, as required by the GARPP.



GOOD PRACTICE

- For many Service BC centres, staff make bank deposits in-person. However, if bank deposits are placed in the financial institution's overnight box, it takes a few days for the bank to process and confirm the deposit. This creates a risk that discrepancies may not be promptly identified. To mitigate risk, high dollar value deposits should be made during regular business hours.
- After bank deposits are completed, they should be verified by a second individual to align with the segregation of duties principle. In two offices, we found that bank deposits were verified by the same individual who delivered the deposit. While not inconsistent with policy, this is an opportunity to enhance Service BC processes.

Each Service BC centre should review our observations and compare them to their current processes and controls. Where gaps are noted, centres should consider making improvements, based on their offices' specific operational circumstances. As described in Section 4, Service BC's Area Directors and Finance team also conduct annual compliance reviews. The results from this audit can help determine potential areas of focus for future compliance reviews.

Recommendations:

- (2) Service BC should ensure that centres' day-to-day cash management processes follow GARPP requirements to manage risks and maintain a high standard of financial control and operational efficiency.
 - (3) Service BC should require centres to review, and where applicable, implement the following good practices to enhance their cash management processes:
 - cash out activities should not be visible to the public;
 - high dollar value bank deposits should be made during regular bank hours (if done in-person); and
 - bank deposits should be reviewed by a second individual.
-

3.0 Physical Security

Security is a continuous and integrated process that uses layered defences to help protect government assets. Physical security includes the external and internal environment of facilities, coupled with specific physical safeguards that detect and protect against unauthorized access.

Ministries are responsible for creating a comprehensive security program in accordance with the CPPM and other operational standards and guidelines. There is a collection of government security standards² available to guide ministries with the development of their programs. In addition, Service BC has developed specific physical security expectations for its centres in the GARPP.

3.1 Compliance with Physical Security Standards

Using the government and GARPP standards, we selected key physical security controls (or features) and evaluated whether centres met the stated expectations.

We tested whether Service BC centres had, for example:



building intrusion alarm systems



panic alarm systems for staff to signal for help without drawing attention



secure areas that are appropriately protected from unauthorized entry



processes for managing keys, alarm codes and safe combinations

Overall, the offices we visited met the minimum physical security requirements for the areas tested. For instance, all offices had installed panic and intrusion alarms and maintained a security log that records employee access to keys, and alarm codes.

We only noted one area where some offices did not align with a physical security requirement in the GARPP. Specifically, policy requires keys to entrance and exits, secure storage, and cashier drawers to be stamped "do not copy". This feature is designed to help prevent inappropriate copying of keys that could potentially lead to unauthorized access to buildings. While a relatively minor detail, centres should ensure this safeguard is in place. Alternatively, replacing keys with access cards is an additional step that Service BC should consider to better align with good practices.

² Physical and Environmental Security Standard; Physical Security Standards (Ministry of Citizens' Services); Security Standards and Guidelines (Ministry of Finance)

3.2 Enhancing Physical Security Processes

While we found Service BC generally compliant with the standards we tested, our review identified opportunities for the Division to enhance its physical security administration practices, as well as strengthen security features at some regional offices.

Physical Security Administration

Updating security contacts: We found that Service BC has not established a process for updating authorized contacts in the event of an alarm activation. The Division uses a third-party provider to support and respond to the activation of an intrusion or panic alarm. In two instances, we noted that the provider did not have an up to date listing of authorized contacts. As a result, we were advised that office staff were not able to nullify an accidental alarm trip. This also presents the risk that past employees may still be authorized to respond and potentially cancel valid security alarms.

Service BC should establish a policy on when contact information is required to be updated. For example, outgoing employees should be removed by their last day with the centre, while new employees should be added within a specified number of days after their start date. This policy and the process to update information should be included in the GARPP. Furthermore, Service BC should assess whether the third-party provider can support compliance with any specific timeline requirements it establishes in policy.

Training: When assessing the knowledge and training of Government Agents, we found that they are generally well-informed about physical security policies and their roles and responsibilities. However, the onboarding program does not include detailed training on the particular security features of the office under their responsibility, such as their centre's security system. This may result in security features not operating effectively or being adequately maintained. Government Agents should receive training on any security features relevant to their office and role during their onboarding program.

Enhancing Physical Security

While the Service BC centres we visited met government's broad physical security requirements, there are opportunities for enhancement.

Service BC centres have different risk profiles based on their unique location, layout and security features. For example, some centres are remotely located within older standalone buildings that use standard keys and locks, while other centres are in larger cities within modern buildings that use access passes and have building security staff.

The Division manages individual centres' security concerns on an ongoing basis through service requests and according to budget availability. Service BC is currently planning improvements to 16 locations over the next two years.

In the offices we visited, we identified features that could be added or improved during facility improvements to reduce the physical security risk, including:

- replacing the low-height "pony" gates that separate staff and customer spaces with secured access doors;
- ensuring that client and employee zones are separated when centres provide exam oversight services for the public; and
- pursuing options for video surveillance at higher risk locations.

Potential facility improvements should be assessed collectively across all offices as part of Service BC's process, with upgrades made based on budget availability and the specific risks and priorities for each centre and the Service BC organization.

Recommendations:

- (4) Service BC should include policies and procedures in the GARPP for maintaining and updating authorized contacts in the event of alarm activations.
 - (5) Service BC should ensure that Government Agents receive training on core security features as part of onboarding.
 - (6) Service BC should collectively review its service centres' security features for gaps and address areas of improvement based on risk and available budget.
-

4.0 Oversight Activities

Monitoring operations across the Service BC centres helps to ensure staff understand and adhere to current policies and procedures. Providing regular and consistent oversight also allows the Division to assess whether controls are being effectively implemented.

4.1 Annual monitoring and review process

We audited Service BC's internal review activities to evaluate their monitoring controls as they relate to cash management and physical security. We found that Service BC has established a multi-level monitoring and review approach where oversight is provided by the office Government Agents, the regional Area Directors and the Division's central Finance Team.

Government Agents are required to complete periodic reviews of their operations and controls in their offices. This results in daily, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual review activities.

Area Directors complete an annual financial control compliance review of each centre within their designated region. This activity includes an office visit to review the financial and security controls, discuss operations and corporate initiatives, and spot check compliance with GARPP.



Annual financial control compliance review is a good practice that Service BC implemented resulting from a 2006 IAAS audit recommendation.

To provide an additional independent review, the Finance Team completes its own compliance reviews for six offices per year. Due to the size of the Service BC Finance Team and the number of offices, it takes an average of 10 years for Service BC Finance to review each centre. To help improve the timeliness of secondary reviews, there is an opportunity for Service BC to have Area Directors complete financial control compliance reviews for a select number of centres outside their region. Alternatively, Area Directors could conduct quality assurance checks on a selection of compliance reviews for other offices to ensure completeness and accuracy. These reciprocal reviews can also allow for increased idea-sharing between offices and regions around good operational practices.

We also found that some of the annual compliance reviews were not completed in recent years, partly due to disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We were informed that these reviews have resumed and were underway during this audit.

Review Checklist

The annual compliance reviews are completed using a checklist template with the intention of promoting uniformity in the annual review process. However, in some cases the template procedures are not sufficiently detailed to adequately guide the reviewer. For example, when confirming whether controls are in place, there are not clear instructions whether the reviewer should collect documentary evidence or whether visual or verbal confirmation is adequate. This can lead to inconsistency in office reviews or instances where the reviewer may not have gathered enough information to confirm compliance.

To strengthen the quality of the review process, Service BC should specify the procedures required to verify compliance with each item in the checklist. This may include inquiry, observation, and inspection through sample testing.

Voided Transactions

As part of their monthly process, Government Agents review voided transactions in their office to identify errors, anomalies, and indication of fraud. However, Service BC does not conduct broader analysis across all its offices. As a result, the Division may not identify broader issues or opportunities for improvement such as the need for training, or operational inefficiencies.

Service BC can improve its current process by having its Finance Team conduct analysis over voided transactions as part of its annual process. Examples can include void analysis by reason, employee, office or the type of service and transaction. Any trends can be followed up on at a staff, centre, regional or organizational level, as appropriate.

Accountable Advances

As noted in Section 2.1, it is important for accountable advances to be accurately recorded in the correct staff members' names. If accurate records are not maintained, this could limit accountability and the ability to recover missing funds.

In addition, we found that centres do not currently review float custody as part of their annual or semi-annual processes. To help support accurate record keeping and appropriate custody of funds, Service BC centres should periodically review their accountable advances to ensure they are accurate and resolve any discrepancies, as necessary.

Recommendations:

- (7) Service BC should adopt a reciprocal review process between Area Directors as part of the annual compliance review process.
 - (8) Service BC should ensure that the annual compliance review checklists require specific, risk-based procedures to verify compliance.
 - (9) Service BC Finance Team should conduct periodic analyses of voided transactions to identify trends or anomalies and provide recommendations for Area Directors to follow up.
 - (10) Service BC should require centres to periodically review their accountable advances for accuracy.
-

Appendix A - Summary of Recommendations

1	<p>Service BC should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> periodically review the GARPP to ensure it is up to date; notify staff of policy updates through written communication; and create a formal record and timeline of policy updates within the GARPP.
2	Service BC should ensure that centres' day-to-day cash management processes follow the GARPP requirements to manage risks and maintain a high standard of financial control and operational efficiency.
3	<p>Service BC should require centres to review, and where applicable, implement the following good practices to enhance their cash management processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cash out activities should not be visible to the public; high dollar value bank deposits should be made during regular bank hours (if done in person); and bank deposits should be reviewed by a second individual.
4	Service BC should include policies and procedures in the GARPP for maintaining and updating authorized contacts in the event of alarm activations.
5	Service BC should ensure that Government Agents receive training on core security features as part of onboarding.
6	Service BC should collectively review its service centres' security features for gaps and address areas of improvement based on risk and available budget.
7	Service BC should adopt a reciprocal review process between Area Directors as part of the annual compliance review process.
8	Service BC should ensure that the annual compliance review checklists include specific, risk-based procedures to verify compliance.
9	Service BC Finance Team should conduct periodic analyses of voided transactions to identify trends or anomalies and provide recommendations for Area Directors to follow-up.
10	Service BC should require centres to periodically review their accountable advances for accuracy.

Appendix B - Abbreviations

Centre or Division	Service BC Office
CPPM	Core Policy and Procedures Manual
GARPP	Government Agent Revenue Policies and Procedures
IAAS	Internal Audit & Advisory Services
Province or Government	Government of British Columbia

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Cybersecurity of Teleworking

Revised: Date of last revision, February 13, 2023

Key Messages:

- The Office of the Auditor General conducted an audit between June 2021 and January 2022 on telework in government.
- The audit was conducted to determine whether government is effectively managing cybersecurity risks associated with telework.
- The OAG worked closely with the Information Security Branch (ISB) in the OCIO to complete this audit.
- On March 29, 2022, the OAG report was published publicly and the audit findings were overall positive with one recommendation for improvement.
- The audit placed additional emphasis on the OCIO's need for additional technical controls to prevent the use of personal devices accessing internal government systems and data.
- Specifically, the audit recommendation was to implement detective controls to determine the extent of personal telework device use.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- **Government accepted the recommendation and implemented necessary security controls in December 2022.**
- **What I can say is that we take cybersecurity very seriously.**
- **Protection of government data and networks is a top priority for this government, especially where it concerns British Columbians' personal information.**
- **Over \$25 million is spent directly on IT security across government every year.**
- **And our staff of experts have systems to protect our networks that operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including:**
 - **Firewalls**
 - **Intrusion Prevention systems**
 - **Anti-virus software, and**
 - **Vulnerability scanning program**
- **Focus on training and awareness for employees has been a priority over the years and in 2022, government updated the mandatory Privacy, Security and Records Management course to address the "new" telework environment.**

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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Questions and Answers:

1) How many personal devices are being used to access government's network?

- Thousands of personal devices access the government network over different remote access services.
- Personal devices are mainly contractor devices or employees connecting from home to their government managed device in the office.

2) What are you doing to minimize the use of personal devices?

- Rolling refresh of government devices ensures that employees have current technology that meets their work needs.
- New or updated service offerings make it easier to connect and use managed computers from outside of government offices and network securely.
- Some government services are designed to be accessed with personal devices.
- Additional security controls will be implemented to identify personal devices connecting to government services that are not intended to be used with personal devices.

3) How are you responding to the audit?

- OCIO is continuing to implement additional security controls for remote employees such as advanced email

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security and endpoint protection.

- OCIO also implemented strong authentication to improve security while accessing government systems.
- Additional security controls will be implemented to identify personal devices connecting to government services that are not intended to be used with personal devices.

Contact:

Gary Perkins	ED, Information Security Branch	OCIO Enterprise Services	250-387-7590
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2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: IT Asset Management Audit

Revised: Date of last revision, January 13, 2023

Key Messages:

- Protecting government data and networks is a top priority for this government, especially where it concerns British Columbians' personal information.
- Our team of experts have systems to protect our networks that operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including:
 - Firewalls
 - Intrusion Prevention systems
 - anti-virus software, and
 - Vulnerability scanning program.
- It is important for us to be vigilant, as government records hold sensitive information including personal information of our citizens and businesses.

Audit activity/timeline:

- In August 2016, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) announced plans to conduct an audit on Information Technology Asset Management: Cybersecurity Controls.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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- The OAG worked with ministries and OCIO since March 2019 to ensure the report's findings and recommendations are accurate.
- Ministries received preliminary findings and recommendations and responded in May 2020.
- The OAG published the public report on January 19, 2021.
- Government accepted the recommendations in the OAG report.
- Government completed the remediation by December 2021 as planned.

Questions and Answers:

1) Why was government found to have insufficient asset management practices?

- Government has examples of good asset management practices in some areas, with exceptions in some ministries.
- Good practices include keeping up-to-date inventories of devices such as servers, laptops, and mobile phones and having policies and standards for how to manage IT assets.
- Ministries did not consistently have processes documented.

2) Audit results made it appear as though government's asset management practices posed a risk to government networks, systems, and data. What is this government

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

doing to protect its systems and peoples' information?

- Government completed the recommendations in the OAG report by December 2021 as planned.
- Strong asset management practices have been implemented.
- Strong security controls such as encryption to prevent unauthorized access to systems and data are available.

3) When did this government completely fulfill the recommendations in the report?

- Government fulfilled the recommendations in December 2021.
- This required collaboration with all ministries across government.

Contact:

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Services

250-387-7590

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Financial Data Integrity Audit

Revised: Date of last revision, February 14, 2023

Key Messages:

- While this review focused on other selected ministries, the recommendations have relevance across Government.
- I can confirm that adequate controls exist within my ministry to ensure financial data integrity.

Questions and Answers:

1) How does government ensure the integrity of the financial data?

- Government's Core Policy and Procedures Manual provides policy and procedures for financial management. Government ensures financial data integrity by:
 - Aligning ministry financial policies and procedures with Core Policy, and ensuring staff are trained.
 - Ensuring systems and data entry controls are in place, including exercising expense authority before data entry.
 - Using post transaction data review and data reconciliations between systems and variance analysis to identify errors and anomalies.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

2) What are the areas of improvement that are required?

- While this review generally focused on the selected ministries, the recommendations have relevance across Government. This ministry has adequate controls to ensure financial data integrity. To further improve outcomes, the following actions will be maintained/implemented:
 - Ensuring timely updates of financial policy and procedures.
 - Cross training ministry staff on key financial management tasks to avoid knowledge loss during staff turnover.
 - Perform reconciliations of financial data transfer between data sources.
 - Developing a process to have regular communication and collaboration between finance and IT departments to address the potential financial impact of system changes.
 - Maintain and enhance our inventory of financial systems.
 - Note: The Ministries reviewed were: Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (now Forests) ; and Public Safety and Solicitor General.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

3) When is government going to implement all of the improvements?

- While this review generally focused on the selected ministries, the recommendations have relevance across Government. As a result, Citizens' Services will be maintaining and improving its controls over the coming year in line with ministry priorities.

Contact: Government of Canada Assistant Deputy Minister Corporate Services Government Information

REPORT ON:

Financial Data Integrity

IAAS | INTERNAL AUDIT &
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Ministry of
Finance

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Executive Summary and Overall Conclusion

A key component of the Government of British Columbia's (Government or Province) financial management environment is its financial systems. Financial systems process a significant amount of data and are critical to manage government services and produce the Government's Public Accounts.

The Office of the Comptroller General (OCG) is responsible for governance over the Province's financial management environment. It provides strategic direction and guidance in relation to effective frameworks, capacity development, and processes and systems. OCG is responsible for managing the Corporate Financial System (CFS) E-Business Suite which is the single source of truth for government's financial information.

Ministries must ensure their systems, policies and processes align with the Core Policy and Procedures Manual (CPPM). They are responsible for developing their own financial management practice guidance to supplement the CPPM, where applicable, and ensure the overall principles of the CPPM are reflected in their policies and procedures.

Internal Audit & Advisory Services conducted this review to assess the existence and accessibility of ministries' policy and documented procedures, financial management training, controls that cover data integrity (accuracy, completeness, and validity), and consistency of data between systems.

For this review we selected the following ministries: the Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. We found that the selected ministries had robust and comprehensive financial management environments that ensured data integrity. We did not identify any significant deficiencies with the programs and processes we reviewed. Ministries can continue to mature their processes by leveraging good practices identified during our review. OCG plans to engage with the finance community to share and implement these practices government-wide.

This review examined how data integrity are managed during each stage of the data entry and output process:

- **Governing Financial Management Environment** – We considered whether the selected ministries had documented policy and procedures to ensure accuracy, completeness, and validity in the data entry process, data was checked for consistency between systems, and ministry staff received financial management training.

We found that the selected ministries provide their staff with financial management training and had documented policy and procedures that are easily accessible to all staff. These documents are updated when required to address new issues or changes in policy. One selected ministry was working to document their maturing process in a timely manner.

- **Establishing Controls for Financial Data Integrity** – We considered whether the selected ministries had controls to ensure data integrity when transferring financial data into and out of CFS.

We found that both ministries had several controls to ensure data integrity when entering or transferring data into CFS, including reviewing data for accuracy, completeness, and validity, and by performing reconciliations. They were reviewed to confirm consistency of data between CFS and their systems. Areas for improvement focus on conducting more post-transaction data review.

- **Managing Financial Systems** – We considered whether the selected ministries had communication between their finance and Information Technology (IT) departments, and whether an inventory of financial systems exist.

We found one selected ministry had limited communication between their finance and IT departments. This can create a risk that the financial systems may not have appropriate system controls in place or risk the duplication of system and functions. The other selected ministry had regular communication between their two departments allowing for increased awareness of IT changes that could impact financial management activities and controls. Only one of the selected ministries attempted to create an inventory of their financial systems, this was still in progress at the time of the review.

We identified five recommendations and several good practices that the selected ministries should consider for the development and maintenance of their financial management environments. These recommendations provide ministries with areas to improve the maturity of their financial management processes.

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We would like to thank all ministry staff, who participated in and contributed to this review, for their cooperation and assistance.



Alex Kortum, CPA, CA
Executive Director
Internal Audit & Advisory Services
Ministry of Finance

Introduction

A key component of the Government of British Columbia's (Government or Province) financial management environment is its financial systems. Financial systems process a significant amount of data and are critical to manage government services and produce the Province's Public Accounts. The Corporate Financial System (CFS) E-Business Suite is the Government's core financial system.

The Office of the Comptroller General (OCG) is responsible for governance over the Government's financial management environment. It provides strategic direction and guidance in relation to effective frameworks, capacity development, and processes and systems. OCG is also responsible for managing CFS.

The Core Policy and Procedures Manual (CPPM) is a compilation of the Government's financial policies, general management policies and financial administration procedures. It outlines government objectives, standards and directives for sound management and promotes consistent, prudent financial administration, which encompasses the financial management environment. It is a framework of controls to support ministries' financial management activities.

Ministries must ensure their systems, policy and processes align with the CPPM. They are responsible for developing their own financial management policy and procedures to supplement the CPPM where applicable and ensure the overall principles of the CPPM are reflected in their policies and procedures. Financial data contained in CFS is the single source of truth, and outputs from the CFS are utilized for financial and other decision-making purposes. We expect to see robust controls to ensure data going into and coming out of CFS maintains integrity covering accuracy, completeness, validity, and consistency of data between systems or sources of data.

Purpose, Scope and Approach

The purpose of this review was to gain exposure to the ministries' financial governance environment and utilize that understanding to plan future audit projects. Additionally, this review was to assess the:

- existence and accessibility of ministry's policy and documented procedures to cover data integrity and assess how consistently they are followed;
- existence of financial management training; and
- existence of controls to ensure coverage over data integrity of accuracy, completeness, and validity, and ensure data is consistent between systems and sources of data.

We did not assess the performance of CFS system controls nor operating effectiveness of controls at the ministry transactional level.

The following two ministries were selected for having relatively robust and comprehensive financial management policy and processes, and to help identify leverageable good practices applicable across government:

- Ministry of Forest, Lands, Natural Resource Operations & Rural Development; and
- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

Our approach involved inquiry, inspection, observation and reperformance of controls where applicable.

Internal Audit & Advisory Services (IAAS), Ministry of Finance, conducted this review and completed fieldwork in October 2021. We met with each selected ministry to discuss the specific findings of our work. This report consolidates those findings. We require the selected ministries to develop and submit an action plan in response to the recommendations provided in this report, including their timeframe for implementation. We will conduct an annual follow-up to assess each ministry's progress in implementing their action plans.

While this review generally focused on the selected ministries, the recommendations and good practices within have relevance across Government. We therefore encourage other government organizations to review their processes and consider the recommendations identified in this report.

1.0 Governing Financial Management Environment

Ministries are expected to establish their own financial management policy and procedures tailored to their environment to ensure compliance with the CPPM and promote efficient financial management practices.

The following CPPM chapters provide principles to ministries on financial management:

- The CPPM Chapter 2 and 3 provide direction for financial policy across government, and guidance on ministries' planning, budgeting, and reporting tasks. These chapters outline tasks to ensure ministry output reports are consistent with government-wide processes.
- The CPPM Chapter 13 provides guidance to ministries on financial systems and internal controls for these systems.

1.1 Ministries' Financial Management Policies and Procedures

The CPPM Chapter 2 states that: "Ministries must establish, maintain and operate systems of financial administration that are consistent with statutes, regulations, policy and directives."

We interviewed key staff within the selected ministries to ensure they had documented financial management policy and procedures and were communicated to staff. These should be stored in central locations, which are accessible to all staff. The documents should be reviewed and updated when changes occur to ensure they address new circumstances or changes in government-wide or ministry policy.

The selected ministries generally have documented procedures for the data entry and review process to ensure ministry staff check for **accuracy, completeness, and validity**. These documents provide step-by-step guidance on how to perform data entry and review procedures. Although one of ministries did not fully document procedures related to a process that we reviewed, this was due to a new financial system with under-developed processes. The ministry is aware and taking corrective action which will ensure procedures are documented in a timely manner to avoid loss of knowledge when key ministry staff leave their positions.

Accuracy is that the dollar value of the transaction is correct.

Completeness is that all valid transactions are recorded.

Validity is that all transactions recorded are genuine.

Overall, we found that the selected ministries established financial management policy and procedures to supplement the CPPM and guide staff on specific tasks and was consistently followed across the respective ministries. This information is well documented and accessible to staff on ministry intranets. One selected ministry made their **revenue and expense authority matrices** available and accessible to staff on the ministry intranet to help ensure financial transactions are sent to the appropriate person for review and approval. We also found that selected ministries review and update their policies and procedures when changes are made to program, ministry, or government-wide policy.

Revenue and expense authority matrices show which ministry staff are authorized to approve transactions, what type of transactions they can approve, and the dollar amount they can approve.

1.2 Ministries' Financial Management Training

Financial management training provides staff with the required knowledge and resources to perform job functions effectively which reduces mistakes and improves data integrity. Although there is no mandated training requirement in the CPPM, there is an expectation for ministries to provide adequate training for financial management roles.

We found that selected ministry staff performing financial management tasks had received training to cover data integrity. This is typically done through a combination of BC Public Service Agency and internally developed training courses. Examples of internally developed training courses include:

- data entry training into CFS and data extraction out of CFS;
- accounts payable training manual with the correct procedures to follow when processing accounts payable transactions; and
- revenue authority training covering the responsibilities of financial management staff members and how to send transactions to them for review.

Training is developed by the selected ministries to address identified gaps in staff knowledge. Ministry staff are encouraged to participate in additional training courses on a continuous basis to further their knowledge and skills. One selected ministry has made additional resources available to their staff to assist them with queries or issues, such as a finance help desk, in the event where documented procedures may not be available. One selected ministry cross-trained staff on financial management tasks to avoid situations where only one person can perform a specific task.

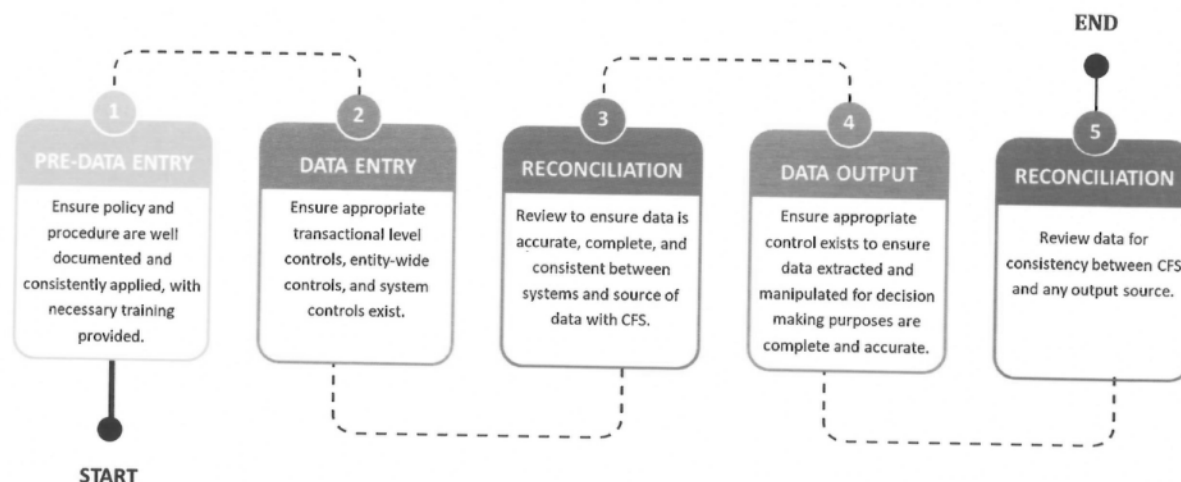
Recommendations:

- (1) Ministries should develop a process to ensure that key financial management policy and procedures are documented and updated when changes occur.
 - (2) Ministries should develop a process to cross-train ministry staff on key financial management tasks to avoid knowledge loss during staff turnover.
-

2.0 Establishing Controls for Financial Data Integrity

The data entry and output process require appropriate controls to strengthen data integrity and support CFS as the source of truth for which decisions around financial data are based. This review has utilized the Data Integrity Controls Figure 1 to guide our assessment of ministries' controls around maintaining data integrity.

Figure 1: Data Integrity Controls



The selected ministries used both **manual** and **automated** data entry points.

2.1 Data Entry

We found that selected ministries use several good practices to ensure data was consistently checked for accuracy, completeness, and validity before data is recorded in CFS, such as:

1. Ministry staff review supporting documentation to match the data to be transferred into CFS. For example, an invoice from a supplier is checked against the amount to be recorded. Discrepancies are resolved before they are recorded in CFS.
2. Ministry staff confirm that all financial transactions have been approved by appropriate staff, such as an **Expense Authority**.
3. Ministry staff review the total balance of individual line items for reasonableness to help staff detect anomalies and take follow-up actions.

Manual data entry point requires staff to manually input the financial data into an application that will be transferred into CFS.

Automated data entry point involves transferring financial data through system integration between CFS and ministry financial systems.

Expense Authority is a ministry staff member who has the responsibility to review and approve expenses before they are recorded in CFS for onward payment.

In addition to the controls implemented by the ministries, CFS has several system controls in place to validate transactions entered and transferred into the system. Key examples detailed below:

1. Prevent duplicate transactions from being recorded.
2. Block transactions whose details do not match the details recorded in CFS, such as supplier information.
3. Prevent users from uploading journal vouchers containing formatting errors.

These system controls ensure financial data transferred to CFS are properly formatted (through manual upload or automatic transfer), but does not check for data accuracy, completeness, or validity. These are the responsibility of ministry compensating controls through their financial systems, or manual processes to help mitigate risk.

Although there is a greater reliance placed on the system controls for automated data entry points, ministry staff still performed a manual review to check the accuracy, completeness, and validity of financial data before recording in their financial systems.

2.2 Post-Transaction Data Review

Ministries should conduct post-transaction reviews after the financial data has been entered into CFS to identify anomalies and ensure the financial data is accurate, complete, and valid. We found that one selected ministry performs several post-transaction review activities as follows:

- Compare forecasted financial results to actual financial results recorded in CFS to determine if there are significant variances. In the event there are significant variances, these are investigated to understand the cause.
- Review each line item on financial reports to check if the amounts seem reasonable and have been correctly allocated to the relevant ministry.
- Perform Balance Sheet and Trial Balance Sheet reviews, in which all balances are validated by the appropriate ministry staff.

Reconciliation

Ministries should perform reconciliations to ensure the accuracy and completeness of data within CFS and mitigate the risk that financial data is inconsistent between ministry financial systems and CFS. Reconciliation differs from post-transaction review as it compares two sets of reports to ensure the total balances. For example, reconciliations identify instances where data is recorded in a ministry financial system but not CFS, as the total balance would not match. This may occur due to manual error, or adjustments made that were not captured during transfer. Reconciliation is particularly important if ministries are utilizing data from CFS to create outputs (e.g., reports) that are used for financial decision-making purposes.

When ministry staff extract data from a financial system or data source and transfer into CFS, they regularly reconciled data between the system to CFS to check that data is consistent between the sources. This reconciliation was not possible when transactions were manually recorded into excel that is manually uploaded to CFS, or direct entry into CFS modules as there would be no report to compare against. As a compensating control, ministries sample transactions to match them to supporting documentation to ensure validity and accuracy after they have been recorded.

Data Warehouse and Output

After financial data have been recorded in CFS, it is stored in a data warehouse. All ministries have access to their respective data in this data warehouse and can extract it for financial management activities such as reporting, analytics, and forecasting and budgeting. It is important for appropriate controls to exist to maintain data integrity on report outputs.

We found that the sampled ministries had good practices detailed below when extracting financial data from the data warehouse:

1. Ministry staff perform variance analysis between the data extracted from the data warehouse to identify errors or anomalies and confirm the accuracy before using the data for reporting, budgeting, or decision-making purposes.
2. Ministry staff reconciled the ministry generated report outputs to reports generated from data warehouse to check consistency of financial data.

Recommendation:

- (3) Ministries should perform reconciliations of all financial data transfers between data sources. If reconciliations are not feasible, staff should sample transactions to verify against supporting documentation.
-

3.0 Managing Financial Systems

Financial systems generate a significant amount of financial data and are critical to manage the delivery of Government services and produce the Government's Public Accounts. According to the CPPM Chapter 12 "Data and corresponding information systems must be identified, classified, inventoried, documented and maintained throughout their lifecycle."

There is an expectation that as part of the CPPM, ministries would have an inventory of their financial systems and have captured key information about the system. This would involve sufficient communication between ministry finance and Information Technology (IT) groups to ensure the completeness of this inventory.

1.1 Communication Between Finance and IT Departments

We found that IT and finance departments in the sampled ministries do not always communicate regularly. One ministry indicated that limited communication created instances where the IT department did not inform the finance department about system modifications or the implementation of new financial systems. This can create a risk that the financial systems may not have appropriate system controls in place or risk having systems with duplicated functions.

We found that the other selected ministry has adopted a good practice of increasing communication and collaboration between their finance and IT departments through regular meetings and having client services that bridged the relationship between the two groups. This allowed for increased awareness of upcoming IT changes that could impact financial management activities and controls. Additionally, OCG is working on separate strategic initiatives and audit projects related to the financial governance environment to facilitate increased communication between ministries' finance and IT departments.

1.2 Inventory of Financial Systems

In addition to providing the ministry's finance staff with appropriate awareness and oversight of financial systems used across their ministry, an inventory could provide them with an asset registry list that could be used by other ministries to identify leverageable financial systems to share costs rather than procure a new system.

Ministries should develop an inventory that includes a description of a system, their functions to support service delivery, criticality, status (i.e., active, in development, retired), ownership and their expected useful life. To provide better oversight of financial systems, the financial system inventory should include annual expected transaction volume, dollar amount correlated to the volume, identification of **Financial Risk and Controls Review** performed or in progress, and integration with other financial systems including CFS. Ministries should have processes, procedures, and guidance available for the information to remain comprehensive, accurate and current. In doing so, ministries and OCG can better track and assess the health of their financial system portfolios.

Financial Risk and Controls Review assesses and documents the adequacy of the designed controls for a new financial system (or a significant modification to an existing financial system or a system having a key financial component) with generally accepted financial control standards to prevent and reduce the risk of loss, error, misuse or fraud and to ensure conformity with accounting assertion criteria.

One selected ministry has made progress in developing an inventory of all financial systems, while the other selected ministry was faced with communication challenges to obtain financial system information. One selected ministry created a client service group that bridged the knowledge gap between their finance and IT departments, making information easier to obtain. At the time of this review, the ministry had not yet completed their inventory of financial systems. OCG is working on a strategy to assist ministries to develop an inventory of financial systems.

Recommendations:

- (4) Ministries should develop a process to have regular communication and collaboration between their finance and Information Technology departments to address the potential impacts of financial system changes.
 - (5) Ministries should create an inventory of all financial systems and update the inventory when changes occur.
-

Appendix A - Summary of Recommendations

1	Ministries should develop a process to ensure that key financial management policy and procedures are documented and updated when changes occur.
2	Ministries should develop a process to cross-train ministry staff on key financial management tasks to avoid knowledge loss during staff turnover.
3	Ministries should perform reconciliations of all financial data transfers between data sources. If reconciliations are not feasible, staff should sample transactions to verify against supporting documentation.
4	Ministries should develop a process to have regular communication and collaboration between their finance and Information Technology departments to address the potential impacts of financial system changes.
5	Ministries should create an inventory of all financial systems and update the inventory when changes occur.

Appendix B - Abbreviations

CFS	Corporate Financial System
CPPM	Core Policy and Procedures Manual
IAAS	Internal Audit & Advisory Services
IT	Information Technology
OCG	Office of the Comptroller General
Province or Government	Government of British Columbia

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Information Management and Technology Procurement – Phase 1

Revised: Date of last revision, January 15, 2023

Key Messages:

- The Government of British Columbia relies on information management and information technology (IM/IT) to underpin the delivery of services to British Columbians.
- The Internal Audit and Advisory Services, Ministry of Finance, conducted Phase 1 of a multi-phase review of Government's processes to procure IM/IT professional services.
- The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Government's processes to procure IM/IT professional services were compliant with procurement policy and enabled contracts to deliver their expected value.
- The audit reviewed a sample of procurements from the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Finance.

Questions and Answers:

1) What were the findings of the review?

- The government has established an effective procurement framework which is supported by the *Procurement Services Act* and Core Policy and Procedures (Chapter 6).

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- The findings identified good procurement lifecycle practices used by the selected ministries for the review.
- The review identified areas where the selected ministries could strengthen their policies and alignment with government's Core Policy and Procedures.
- The recommendation is for the ministries to continue to mature their internal procurement processes, guidance, and training to ensure consistency within their ministry.
- Detailed questions related to the audit recommendations should be directed to the appropriate ministry or Internal Audit and Advisory Services, Ministry of Finance.
- The Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Finance participated in this review.

2) Why does Government outsource portions of their IM/IT operational work?

- The most commonly outsourced IM/IT services include application and infrastructure management, help desk support and independent testing and validation.
- Outsourcing these services enables the government to access staffing and expertise that may be challenging for ministries to acquire directly or sustain in the long run.

3) What was the period and scope of the procurements reviewed?

- The sampled contracts identified in the Corporate Financial System started in the fiscal years 2018 – 2022.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services

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- The ministries included in the sampling were the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Finance.

4) Do all jurisdictions and governments outsource such work?

- Many public sector jurisdictions across Canada and internationally rely on the private sector vendors to help deliver critical services, including IM/IT systems and support.

Contact:

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A/Executive Director

Procurement and
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REPORT ON:

IM/IT Procurement – Phase 1

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Ministry of
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Executive Summary and Overall Conclusion

The Government of British Columbia (the Government) relies on information management and technology (IM/IT) to underpin the delivery of services to British Columbians. In order to do so, the Government procures IM/IT professional services to deliver programs and services.

The purpose of this review was to determine whether the Government's processes to procure IM/IT professional services were compliant with procurement policy and enabled contracts to deliver their expected value.

Ministries may outsource portions of their IM/IT operational requirements to an external vendor. The most common outsourced IM/IT services include application and infrastructure management, help desk support, and independent testing and validation. Outsourcing these services enables the Government to access staffing and expertise that may be challenging for ministries to acquire directly or sustain in the long run.

The Government has established an effective procurement framework. The framework is supported by the *Procurement Services Act* and the Core Policy and Procedures Manual (Procurement Policy or Policy). The Policy outlines fair and open procurement principles for ministries: competition, demand aggregation, value for money, transparency, and accountability. A procurement framework provides the vendor community with predictable experiences when bidding on Government contracts. Overlooking the framework may result in ministries' inability to receive the expected value from their procurements.

An effective procurement framework also includes cross-government support, controls, monitoring, and governance. Two cross-government bodies are highlighted in this report:

- The Procurement and Supply Division (PSD), within the Ministry of Citizens' Services, is responsible for setting strategic directions regarding procurement. It provides leadership in advising, establishing, and managing the Government's strategic contracts, and supports ministries' other IM/IT procurements.
- The Office of the Comptroller General (OCG), within the Ministry of Finance, is responsible for the overall quality and integrity of the Government's financial management and control systems. This includes developing, maintaining, and interpreting corporate procurement policies, and providing risk-based monitoring of policy compliance across government.

These governance bodies provide a preventative control function, through early consultation and advice, and a detective control function, through risk-based monitoring and reporting of policy compliance.

We reviewed a sample of procurement contracts from the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Ministry of Finance (selected ministries). We assessed whether selected ministry procurement practices aligned with the Policy, guidance, and industry good practices.

We identified good practices used by selected ministries across the procurement lifecycle. Selected ministries had developed internal policies and guidance, and resources for procurement training. Selected ministry procurements included strong processes for contract approvals, contract development, and financial monitoring.

We also found areas where selected ministries could strengthen their processes and alignment with the Policy. These include gaps in key phases, such as early procurement planning, solicitation and evaluation, and vendor monitoring. This presents risks in how the Government competes for contracts, demonstrates value for money, and achieves transparency and accountability. [Appendix B](#) provides an indicative risk summary of the transactions tested for policy compliance.

Our key recommendation is that ministries should continue to mature their internal procurement processes, guidance, and training, and ensure consistent application within their ministry. Doing so will ensure ministry procurements consistently meet, or exceed, Procurement Policy requirements, support better program outcomes and reduce Government's procurement risks.

We identified nine recommendations that ministries should consider when planning, awarding, and managing IT procurements. These recommendations will strengthen how ministries address:

- Loss of staff and retain procurement knowledge.
- Plan and implement procurements in alignment with the Policy.
- Develop solicitation documents and evaluate submissions by vendors.
- Develop and monitor performance measurements and govern contract information.

Ministries should leverage the governance framework and activities currently in place. The PSD offers consultation and advice on ministry procurements. The OCG provides monthly reporting of compliance risks to ministries, including risks related to procurements. This function provides opportunities for ministries to develop timely actions on identified procurement risks, strengthen compliance with the Policy, and mature its good practices.

This report is part of a multi-phased review of Government's IT procurement practices. Looking ahead, we will continue to monitor risks across the Government and identify the scope and timing of additional IT procurement reviews.

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We would like to thank all government staff, who participated in and contributed to this review, for their cooperation and assistance.



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Ministry of Finance

Introduction

The Government of British Columbia (the Government) relies on information management and technology (IM/IT) to underpin the delivery of services to British Columbians. The Government procures IM/IT professional services to deliver programs and services.

Ministries may outsource portions of their IM/IT operational requirements to an external vendor. The most common outsourced IM/IT services include application and infrastructure management, help desk support, and independent testing and validation. Outsourcing these services enables the Government to access staffing and expertise that may be challenging for ministries to acquire directly or sustain on the long run.

It is in the best interest of British Columbians that ministry procurement achieves value for money with high quality IM/IT professional services. To procure IM/IT professional services, ministries must follow the principles defined in the *Procurement Services Act* of fair and open procurement, competition, demand aggregation, value for money, transparency, and accountability.

The Government has a core policy (i.e., Chapter 6 of the Core Policy and Procedures Manual), procedures, a standard and governance bodies to support and implement the principles of the *Procurement Services Act* (Procurement Policy or Policy). Aligning procurement processes with the Policy, procedures and standards can help ministries ensure that the services they outsource will meet their business needs.

Cross government bodies support ministry procurements. These include the Office of the Comptroller General (OCG), within the Ministry of Finance, which is responsible for Procurement Policy, corporate standards, and procedures, as well as monitoring and compliance. The Procurement and Supply Division (PSD), within the Ministry of Citizens' Services, is responsible for setting strategic directions regarding procurement. It provides leadership in advising, establishing, and managing the Government's strategic contracts, and supports ministries' other IM/IT procurements.

Purpose, Scope and Approach

This review is part of a multi-phase review of Government's IM/IT procurement. Phase I focused on a review of ministry IM/IT procurement processes. The scope and timing of Phase II will be determined at a later date.

The purpose of this review was to determine whether ministry processes to procure IM/IT professional services were compliant with Procurement Policy and enabled contracts to deliver their expected value.

We selected two ministries for this review: the Ministry of Education and Child Care, and the Ministry of Finance (selected ministries). We selected these ministries based on consideration of recent coverage by our office and an initial review of Government procurement data.

Our approach with the selected ministries included:

- sampling contracts identified in the Corporate Financial System and started in the fiscal years 2018-2022;
- reviewing procurement documentation to verify compliance;
- interviewing ministry staff and management; and
- reviewing a subset of sample of contracts to assess alignment with the Policy, guidance, and industry good practices.

We considered most phases of the procurement lifecycle (see [Figure 1](#)). We focused our assessments on areas of key risks, such as procurement planning and contract management. We did not assess the close out phase, as our contract samples included some active procurements.

Internal Audit & Advisory Services (IAAS), Ministry of Finance conducted this review and completed fieldwork in May 2022. We met with each selected ministry to discuss the specific findings of our work. This report consolidates those findings.

We require selected ministries to develop and submit an action plan in response to the recommendations provided, including the timeframe for implementation. IAAS conducts an annual follow-up process to assess selected ministries' progress to address its action plan in response to the recommendations given.

While this review focused on selected ministries' procurement processes, the recommendations within have relevance across Government. We therefore encourage other government organizations to review their procurement processes and consider the recommendations identified in this report.

1.0 Procurement Framework

Ministries often reach out to the private sector to acquire services that they cannot find in-house or at a higher cost. A procurement framework helps ministries manage their procurement risks and gain effectiveness by using consistent structures and processes. It also provides the vendor community with predictable experiences when bidding on government requests for proposals.

A Procurement framework should include procurement principles, procedures, governance, and training.

1.1 Procurement Policy

The *Procurement Services Act* and Chapter 6 of the Core Policy and Procedures Manual outline fair and open procurement principles for ministries: competition, demand aggregation, value for money, transparency, and accountability (Procurement Principles).

The Procurement Policy established by OCG covers all phases (see Figure 1) of procuring IM/IT professional services¹.

Figure 1: Procurement Lifecycle



¹ The review's objectives focused on the planning, pre-awarding & awarding, and contract management phases.

The Policy defines the various procurement options that ministries may use. In most cases, they must use a competitive procurement process to acquire IM/IT professional services, such as obtaining quotes or posting opportunities on **BC Bid**. However, ministries may use a Direct Award process, which does not require posting on BC Bid. A Direct Award solicitation can be used where exceptional conditions apply, including the absence of multiple vendors on the market, emergency, or public health and safety concerns.

BC Bid is a marketplace where public sector organizations advertise opportunities for goods and services contracts. It is operated by the PSD. In fiscal 2022/23, the PSD rolled out an updated BC Bid.

Find out more: [BC Bid website](#)

The Policy is principle-based, and requirements are focused on outcomes and written broadly. This approach provides ministries with some flexibility to tailor procurements to their needs and develop internal guidance or policies. Given the business and financial significance of the Government's procurement activities, ministries may need to supplement documented policies and procedures with guidance and industry good practices to ensure an adequate procurement culture. Good practices recommend that organizations reinforce procurement awareness and understanding as well as appropriate behaviours and protocols through a comprehensive framework.

1.2 Governance

Ministry procurements must align with applicable legislation, agreements, and directives. Under the Policy, ministries are required to ensure that processes and procedures are clearly defined, documented, and communicated to staff. To facilitate alignment with the Policy and the Procurement Principles, the OCG and PSD are enabled with key roles and responsibilities for governance, monitoring, and support of ministry procurement activities.

The Office of the Comptroller General

The OCG supports government procurement by providing strategic procurement governance advice and supports the maintenance of the Government's procurement framework, including the Policy, and conducting risk-based compliance monitoring.

The Financial Management Branch develops and maintains Government's procurement governance framework and provides procurement governance advice.

The Corporate Compliance and Controls Monitoring Branch actively conducts risk-based compliance monitoring. This monitoring function includes risks identified with ministry procurements.

As part of its role, the Corporate Compliance and Controls Monitoring Branch provides monthly reporting of compliance risks to ministries, including risks related to procurements. Under the Policy, ministries are responsible for following up on compliance risks identified by the Corporate Compliance and Controls Monitoring Branch.

As noted later in this report, our office found that ministry compliance with the Policy varied, with identified **strengths** in financial monitoring and approvals. We also found **opportunities for improvements** by ensuring that key phases in procurement planning, solicitation and evaluation, and vendor monitoring, align with the Policy, the Procurement Principles, and industry good practices.

Ministries should leverage the monitoring and reporting functions of the OCG. Regular compliance reports, prepared by the Corporate Compliance and Controls Monitoring Branch, offer an opportunity for ministries to develop timely actions on identified IT procurement risks, strengthen compliance with the Policy, and mature their good practices.

Procurement and Supply Division

The Policy enables the PSD to assist ministries in their procurement activities and recommend procurement practices. The PSD is responsible for supporting operational advice on selecting and managing procurements.

The PSD provides resources and expertise to support the Government's procurement activities, including the procurement of IM/IT professional services.

The PSD has established such key elements to orient and oversee procurement practices across ministries, including:

- **Guidance and training:** PSD, the OCG, and the BC Public Service Agency have collaborated to establish a set of guidance, templates, and training available to all government employees.
- **Strategy:** The PSD developed the *British Columbia Procurement Strategy 2018*. The strategy seeks to improve "access for companies of all sizes to do business with government while ensuring that British Columbias' public dollars are being used to benefit communities." It issued its latest strategic update in 2020.
- **Oversight committees,** including the Deputy Ministers' committee on Procurement and Strategic Contracts and its sub-committees. These committees provide strategic direction and advice, change leadership, and portfolio management.

- **Cross-Government engagement:** PSD facilitates the sharing of cross-government information, experience, and expertise on procurement through its Community of Practice and a Procurement Council.

We considered whether selected ministries engaged with PSD when conducting their procurements. We note our findings in [Section 2.2](#). Ministries should leverage the advice and consultation role of the PSD when conducting procurements.

1.3 Ministry Procurement Framework

The Procurement Policy is principle-based and must be adopted by all ministries with various business requirements. The Policy can be supplemented by internal ministry policies or guidance. While ministries may create their procedures, each ministry is responsible for aligning with the Procurement Policy. This may include guidance on procurement processes, training, and strategies to support staff skills and knowledge.

We considered whether selected ministries had developed their procedures to implement the Procurement Policy's requirements and support IM/IT professional services procurement. We found that selected ministries had developed internal guidance to support procurement activities. This included guidance on the procurement cycle and requirements, and detail on contract approvals. This guidance supplemented the Policy and was available to staff through shared ministry resources.

We also found that selected ministries' internal websites leveraged corporate training options. At a corporate level, the Government provides procurement training through the BC Public Service Agency. For example, the Procurement Foundations course provides a series of courses escalating in detail for Government staff.

Internal guidance and procurement training is a key action to help ensure ministries maintain staff knowledge and skills. Staff attrition is a common occurrence that may risk such knowledge and skills. We found that selected ministry program areas responsible for contracts have experienced challenges with loss of procurement staff. This resulted in gaps in contract knowledge. It also resulted in some cases where vacating staff did not transfer documents to shared locations, resulting in gaps in contract documentation.

Ministries should ensure there are processes to support changes of responsibilities, knowledge, and documents during staff transition. This can include creating clear internal guidance for staff and providing resources and opportunities for procurement training.

Recommendations:

- (1) Ministries should establish and maintain internal policies, guidance, and training to support new and current procurement staff.
 - (2) Ministries should leverage the resources of the Procurement Services Division and Office of the Comptroller General when conducting procurements and monitoring procurement processes and risks.
-

2.0 Planning the Procurement

During procurement planning, ministries confirm their need to purchase services from a vendor. Ministry staff need to define what to buy, how to select the vendor, and the available budget.

The Procurement Policy requires that ministries look for alternatives to procurement, identify the solicitation method most appropriate to their circumstances, and receive adequate approvals to proceed. Industry good practices also recommend that ministries spend sufficient effort to define their business needs and understand the available services on the market. The purpose is to ensure that the Government receives the best value while following a fair and transparent process for ministries and vendors.

Poor planning may have long-term effects on a ministry's performance. For instance:

- If scope and deliverables are not well-defined, interested vendors may not understand the services that ministries seek. It may result in proposals with different offerings and prices that ministries will find challenging to evaluate and in deliverables that will not fit their needs.
- If ministries do not have a thorough planning phase, key processes to hold a vendor accountable may be missing in the resulting contract or inconsistent with the procurement's initial intent.

We reviewed a procurement sample to determine whether selected ministries' procurement planning complied with the Policy. We also assessed whether selected ministries' planning practices aligned with complementary good practices for a subset of the sample.

2.1 Identifying Business Needs

Industry good practices recommend that ministry procurement not only focuses on reducing costs, but also supports long-term organizational objectives.

Ministries should spend sufficient resources on understanding their short- and long-term business needs to ensure adequate planning. This includes identifying whether alternatives to the procurement are available internally. For instance, contracting out services, such as critical applications support, may result in money saving on the short term. However, on the long term, ministries may end up losing their internal expertise and become dependent on an external vendor. It also requires a good understanding of the services vendors can offer to inform and refine the business needs.

We found that for most sampled contracts, selected ministries had documented alternatives to their procurements. Ministries commonly documented alternatives in a business case, or an initial planning document. In doing so, ministries provided a reasonable rationale for why they selected the procurement process.

We found that some contracts however, either did not document whether alternatives were considered, or provided only limited reasoning for selecting the procurement. A lack of a documented rationale creates risks that a procurement does not include a clear business need.

We also reviewed a subset of the sampled contracts to assess the adequacy of how selected ministries' plan procurements. In doing so, we identified the following good practices:

- ministry procurement staff supported program areas' procurement planning;
- procurements aligned with broader ministry strategic and operational goals;
- internal policy and guidance that helped guide procurement steps; and
- staff proactively developing timelines to support procurement delivery.

By documenting a procurement rationale, ministries can better strengthen the scope, rationale, and deliverables of a procurement.

2.2 Defining Procurement Value and Obtaining Approvals

Defining the value of a procurement is crucial in determining an approach compliant with the Procurement Policy and financial management policies. For instance:

- The Policy requires that ministries post procurements valued over \$75,000 on BC Bid. Below \$75,000, ministries may only need to look for three quotes.
- The Policy also requires that procurements valued at over \$250,000 receive the PSB's support.²
- The procurement value also determines what ministry authority may approve the procurement

By aligning practices with the Policy, ministries can demonstrate fair and transparent procurements. Internally, if ministries do not secure the appropriate approvals, ministries may not receive the budget necessary to complete their procurement.

² Prior to July 2021, this threshold was for contracts between \$100,000 and \$500,000 in value.

Estimating Procurement Value

We found that the majority of sampled procurements had developed an estimated value of the contract consistent with the Policy. Ministry cost estimates were prepared in initial planning documents, commonly in a business case. However, selected ministries could improve their processes by ensuring that contract estimate documents are readily available and include sufficient detail. Ministries could strengthen initial planning documents, such as Business Cases, by providing robust financial estimates, cost benefits analysis, or rationale supporting the procurement.

Obtaining Approvals

Before a procurement moves forward to solicitation and vendor selection, it should obtain appropriate approvals. This includes both internal approvals, and in some cases, consultation with the PSD.

We found that all sample procurements obtained proper approval from authorized **Expense Authority**, prior to moving forward to the solicitation phase. In one instance, we found that a procurement did not include consultation with a program area, when required. However, the impact of this step was limited, as the procurement received final approval within the ministry.

An **Expense Authority** is a ministry staff member who has delegated authority to approve accounts and expenditures, including procurements.

In the majority of samples, we found that selected ministries consulted with the PSD during the planning process. Ministry staff advised our office that PSD engagement helped support their procurements. In two cases however, we did not find evidence that PSD was engaged. By engaging with PSD, ministries can leverage corporate procurement knowledge and expertise, and meet key requirements of the Policy and good practices.

Recommendations:

- (3) Ministries should ensure that all IT procurements align with relevant procurement requirements of the Core Policies and Procedures Manual.
-

3.0 Awarding the Contract

The Policy requires that procurement decisions are fair and competitive. The solicitation and evaluation phases involve advertising or soliciting to eligible vendors and evaluating their proposals to select the successful bid. These phases are crucial for ministries to find the services that best meet their needs. Once the successful bid is known, ministries must draft and sign the written contract.

We reviewed a procurement sample for IM/IT professional services to determine whether selected ministries complied with the Policy when awarding the contract. We also considered whether selected ministries' solicitation and evaluation practices aligned with complementary good practices for a subset of the sample.

3.1. Solicitating and Evaluating Offers

The solicitation and evaluation phase comprise the competitive process ministries must follow to select a vendor. It enables multiple vendors to make offers for the requested services. It generally involves posting a request for proposals on BC Bid or communicating with pre-qualified vendors to reach eligible vendors in a non-discriminatory manner.

Requests for Proposal and other solicitation documents provide eligible vendors with information about a procurement. Such documents should clearly identify the business needs ministries are looking for and how ministries will assess vendors' proposals. Ministries should align their evaluation approach with the needs they are looking to address. Their criteria should also be specific and objective to compare offers.

A **Request for Proposal** is a request for vendors to submit proposals that include information on relevant qualifications, experience, and pricing. It includes clear and defined criteria against which the proposals will be evaluated.

Failure to evaluate vendors' proposals according to the solicitation document may result in risks such as disputes on vendor selection, or poor selection of vendors by ministries.

Solicitating Vendors

We assessed whether selected ministries solicited vendors in alignment with the Policy, including how they advertised procurements to potential vendors, such as through BC Bid.

We found that most of the sampled procurements used solicitation processes that aligned with the Policy. Selected ministries used several processes to advertise their opportunities. These included:

- advertising procurements publicly on BC Bid, including providing appropriate information in their Requests for Proposal;
- selecting vendors from pre-approved vendor lists, known as Supply Arrangements, available through the PSD; and
- using **Direct Award** processes, whereby a contract is awarded to a vendor without a competitive process. Two of the sample procurements used a Direct Award process and both contracts complied with the Policy. This included clearly documenting the rationale and approvals for selecting a Direct Award process.

A **Direct Award** process allows a ministry to select a vendor without a competitive process. The Policy establishes clear requirements for using a Direct Award, including:

- only one contractor is qualified or available;
- an unforeseen emergency exists, limiting a competitive process; or,
- when a competitive process would impact security or public safety.

We identified some gaps in how selected ministries solicit vendors. These included instances where documentation was not provided to support the solicitation process or procurement not being posted on BC Bid when the Policy thresholds were met. We also identified instances where the criteria for evaluation in solicitation documents lacked clarity. Poorly defined criteria can result in vendor submissions that are difficult to evaluate, or criteria that restricts how a ministry can select a vendor.

Evaluating Vendors

We also assessed whether procurements evaluated and selected potential vendors consistent with the Policy. This included the requirements to document the evaluation and grading of vendors against the criteria outlined in solicitation documents.

We found that the majority of the procurements evaluated vendors against criteria established in the solicitation documents. In these cases, selected ministries clearly documented how the vendors were reviewed, evaluated, and, how the successful vendor was selected.

We found some gaps in how selected ministries evaluated vendor submissions. In some cases, the selected ministries could not provide sufficient documentation to support how the vendors were evaluated and selected. In other instances, we found that procurement evaluations did not fully align with all of the criteria outlined in the solicitation documents.

The Policy requires that ministries maintain solicitation documents to support the evaluation process. By clearly documenting the solicitation process, vendor evaluation, and aligning grading criteria with solicitation processes, ministries can better ensure vendor selection is transparent and fair.

Recommendations:

- (4) Ministries should ensure that solicitation documents include clearly identified criteria for evaluation.
-

3.2 Drafting and Signing the Contract

The contract phase is the process for ministries and selected vendors to draft, negotiate and agree on the contractual provisions.

The Procurement Policy requires that ministry contracts receive the Government's Legal Services Branch's approvals when required³, covers performance measures and dispute resolutions, and are appropriately signed before the services start to reduce contractual risks.

There are additional areas that contracts should cover to hold a vendor accountable for delivering the expected services. These areas include contract governance, rights to audit, risk management, contract termination and transition. Overlooking these areas may result in ministries' inability to receive the expected value from their procurement. It can have a long-term impact on their vendor performance.

We assessed whether selected ministries complied with the Policy regarding the contract phase for a sample of procurement. We found a number of good practices within selected ministries:

- contracts were signed by an appropriate Expense Authority and the vendor;
- selected ministries used appropriate government contract templates, or sought review from the Legal Services Branch when required; and
- contracts included required elements, such as the contract term, goods, or services to be provided by the vendor, and pricing and payment information.

Overall, we found selected ministries drafted and approved contracts in alignment with the Policy. These good practices can help support effective contract delivery.

³ Legal Services Branch is part of the Ministry of Attorney General.

As outlined in Section 4.0, we found one area where ministries could strengthen their contracts is through clearly identifying performance measures for the successful vendor. In doing so, ministries can improve their ability to manage the contract and better monitor vendor performance.

4.0 Managing the Contract

Contract management includes all activities that occur while a contract is in place. This includes receiving and verifying the quality of the deliverables, monitoring progress and performance, and managing any dispute or contract amendment.

We reviewed a procurement sample for IM/IT professional services to determine whether ministries complied with the Policy. We also considered whether ministries' contract management practices aligned with complementary good practices for a subset of the sample.

4.1 Monitoring the Contract

Ministries are responsible for ensuring that vendors deliver the services in accordance with the contracts. Ministries should describe these monitoring activities in the solicitation document and include them in the contract.

The Procurement Policy requires that ministries:

- monitor their vendor's performance according to the contract;
- assign a **Qualified Receiver** to attest of the quality of the delivered services before the invoice is approved; and
- document and communicate to the vendor any performance deficiencies.

Contract monitoring is critical to ensure and demonstrate value for money. Vendors may overlook their contractual requirements if they believe ministries have a poor understanding of them and are reluctant to use processes for dealing with poor service delivery or failure.

We found that selected ministries consistently monitored financial components of the contract. This included monitoring payments and ensuring that an authorized Qualified Receiver signed contract invoices. In doing so, selected ministries confirmed that goods and services for the contracts were received.

Qualified Receiver is a delegated ministry staff member who is responsible for reviewing and confirming that goods and services are received. In order to appropriately segregate duties, Qualified Receiver must be a different staff member than the Expense Authority.

We found that most sampled procurements monitored vendor performance against the terms of the contract. Monitoring activities included reviews of vendor status reports and regular and active vendor engagement. In some cases, however, formal vendor monitoring was limited to financial components of the contract. Vendor monitoring was informal and not documented.

We reviewed a subset of the sampled procurements and assessed whether the contractual performance management provisions were adequate and consistent with guidance and industry good practices. We found that selected ministries maintain positive vendor relationships and established regular check-ins with the vendor. We found some areas where selected ministries could strengthen their processes:

- Industry good practices recommends clearly outlining how a vendor will be monitored and by which metrics. While selected ministries developed contract requirements consistent with Procurement Policy, we found there was a lack of clear performance indicators in vendor Service Level Agreements. By including specific and measurable requirements, ministries can be better prepared to develop active and formal vendor monitoring.
- Industry good practices recommends regular, documented feedback in order to ensure transparency and accountability. Selected ministries tended to focus vendor monitoring on contractual outputs, such as the timing or cost of a project outcome delivered by a vendor project manager. Ministry staff would meet informally with vendors on a regular basis. However, they would not document performance of the vendor staff against measurable and documented criteria. Ministries could strengthen their processes by actively and formally evaluating the vendor project manager in addition to the contractual outputs. This provides ministries with a more fulsome assessment of not only the outputs delivered, but the working relationship with the vendor.

It is critical that a ministry can follow up and resolve issues with a vendor regarding its performance. We found that sampled contracts included provisions for following up with a vendor when a ministry identified an issue. We found no instances where significant issues were raised and had to be resolved.

By clearly identifying performance measurements in agreements, ministries can be better prepared to deliver effective vendor monitoring throughout the contract.

Recommendations:

- (5) Ministries should ensure that contracts include clear and measurable indicators to monitor vendor performance.
 - (6) Ministries should regularly document vendor monitoring against measurable performance indicators and contract terms.
-

4.2 Governing and Amending the Contract

The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada⁴ conducted a jurisdictional scan in 2020 about IT outsourcing. It identified that IT consultants often end up costing to governments twice as much as expected, because of two major reasons:

- Contract managers have a significant ability to amend contracts after they have been signed; and
- Vendors underestimate their bid to win procurement over and later asks for contract amendments.

To ensure that the contract's costs and other problems do not inflate, good practices recommend that contractual parties document and establish a robust governance structure that includes regular meetings between the contractual partners, risk management, and annual reviews of contracts to ensure their terms are still relevant.

Amending Contracts

We assessed sampled procurements to determine whether contract amendments were conducted in accordance with the Policy. This includes ensuring that appropriate Expense Authority signs all contract amendments and that changes to the contracts did not alter the nature and intent of the original agreement.

We found that an authorized Expense Authority signed all contract amendments. We also found that the majority of contracts reviewed did not change the nature and intent of the original contract. In one case, we found that the contract included key outputs not designed in the original contract. As a result, the amendment shifted the scope of the contract beyond its original intent and significantly increased the costs beyond its original estimated value. In such cases, there is a risk that ministries do not receive the best value for money on their procurement and impact the perception of fair and transparent procurement.

Governing Contracts

We assessed whether selected ministries defined adequate governance mechanisms in a selection of contracts and implemented them. We found that selected ministries had established governance structures, roles and responsibilities and processes to support contract governance for a sample of contracts:

- Agreements clearly identified roles and responsibilities for vendor and ministry staff. This provided ministry and vendor staff with a clear understanding of their roles and accountabilities.

⁴ Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, Putting a Stop to Outsourcing, www.pipsc.ca

- Most contracts identified governance committees to support the contracts. However, we found that some contracts did not formalize governance structures in the contract. We were advised that formal committees were not established on contracts with lower contract values due to an estimated lower risk profile. Industry good practices recommends establishing formal committees and governance structures to support monitoring, decision-making and oversight.
- Agreements established clauses allowing the ministry to conduct third-party reviews. In doing so, ministries can be better prepared to seek assessments of contracts, if required.

We also found that selected ministries had established internal policy and guidance to support procurement. These documents provided guidance to current and new staff for contract governance, including identifying authorization levels of contract approvals, documenting procurement processes, and outlining general expectations for governing procurements.

Managing Contract Documents and Information

We considered how selected ministries manage and maintain contract documentation. We found that selected ministries generally use a decentralized model for document management. Under this model, program areas responsible for a contract are accountable for maintaining key contract documents. This process can create some potential advantages since it does not funnel all contract documents to a central location, which could lead to potential backlogs.

We found however, that this model creates some risks. Program areas could not always provide the requisite documentation to our office. Central bodies in the ministry that support procurement would also not always have access of contract documentation, due to ownership on the program area side. A lack of supporting documentation creates a risk that ministries cannot demonstrate compliance with the Policy. It would be beneficial for the ministries to create high level checklists of key documents maintained on shared locations.

Industry good practices recommends that contract owners keep all records with key contract information. These documents should be available to all involved, and support contract governance processes. There is opportunity for ministries to consider models that can support program area flexibility while centralizing some key documentation. One option a ministry can consider is holding copies of key documentation (e.g., solicitation documents and copies of agreements and amendments) in a ministry central shared location. Day-to-day documentation, such as invoices and vendor performance documentation, could be managed at the program area level.

The Government relies on the Corporate Financial System to manage financial transactions, including procurement data. Procurement data can include contract costs, procurement dates, scope of work, and responsible program areas and personnel. During our review, we also found that there were discrepancies between the procurement data within the Corporate Financial System and the procurement information found within the ministries. This creates a risk that the Government does not have current, reliable and complete procurement data on some contracts.

Recommendations:

- (7) Ministries should develop processes, such as checklists, to support changeover of key staff knowledge, responsibilities, and documentation.
 - (8) Ministries should establish procedures to ensure that key contract documentation is readily available and complete.
 - (9) Ministries should ensure the accuracy and completeness of procurement data entered into the Corporate Financial System.
-

Appendix A- Summary of Recommendations

1	Ministries should establish and maintain internal policies, guidance, and training to support new and current procurement staff.
2	Ministries should leverage the resources of the Procurement Services Division and Office of the Comptroller General when conducting procurements and monitoring procurement processes and risks.
3	Ministries should ensure that all IT procurements align with relevant procurement requirements of the Core Policies and Procedures Manual.
4	Ministries should ensure that solicitation documents include clearly identified criteria for evaluation.
5	Ministries should ensure that contracts include clear and measurable indicators to monitor vendor performance.
6	Ministries should regularly document vendor monitoring against measurable performance indicators and contract terms.
7	Ministries should develop processes, such as checklists, to support changeover of key staff knowledge, responsibilities, and documentation.
8	Ministries should establish procedures to ensure that key contract documentation is readily available and complete.
9	Ministries should ensure the accuracy and completeness of procurement data entered into the Corporate Financial System.

Appendix B – Compliance Results

IAAS reviewed whether a sample of selected ministries' procurements aligned with requirements in Chapter 6 of the Core Policies and Procedures Manual.

The figure below provides an indicative risk summary of the transactions tested for policy compliance.

Figure: Compliance Results

Policy Requirements	Procurement Sample and Results									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Procurement Phase: Procurement Planning										
A) The Procurement Services Branch was consulted										
B) Procurement alternatives were considered										
C) The procurement value was estimated										
D) Procurement was approved appropriately										
Procurement Phase: Contract Award										
E) Solicitation demonstrated fairness and transparency										
F) Evaluation aligned with criteria										
G) Contract template was approved by Legal Services Branch										
H) Contract was signed by authorized personnel										
I) Contract included key requirements										
J) Contract amendments did not change the initial intent										
Procurement Phase: Contract Management										
K) A Qualified Receiver validated contract outputs										
L) A record of payments was maintained										
M) Vendor Performance was monitored										

Legend	
Strong Policy Compliance	
Medium Policy Compliance	
Lower Policy Compliance	
Not Applicable	

Appendix C - Abbreviations

Government	Government of British Columbia
IAAS	Internal Audit & Advisory Services, Ministry of Finance
IM/IT	Information Management and Technology
OCG	The Office of the Comptroller General, Ministry of Finance
Procurement Policy or Policy	<i>Procurement Services Act</i> and the Core Policy and Procedures Manual
PSD	Procurement and Supply Division, Ministry of Citizens' Services

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Management of Legacy Technology

Revised: Date of last revision, February 7, 2023

Key Messages:

- **Government is committed to investing in the talent and funding the infrastructure required to modernize the existing IT systems and technology that support its most critical programs and services.**

Questions and Answers:

1) What is legacy technology?

- When we talk about legacy technology, we are referring to outdated systems that no longer meet government's needs and are hard to update or change.
- Legacy systems can pose several challenges. For example:
 - Legacy systems can sometimes deteriorate to the point that they experience outages and technical issues. This can cause service interruptions to critical government programs and services.
 - Legacy systems often don't look and operate the way people expect. This can impact people's trust that they can count on our services.
 - It can be hard to find people with the expertise to work on systems built using technology that is no longer

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widely used, making it harder to maintain and update legacy systems.

- Legacy systems can often be difficult, expensive and time consuming to update. This can slow down the implementation of new government programs and services that require changes or updates to legacy systems.

2) How many legacy systems does the B.C. Government have?

- A recently completed internal audit found that an estimated 40% of ministries' IT systems could be considered legacy systems.

3) What are the root causes of this legacy systems problem?

- There are two major root causes to this legacy systems problem: funding and talent.
- **Funding:** Like many government and large organizations, government historically funded technology like we did highways and bridges: build it once and operate it for several years until it needs to be replaced. This approach is a mismatch with technology, which works best with constant improvements and upkeep.
- **Talent:** In the early 2000s, government decided to outsource all technology development to the private sector. This policy means that today, government has limited internal technology capacity and experience, making it harder to update, maintain or continuously improve its systems to prevent them from becoming legacy systems.

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4) What is government doing to reduce its reliance on legacy systems?

- The B.C. Government is reducing its reliance on legacy systems through a series of coordinated actions.
- First, government is prioritizing funding to update or replace the most important legacy systems across government to ensure that critical government services remain available and reliable for people. For example, 90% of digital projects funded by the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Digital and Data that were completed in 2021/22 helped modernize legacy systems that support government's most critical programs and services.
- Second, government is revisiting its technology funding model to ensure that ministries have appropriate funding to maintain and continuously improve their systems to ensure they continue meeting people's needs.
- Third, government is actively recruiting and developing talented technologists. This will ensure that public servants have a strong understanding of the systems that underpin all government programs and that these systems are better maintained.
- Finally, migrating from legacy to modern technology can be technically challenging. To support ministries' legacy system modernization initiatives, Citizens' Services is strengthening policy and guidance available to guide the work of public servants.

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Contact:

J-P Fournier Executive Director, OCIO, Digital Office 250-896-4702

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Procurement of Personal Protective Equipment During the COVID-19 Pandemic - Phase 1

Revised: Date of last revision, January 26, 2023

Key Messages:

- Keeping people safe was our highest priority throughout the pandemic.
- We supported the Province's COVID-19 Supply Hub with technology, procurement, and logistics to help ensure non-health sectors and social service organizations had the PPE needed to keep our communities safe during the early months of the pandemic.
- And we stabilized personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies for non-health sectors and social service organizations.
- The COVID-19 Supply Hub was successfully shut down on September 30, 2021.
- As part of lessons learned, we provided information to Internal Audit in 2021 on our Ministry's support in purchasing and distributing PPE in the early stages of the pandemic on behalf of the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR).
- Internal Audit's findings show that our Ministry's support to EMCR was critical in ensuring Government had the PPE it needed to remain safe throughout the pandemic.

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Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
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- Details on future actions to address Internal Audits findings on the supply chain management framework and emergency response plans are being led by EMCR.

Questions and Answers:

Direct questions on inventory strategy, pricing, and quality assurance to EMCR.

Direct questions on PPE expenditures to the Ministry of Health.

1) When did the EMCR COVID-19 Supply Hub shut down?

- The Supply Hub shut down on September 30, 2021.
- Any questions related to the Supply Hub should be redirected to EMCR.

2) What is CITZ doing to specifically address Internal Audits findings?

- CITZ continues to work closely with EMCR to support their work in improving Government's supply chain management framework during emergencies/disruptions.

Contact:

Geoff Haines	Executive Director	Procurement and Supply Division	Government Financial Information
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REPORT ON:

Procurement of Personal Protective Equipment During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Phase 1 - Provincial Procurement Excluding the Healthcare System

IAAS | INTERNAL AUDIT &
ADVISORY SERVICES



Ministry of
Finance

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Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic (pandemic) resulted in the first supply chain disruption of this scale, and most of the world was unprepared. Throughout the initial response there were overriding positive outcomes, including society working together towards a common goal. There were also global challenges as countries competed for scarce supplies and national borders closed.

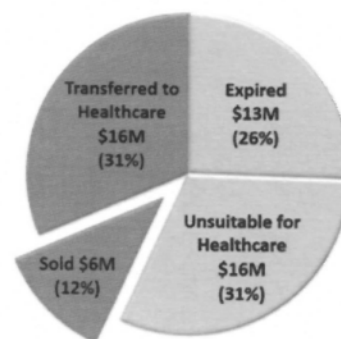
Personal protective equipment (PPE) became essential to protect frontline workers, limit the spread of the virus, and enable the economy to continue operating safely. Early in the pandemic the market for PPE was volatile, with high global demand and insufficient supply. This shortage resulted in a significant influx of new suppliers increasing the risk of low quality and counterfeit PPE.

The procurement of PPE became a key focus of the Government of British Columbia (Government) during the pandemic. The Government prioritized the procurement of a large volume of PPE due to the uncertainty of the pandemic and the potential devastating consequences of not having sufficient PPE available. A governance framework was established where the Ministry of Health led the healthcare sector response and Emergency Management B.C. led all non-health related efforts. A new working group, the Provincial Supply Chain Coordination Unit (Supply Chain Unit), was created to monitor and support the supply chain as well as procure and resell PPE to the broader public sector, excluding healthcare. This required the establishment of new processes and procedures, including demand modelling, vendor vetting and quality assurance.

Internal Audit & Advisory Services, Ministry of Finance, completed a review to capture lessons learned from the Supply Chain Unit's procurement efforts during the early stages of the pandemic.

The Supply Chain Unit secured \$61 million of PPE, of which approximately \$6 million was sold to the broader public sector. Of the remaining surplus inventory, \$16 million was transferred to the Provincial Health Services Authority for use within the ongoing medical response. The Supply Chain Unit also negotiated reductions to contract volumes resulting in approximately \$10 million in cost savings. An estimated \$16 million of PPE was disposed of due to quality issues and a further \$13 million expired throughout the year.

PPE Purchased by the Supply Chain Unit



Source: Figures obtained from Emergency Management B.C. and the Ministry of Citizens' Services as at May 31, 2021.

The key observations identified through the lessons learned process include:



Teamwork and cooperation were consistently identified as strengths of the Government's emergency response, enabling the Government to set up a cross ministry working group quickly. This team worked collectively to ensure the Government had the PPE it needed to remain safe throughout the pandemic. They also implemented several new processes to monitor the supply chain, and to identify and vet vendors ensuring that only quality PPE was distributed throughout the Government.



The Government does not have a supply chain management framework and emergency response plans have limited consideration for supply chain disruptions. This resulted in three key challenges:

- 1. Getting PPE to those in need quickly.** The Government did not have a sufficient stockpile in place necessitating the emergency procurement of PPE. This required establishing the Supply Chain Unit and determining the legal authority to stockpile and resell PPE, which ultimately delayed the distribution of PPE.
- 2. Estimating the demand for PPE.** The uncertainty of the pandemic, and limited global supply chain expertise contributed to overstated demand assumptions.
- 3. Vendor vetting and purchasing in a volatile market.** Buying in uncertain market conditions led to purchasing low-quality PPE.

Developing a provincial supply chain management strategy would help to address these issues and identify and prepare for future supply chain security risks.

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We would like to thank everyone who participated in and contributed to this review, for their cooperation and assistance. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge and thank the British Columbia Public Service for its immense dedication and tireless efforts in serving its citizens through this unsettling time.

Alex Kortum, CPA, CA
Executive Director
Internal Audit & Advisory Services
Ministry of Finance

Overall Conclusion

The Government was not prepared for a global supply chain disruption of this scale. Although the Government has a system of plans in place to respond to various emergencies, there is a gap in the planning, knowledge and resources relating to the management of a global supply chain disruption.

The Government would benefit from implementing a framework to address provincial supply chain management. This framework should consider program objectives including assessing supply chain risks and mitigation strategies, scenario planning for future emergencies, as well as a jurisdictional analysis to ensure best practices. This framework should also determine the oversight structure, resource requirements, information systems and legal and financial authorities required to achieve its objectives.

A comprehensive supply chain management framework would enable the Government to prepare for future disruptions and develop a strategy to mitigate supply chain risks.

Planning for Supply Chain Disruptions	
Key finding: The Government's emergency response plans and procedures have limited guidance relating to supply chain disruptions. Further, there are limited resources responsible for provincial supply chain management. This led to challenges establishing new structures and processes and building knowledge and capacity, while managing the provincial supply chain.	Recommendation 1: The Government should incorporate supply chain management into response plans to prepare for future supply chain disruptions.
	Recommendation 2: The Government should consider the need to build resource capacity with global supply chain expertise.
Key finding: The Supply Chain Unit did not have legal authority to stockpile and resell PPE. Legal consultations to clarify the authority delayed distribution to ministries and other government entities. As such, these entities purchased PPE independently which contributed to the oversupply of PPE. The Government is currently revising the relevant legislation to reflect lessons learned.	Recommendation 3: The Government should ensure revisions to legislation incorporate the authority to stockpile and resell personal protective equipment.

Procuring Personal Protective Equipment	
Key finding: There were limited stockpiles of PPE available at the onset of the pandemic. As such, the Government needed to quickly establish a demand model to estimate its inventory requirements and execute the purchases during volatile market conditions. This also contributed to the surplus of PPE and resulted in the purchase of low-quality goods and product expiration.	Recommendation 4: The Government should consider demand modelling for other types of emergency scenarios to enhance preparedness.
	Recommendation 5: The Government should develop a stockpile strategy to determine inventory requirements and assess inventory management practices.
Supply Chain Security	
Key finding: The global supply chain disruptions during the pandemic highlighted supply chain security risks. The Government did not have the capacity or capability to meet demand for PPE domestically and was reliant on foreign markets. Global supply chain disruptions can occur for a variety of reasons, including labour shortages, extreme weather events or political conflict.	Recommendation 6: The Government should develop a supply chain management strategy to identify, analyze and mitigate supply chain security risks.

Introduction

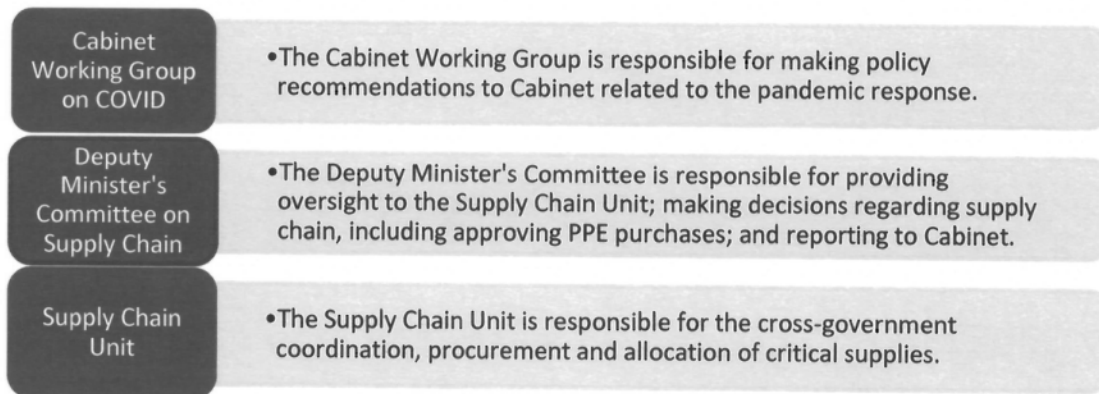
In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic (pandemic) there was an unprecedented need for emergency supplies and services throughout British Columbia and internationally. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was essential to protect frontline workers, limit the spread of the virus, and enable the economy to continue operating safely throughout the pandemic. An imminent global supply shortage in the early stages of the pandemic created an urgent need to coordinate and streamline the Government of British Columbia's (Government) emergency procurement processes.

This global **supply chain** disruption created market volatility and made procuring significant volumes of PPE difficult. The Government established a governance framework where the Ministry of Health led the healthcare sector response and Emergency Management B.C. led all non-health related efforts.

A **supply chain** is the network of organizations involved in the production and distribution of consumer goods, from raw material to finished product.

The Provincial Supply Chain Coordination Unit (Supply Chain Unit) was created to monitor and support provincial supply chains as well as procure PPE to meet the needs of the Government outside of healthcare. The Supply Chain Unit¹ was comprised of approximately 120 individuals from across government and reported to the Deputy Minister's Committee on Supply Chain (Deputy Minister's Committee).

Figure 1: Supply Chain Governance



The Supply Chain Unit coordinated several aspects of the procurement process, including vendor identification and vetting; purchasing and quality assurance; and the receipt, storage, and distribution of PPE.

¹ The Supply Chain Unit was led by a cross-government team from Emergency Management BC and the Ministries of Citizens' Services; Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation; and Transportation and Infrastructure; and was supported by the Provincial Health Services Authority.

Purpose, Scope and Approach

Internal Audit & Advisory Services conducted a cross-government review to examine emergency procurement practices during the pandemic. Understanding and reflecting on the procurement process can help the Government be better prepared for the next major event where similar procurement challenges may exist.

Specifically, this project was designed to understand the Government's authority to secure and distribute PPE²; and the communication and coordination across ministries and other government entities to obtain, prioritize and allocate emergency supplies and services. This included understanding any significant challenges, and identifying potential improvements, and providing considerations to improve future response.

The scope of this review was limited to the activities of the Government outside of the healthcare system.

During the project, we gained an understanding of how the Government:

- obtained authorization to buy, stockpile and resell PPE;
- determined supplies and services requirements, and made critical procurement decisions; and
- coordinated and communicated key procurement processes including vendor identification, vetting and quality assurance.

This work involved:

- reviewing procurement-related legislation, policies, agreements and emergency plans; and
- interviewing executive and procurement specialists across key ministries and other government entities.

This review was conducted by Internal Audit & Advisory Services, Ministry of Finance and fieldwork was completed in October 2021. We require the Government to develop and submit an action plan in response to the recommendations provided in this report, including their timeframe for implementation. We will then conduct an annual follow-up to assess progress in implementing the action plans.

² PPE purchased by the Supply Chain Unit included: gloves, cleaning products, sanitizer, goggles, gowns, and masks.

1.0 Planning for Supply Chain Disruptions

As emergencies become more complex and global in nature, the ability to respond quickly and decisively is increasingly important. This involves planning to ensure the structures and authorities are in place before an emergency event. The pandemic resulted in the first supply chain disruption of this scale, and most of the world was unprepared. As part of this review, we examined the Government's actions related to planning, coordinating and authorizing critical supply chain response activities.

1.1 Emergency Response Plans

The British Columbia Emergency Management System (Emergency Management System) is a comprehensive framework to help ensure a coordinated and organized approach to emergencies and disasters. As part of this framework, the Government has a series of plans for specific emergencies, including a pandemic plan and an **all-hazard plan**. These plans detail the Government's strategy for cross-ministry coordination and business continuity in response to an emergency or pandemic event. The Emergency Management System and the related plans broadly cover emergency or disaster response but have very limited guidance relating to emergency procurement and supply chain disruptions.

The **all-hazard plan** is the basis for response to all types of hazards. It defines the roles and responsibilities of provincial entities (ministries, the private sector, volunteers, and others) and it coordinates the integrated provincial response with the Emergency Management System.

As a newly established working group, the Supply Chain Unit faced several challenges. Firstly, while the Supply Chain Unit had knowledge of typical government procurement, it lacked expertise and experience related to global supply chain matters. Secondly, there were challenges relating to setting up the cross-ministry working group without a plan in place. This involved determining roles and responsibilities, communication channels and decision-making structures, while also completing the tasks required of the Supply Chain Unit. Challenges with communication and coordination resulted in the Supply Chain Unit and eligible entities competing for supplies from the same vendors, resulting in higher prices and over purchasing.

To improve communication and coordination during emergency response the Government should incorporate supply chain management into the Emergency Management System; this would require increased global supply chain expertise.

Recommendations:

- (1) The Government should incorporate supply chain management into response plans to prepare for future supply chain disruptions.
 - (2) The Government should consider the need to build resource capacity with global supply chain expertise.
-

1.2 Legislation

The *Emergency Program Act* (the Act) is the legislation that governs emergency response operations within British Columbia. The Act defines the powers and duties of government during an emergency or disaster. To support its COVID-19 response, the Government declared a state of emergency on March 18, 2020. This gave the Government the power to implement provincial emergency measures, such as access to any land and human resources necessary to prevent, respond to, and alleviate the effects of the emergency. This included securing critical supply chains to ensure people had access to essential goods and services.

Within the Act there is explicit language that permits procurement of medical supplies it considers necessary to prevent, respond to, and alleviate the effects of a disaster. However, the Act does not provide explicit authority to amass inventory of PPE beyond the needs of a disaster. Further, the Act is silent on the authority to resell PPE to other entities. The Supply Chain Unit obtained clarification from legal and financial advisors and concluded they did not have the authority to stockpile and resell PPE. These consultations took additional time and delayed the Supply Chain Unit's distribution of PPE. There is an opportunity to integrate these roles into future emergency response.

Throughout the spring of 2020, a significant stockpile of PPE was purchased while authorities provided under the Act were being clarified. Legal consultations to determine what authorities were available to the Government and how to legally distribute and sell PPE caused delays in making PPE available to **eligible entities**. Ultimately, an agreement was negotiated with the Provincial Health Services Authority, which had the authority to resell PPE. The delays, however, contributed to an oversupply as many eligible entities independently acquired PPE before it was available through the **Supply Hub** in August 2020.

Eligible entities included first responders, ministries, universities, crown corporations, municipalities, school districts, childcare facilities, community organizations.

Supply Hub was a digital sales platform created to sell PPE to eligible entities.

Another legal challenge that was faced by the Government was the liability risk related to the distribution or resale of PPE that was insufficient quality or used inappropriately. A **ministerial order** was issued to protect the Government and other suppliers of goods and services from any liability. This liability protection could be included in proposed amendments to legislation to remove the need for future ministerial orders on the matter.

A **ministerial order** is created and authorized under a statute or regulation granted to a minister to enact temporary law. For example, during the pandemic a ministerial order was issued for the temporary prohibition of reselling essential goods or supplies.

The Government is currently developing a new, modernized emergency management act and is considering what changes to legislation are necessary regarding emergency procurement and the corresponding liability protection.

Recommendation:

- (3) The Government should ensure revisions to legislation incorporate the authority to stockpile and resell personal protective equipment.
-

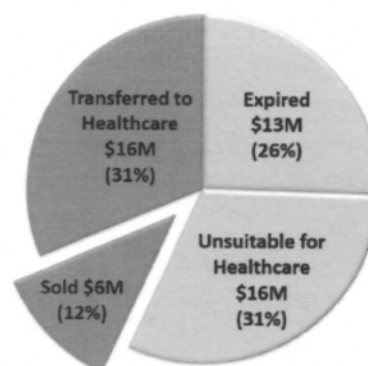
2.0 Procuring Personal Protective Equipment

In our review, we sought to understand the challenges associated with PPE procurement during the pandemic and identify opportunities to mitigate these in the future. Specifically, we examined how the Government determined the volume of PPE required and made other critical procurement decisions that may have contributed to an oversupply of PPE. We also reviewed how the Government helped ensure the quality of PPE through its vendor identification, vetting and quality assurance processes.

The Supply Chain Unit estimated that \$64 million of PPE would be required for the operations of core government and eligible entities to maintain operations for a six-month period. Given the high uncertainty at the outset of the pandemic, the demand model assumptions were designed to ensure ample PPE. This resulted in significant PPE purchases based on early demand estimates. However, global supply chains rebounded within a few months which made PPE available through traditional channels and greatly reduced estimated demand.

The Supply Chain Unit secured \$61 million of PPE, of which approximately \$6 million was sold to eligible entities. Of the remaining surplus inventory, \$16 million was transferred to the Provincial Health Services Authority for use within the ongoing medical response. The Supply Chain Unit also negotiated reductions to contract volumes resulting in approximately \$10 million in cost savings. An estimated \$16 million of PPE was disposed of due to quality issues and a further \$13 million expired throughout the year.

Figure 2: PPE Purchased by the Supply Chain Unit



Source: Figures obtained from Emergency Management B.C. and the Ministry of Citizens' Services as at May 31, 2021.

2.1 Assessing the Supply and Demand for Personal Protective Equipment

Understanding the Government's need for PPE during the pandemic was critical; having too little PPE would put the public at risk, while procuring too much would result in overspending and waste. There were two key factors that significantly influenced the quantity of PPE that the Supply Chain Unit needed to procure: the ability of eligible entities to access PPE on their own, and their rate of consumption. Demand modelling was used to provide an estimate of provincial demand based on a series of assumptions such as population size, usage rates and the availability of PPE.

Demand modelling for the pandemic was initially outsourced to a third-party contractor due to time pressures and the lack of available resources. As demand modelling is an iterative process, subsequent updates were required to maintain the model. Using a contractor to maintain a model of this size and complexity comes with a significant cost and as such, the responsibility of managing the model was transferred internally to **BC Stats**.

BC Stats publishes an array of provincial economic and statistical data and offers custom services, including data modelling and forecasting. BC Stats has access to the statistical information required to make informed modelling decisions.

Demand modelling requires many assumptions to be made that are highly variable. The demand model's assumptions were based on available information, including demographic statistics and updated health and safety guidelines. The model was iterative and flexible to accommodate the everchanging understanding of the COVID-19 virus and orders by the Provincial Health Officer. However, to mitigate the risk of a shortage, there were overarching assumptions applied in the model that when compared to actual outcomes were conservative. For example, the date that eligible entities would return to the office; or that alternative PPE, such as cloth masks, would be available. These assumptions, combined with the delays in making the PPE available to the eligible entities, contributed to surplus of PPE.

Another key challenge was understanding the supply of PPE that existed outside of government. The Government does not currently have a supply chain team with expertise on global and provincial supply chain activities. The Supply Chain Unit reached out to key stakeholders in the supply chain and monitored the inventory of critical items throughout the pandemic. Ultimately, there was uncertainty about the quantity that eligible entities would be able to procure on their own. As such, the modelling incorporated the assumption that eligible entities would be unable to get any PPE from other sources and that the Supply Chain Unit would be the sole provider of PPE. However, supply chains recovered relatively quickly and most entities were able to procure PPE on their own before it was made available by the Supply Chain Unit, contributing to the oversupply.

In future emergencies there may be similar supply chain and procurement-related challenges that arise. Building internal supply chain expertise into the demand modelling process would help refine underlying assumptions. Demand modelling for other types of emergency scenarios could also help the Government be more prepared in the event of another emergency.

Recommendation:

- (4) The Government should consider demand modelling for other types of emergency scenarios to enhance preparedness.
-

2.2 Assuring Quality of Personal Protective Equipment

Global demand for PPE increased by 300-400% between 2019 and 2020 due to record consumption by the general public, healthcare systems and organizations worldwide. This spike in demand resulted in a significant influx of new suppliers in the marketplace and an increased risk of low quality or counterfeit PPE. To address these risks, the Supply Chain Unit established **vendor vetting** and **quality assurance** processes to ensure that the PPE met quality standards.

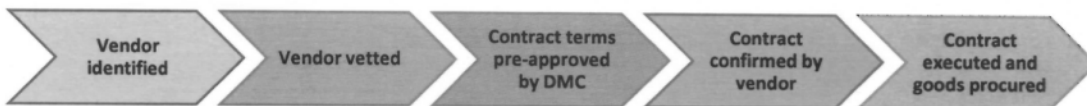
Vendor vetting is the process of screening a potential vendor and their goods prior to contracting with them.

Quality assurance is the process of testing and assessing goods after they have been received, and before they are distributed for use.

The global marketplace was forced to veer away from traditional procurement practices in response to the increased demand for, and limited supply of, PPE. The negotiating power shifted towards vendors and it was not uncommon for vendors to significantly mark up prices, include non-refundable terms in their contracts, require cash payments upfront and limit opportunities to sample products. The Government's vendor vetting processes needed to adapt to competitive market conditions, primarily around the speed at which new vendors were identified, evaluated, and selected.

A third-party contractor was initially used to vet vendors on behalf of the Government. The contractor provided additional capacity as well as their network of international manufacturers. To manage costs, in May 2020 the vetting process was moved internally. For each vendor, a risk evaluation was performed that looked at vendor certifications and licences, payment terms, previous supply quality and vendor credibility. Once a vendor was successfully vetted, the Deputy Minister's Committee was responsible for final approval. While vendor vetting can help to mitigate some risk, it does not guarantee the credibility of suppliers or the quality of their goods.

Figure 3: Supply Chain Unit Purchasing Process



Once goods were purchased and received into the warehouse, the quality assurance process began. While the process varied by product, it generally involved independent visual and physical inspections, lab testing, and/or fit testing. Approximately \$16 million of the PPE purchased did not meet specified quality standards for several reasons such as insufficient particle filtration and poor composition. The Government is in the process of disposing both the expired and the unsuitable for healthcare inventory, additional costs are likely to be incurred.

These quality issues were a result of emergency buying under competitive market conditions, where standard procurement practices could not be upheld. Due to limited local suppliers, the Government purchased from several international vendors. This made vendor vetting more challenging and limited recourse when low quality PPE was received. A sufficient supply of inventory may have reduced the challenges experienced with both quality assurance and vendor vetting process.

2.3 Stockpiling

The purpose of a stockpile of PPE is to ensure the Government has enough supplies on-hand to get through an emergency or supply chain disruption. The Government had access to two stockpiles at the beginning of the pandemic. The first was a provincial stockpile, implemented after the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome pandemic in 2003, and the second was the federal National Emergency Stockpile System. We were advised that the provincial stockpile was not sufficient to meet the needs of the current pandemic, as many goods had expired and were not replaced. The federal stockpile had a limited supply which was shared across the country. Access to these stockpiles was not sufficient to meet the Government's need for PPE.

At the onset of the pandemic, the Government began to stockpile PPE, but experienced many challenges, including availability, price, and quality. Stockpiles provide a buffer from supply chain disruptions, and in this case would have reduced the need to purchase goods from unknown suppliers during volatile market conditions. A sufficient stockpile would ensure that the Government has supplies to respond immediately.

There are costs associated with establishing and maintaining a stockpile, such as the upfront cost of PPE, the storage, staffing, and systems required to manage the inventory. Stockpiles need active management to purchase appropriate inventory levels, ensure inventory is regularly consumed and replenished, and manage storage and distribution. Robust inventory management systems are necessary to track data such as expiration dates or batch numbers and help to effectively monitor the assets. The Government should analyze its need for PPE beyond the current pandemic and ensure its stockpile is maintained and managed on an ongoing basis.

Recommendation:

- (5) The Government should develop a stockpile strategy to determine inventory requirements and assess inventory management practices.
-

3.0 Supply Chain Security

The Government faced significant challenges to obtain PPE at the onset of COVID-19 due to worldwide shortages. There are several contributing factors, including high competition for global supply, minimal inventory held by the Government, and limited local production. This global supply chain disruption highlighted supply chain security as a risk for the Government. When the Government was vulnerable and in urgent need of PPE, it did not have the capacity or capability to meet those needs domestically and was reliant on foreign markets. While stockpiling can create a buffer to relieve this risk in a health crisis, it does not address the long-term oversight and management components required for a secure supply chain.

The prioritization of domestic manufacturing would improve provincial supply chain security by reducing dependence on foreign manufacturing. This issue is complex and requires subject matter expertise to analyze the impacts on policy, ensure alignment with trade agreements and coordinate with the federal government. Reviewing supply chain risks, including performing long-term cost-benefit analyses of potential solutions, may provide valuable insights into future emergency response and supply chain security.

The Government has identified supply chain security as a risk and included supply chain resiliency in their economic recovery plan, **StrongerBC**. This includes the Supply Chain Resiliency Grant Program, which supports industry and trade associations working to support the resilience of local manufacturing.

StrongerBC is an economic recovery plan to support people and communities, it was launched to help the Government recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

Supply chain security is being discussed internationally and is being addressed by governments in various ways. During the pandemic, the Government of Ontario launched Supply Ontario, a centralized supply chain agency, that aims to support the broader public sector by centralizing buying, ensuring supply chain security, increasing support for domestic production, and driving innovation. The agency is currently focused on stabilizing the PPE supply chain but has a long-term mandate to support Ontario's supply chains.

The Supply Chain Unit was formed to fill a similar mandate but only operated temporarily through the pandemic. A more permanent solution should be explored for the Government, including dedicated resources to monitor supply chain health, develop supply chain strategies, and implement action plans.

Recommendation:

- (6) The Government should develop a supply chain management strategy to identify, analyze and mitigate supply chain security risks.
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Appendix A - Summary of Recommendations

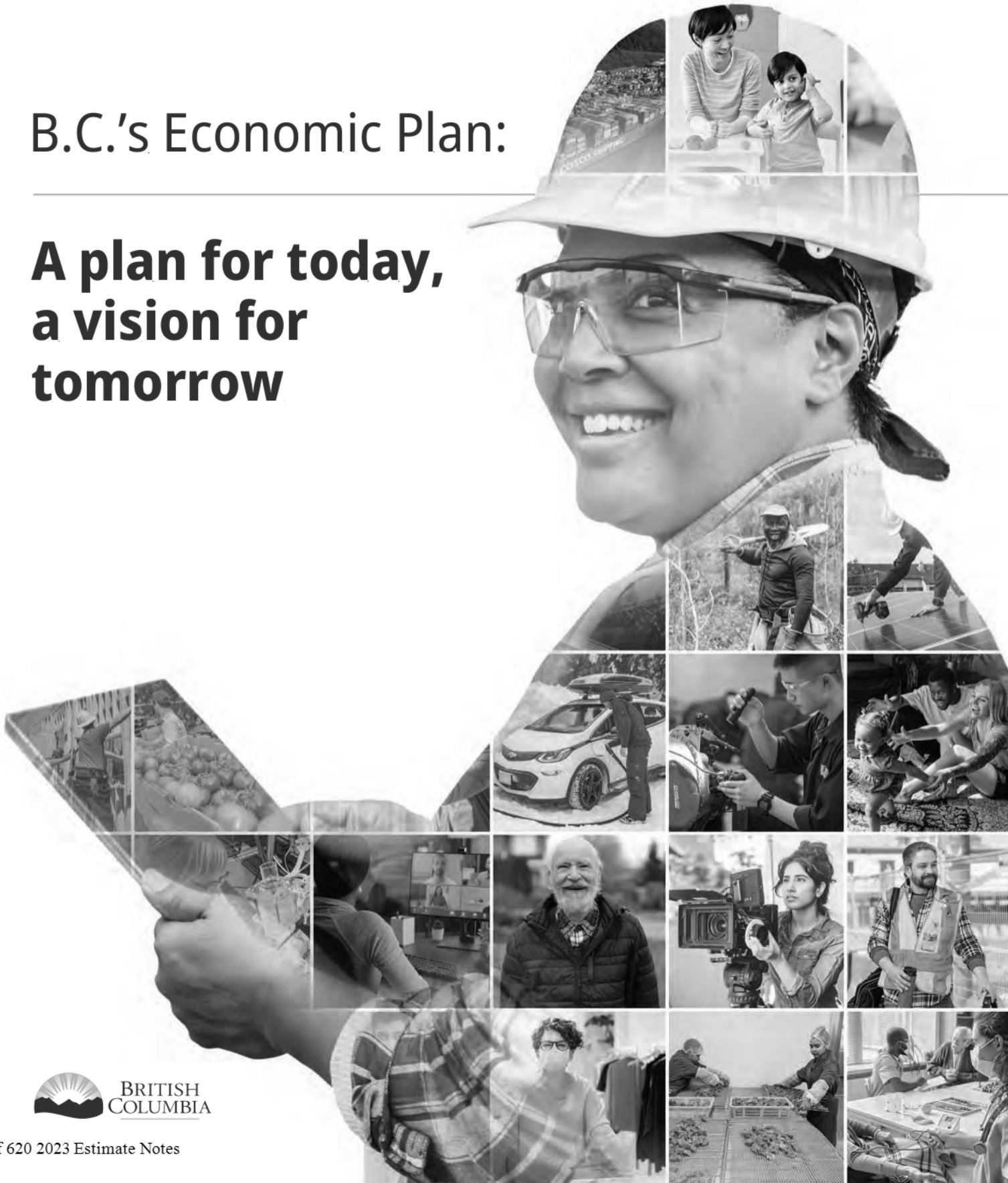
1	The Government should incorporate supply chain management into response plans to prepare for future supply chain disruptions.
2	The Government should consider the need to build resource capacity with global supply chain expertise.
3	The Government should ensure revisions to legislation incorporate the authority to stockpile and resell personal protective equipment.
4	The Government should consider demand modelling for other types of emergency scenarios to enhance preparedness.
5	The Government should develop a stockpile strategy to determine inventory requirements and assess inventory management practices.
6	The Government should develop a supply chain management strategy to identify, analyze and mitigate supply chain security risks.

Appendix B - Abbreviations

Act	Emergency Program Act
Deputy Minister's Committee	Deputy Minister's Committee on Supply Chain
Emergency Management System	British Columbia Emergency Management System
Government	Government of British Columbia
Pandemic	COVID-19 pandemic
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
Supply Chain Unit	Provincial Supply Chain Coordination Unit

B.C.'s Economic Plan:

A plan for today, a vision for tomorrow





Joint letter from the Premier and Minister

From the start, our government has worked to make life better for people.

We've expanded post-secondary education and made child care more available and affordable. We've cut ICBC rates, eliminated bridge tolls and cracked down on housing speculators to keep life affordable for families.

We're working with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples towards reconciliation and leading on climate action. We're modernizing our forest sector to ensure it remains both economically and ecologically sustainable for future generations.

When the pandemic hit, we responded by providing more support per capita to people and businesses than any other province.

These actions have helped B.C. through the pandemic and into a strong economic recovery. Today, B.C. is a national economic leader, just as we were when the pandemic began. More British Columbians are working now than before the pandemic with 100,000 jobs added in 2021. Last year saw the largest interprovincial migration in 28 years with more families making B.C. their home.

Our immediate focus remains getting British Columbians through COVID-19 together. The pandemic was not a one-off event. It has fundamentally changed our outlook and priorities in ways that have profound implications for all of us.



John J. Horgan

Honourable John Horgan,
Premier of British Columbia

Our core values haven't changed. But the pandemic and toxic-drug crisis, together with floods, fires and extreme temperatures, has underlined the need for a renewed approach to economic policy – a long-term approach that looks 10 to 15 years ahead and results in a more sustainable and inclusive province for all British Columbians.

Because we can't go back to the way things were before. That's why we developed this plan.

Following months of consultation with British Columbians, the StrongerBC Economic Plan calls on British Columbia to achieve two big goals: *inclusive growth* and *clean growth*.

The plan lays out specific "missions" to meet these goals, guiding policy decisions in the years ahead. More immediate actions will close the digital divide; get goods to market faster; increase domestic manufacturing; add value to our natural resources; support our booming innovation sector; and help position B.C. as a world-leading supplier of high-demand, low-carbon goods and services.

The StrongerBC Economic Plan also includes a generational commitment to develop the talent B.C. needs to grow and innovate across our economy.

This is a plan for today, and a vision for tomorrow. Our ambition is to build the province we all want for ourselves and future generations. One that fosters innovation and ensures a strong future for resource workers. A high-care, low-carbon economy that works for all of us.



Ravi Kahlon

Ravi Kahlon,
Minister of Jobs, Economic
Recovery and Innovation



An Inclusive, Sustainable and Innovative Economy that Works for People

British Columbia has a small, open economy with many advantages, including being home to two of the country's largest ports, abundant resources, incredible natural beauty, a competitive business climate, strong public services, and a shared commitment to community.

Of all British Columbia's many advantages, our most important asset is people.

And it's people – everyday British Columbians – who are at the heart of this plan. Because if an economy is not working for people, then it's simply not working.

Over the last four years, supporting people has helped B.C.'s economy grow.

Partnering with First Nations, Indigenous Peoples and organizations as respected leaders in our economy to work towards reconciliation, is creating new economic

opportunities throughout our province.

Modernizing our forest sector will ensure forestry remains a source of good jobs and economic security for communities across B.C.

Tackling the climate emergency is driving economic innovation and new clean jobs.

Creating thousands of new spaces at B.C.'s colleges and universities is helping businesses secure talent, increase productivity and improve competitiveness.

Expanding affordable child care makes it easier for businesses to hire by helping families to balance the needs of home and work.

Accelerating capital investments to the highest level ever is upgrading our schools and hospitals; modernizing critical transportation networks and creating tens of thousands of good jobs.

Through the Community Benefit Agreements and new training opportunities for people historically excluded from economic opportunity, key investments in infrastructure are both producing robust growth, and ensuring more people share in the benefits.

At a time of global upheaval, B.C.'s economy is providing certainty and attracting investment from around the world. Last year's \$4.3-billion investment by world-class Newcrest Mining in B.C. is just one example of strong investor confidence.

B.C. also experienced a surge last year in private-technology-startups valued at more than \$1-billion.

Overall, 2021 was one of the best years ever for raising capital by B.C. companies.

These facts point to the enormous potential for B.C. to thrive in a carbon-constrained world. Our plan will help B.C. companies grow from this demand, establishing sustainability as a foundation for future jobs and growth.

Because a strong economy and a healthy society go hand in hand.

The pandemic and all that we have been through over the last two years has brought this truth into sharp focus. And it has reminded us how much more work lies ahead to build an inclusive, sustainable and innovative economy that works for everyone.

The [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) sets out a clear vision for tomorrow, and building off previous plans, charts a path to get us there by making your life better today.

THE PURPOSE OF OUR ECONOMY

Economic growth is not an end in itself.

British Columbia's gross domestic product could outpace the world, but if people aren't feeling the benefits of the economy in their lives and in their communities, then the economy may be growing, but it's not working.

The [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) says the well-being of the more than five million people who call B.C. home is our most important economic advantage. Healthy, inclusive societies where wealth and opportunity are broadly shared are more productive, competitive, and innovative

than societies where inequality is high. They are also more resilient.

This core idea grounds the goals, missions, and actions outlined in this plan. It brings them together in a renewed vision for a more innovative and sustainable economy where each of us can realize our true potential in empowered and inclusive communities. At a time of great global uncertainty, the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) asserts that an economy built for all is an economy built to succeed.



What was important to participants in the virtual engagement sessions:



**AFFORDABLE
HOUSING**



**CLIMATE
EMERGENCY**



HEALTH CARE



**CLOSING THE
DIGITAL DIVIDE**



IMMIGRATION



**RECONCILIATION WITH
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**



CHILD CARE



SKILLED WORKFORCE



**ENVIRONMENTAL
& SOCIAL STANDARDS**



**MODERNIZED VALUE-ADDED
NATURAL RESOURCES**

Built by British Columbians

The [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) is the result of extensive engagement with British Columbians from every region of the province and from all walks of life – business, labour, First Nations and Indigenous leaders, municipalities, not-for-profits, universities and colleges, entrepreneurs, environmentalists, and many others.

At a time of increased polarization around the world, the strong consensus expressed by such a diverse range of British Columbians through our engagements was remarkable.

British Columbians agree that the central aim for B.C.'s long-term plan needs to be economic growth shared by all.

To that end, we agree that diversity is a critical and enduring strength; that rights reconciliation and lasting partnerships with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples is a fundamental condition of long-term economic progress; that developing and attracting talent is the primary source of economic innovation; that increased immigration is good for our economy; and that Environmental, Social and Governance values (ESG) offer a tremendous opportunity for B.C. companies to showcase their advantages.

British Columbians agree natural resources are an enormous economic advantage. We also share a deep commitment to bold and immediate action to tackle the climate crisis.

British Columbians told us they believe governments have a central role in providing services and addressing social problems, as well as in fostering innovation, tackling fundamental challenges like climate change, and helping set the direction for economic growth.

Of course, British Columbians look at our economy and these issues from different perspectives. Views vary on the combination of policies and incentives to achieve lasting economic prosperity.

What has been clear through the pandemic was expressed again in our engagement with British Columbians. We share a common ambition for communities and our province – an ambition on which this plan – its long-term vision, immediate measures, and the metrics by which we will track our progress – was built.

Who We Heard From

Engagement sessions were held over a nine-week period during the summer of 2021. Thirty-three virtual sessions were held with more than 330 stakeholders representing business, industry, labour, and social organizations across B.C. Forty-four written submissions were received from participants and other interested stakeholders. In the fall of 2021, a series of focused virtual engagement sessions were held with First Nations and Indigenous organizations.

Inclusive Growth and Clean Growth

The pandemic has taught us we have a collective capacity to confront big challenges. The extraordinary events of the past two years – flood, fires, heat domes, a global pandemic and the toxic drug crisis – have brought two of these challenges into sharp focus.

First, COVID-19's disproportionate impact on lower-income and marginalized British Columbians has highlighted the tremendous health and economic costs of inequality.

Too many British Columbians lack access to the economic opportunities that are a pillar of a strong and resilient society. In a world where the skills, talents and ambitions of people are one of B.C.'s most important assets, expanding economic opportunity through inclusive growth is both a moral and economic imperative.

Second, the climate emergency is here. Floods, heat domes and fires have brought home the devastating impact of climate change on our economy and society. If we didn't fully appreciate it before, we must now: the world is turning quickly toward an emphasis on sustainable growth. B.C. must continue to be a leader in the fight against climate change.

These twin challenges are also opportunities for British Columbia to lead in shaping tomorrow's high-skill, competitive, low-carbon economy. Tackling inequality and meeting our climate commitments doesn't come at the cost of economic growth, but rather are an accelerant for good jobs, innovation, and economic security across B.C.

In this important way, the StrongerBC Economic Plan represents a fundamental re-orientation of economic policy making in B.C.

For these reasons, the StrongerBC Economic Plan sets forth ***inclusive growth and clean growth*** as the overarching goals towards which everything in the plan is aimed.

The six missions and new priorities forming the heart of this plan are all strategically chosen to meet these two fundamental economic imperatives.

Organizing the StrongerBC Economic Plan in this way gives it the focus required to drive change, prioritize decisions, and track progress in the disciplined execution of specific policies across government.

Some of these policies are new and some are underway. But they are all pointed in the same direction: towards a stronger B.C.

"An economy built for all is an economy built to succeed."

- Premier John Horgan



INCREASING B.C.'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Effective competitiveness is dependent upon a wide range of factors that drive economic productivity. For a small open economy like British Columbia's, factors such as access to talent and capital, competitive tax rates, high quality physical and social infrastructure, strong public healthcare and a business climate that supports innovation are key to gaining advantage in the global marketplace.

The [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) improves B.C.'s long-term competitiveness through a range of measures aimed at nurturing talent, promoting investment, strengthening infrastructure, and fostering innovation in both traditional and new industries.

The Future Ready: Skills for the Jobs of Tomorrow plan will help equip British Columbians with the knowledge and skills they require for the jobs of the future. Expanded child care will make it easier for parents to participate in the workforce. The InBC Investment Corp will provide capital to companies that seek to grow in the province. Closing the digital divide will enable every British Columbian and business to access high-speed internet. Reducing carbon emissions while adding value to our resources will create new opportunities for economic innovation. And B.C. will continue to lead the effort to improve trade among the provinces.

Together, these and other actions in the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) will help B.C. to compete and thrive in an ever-changing global economy.

B.C.'s Economic Plan: A plan for today, a vision for tomorrow

INCLUSIVE GROWTH



Supporting People & Families

- Investing in people and families to make life more affordable
- Delivering the services - like health care and child care - you can count on
- Expanding opportunities for education and training



Building Resilient Communities

- Helping communities thrive with modern infrastructure resilient to changes in the climate and the economy
- Building affordable housing, new schools and hospitals
- Making sure every community in B.C. has access to high-speed internet



Advancing True, Lasting & Meaningful Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

- Working to advance our commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples
- Partnering with First Nations and Indigenous communities to support new economic initiatives
- Acknowledging, respecting and upholding Indigenous rights, First Nations title and Indigenous control of their land and resources

New actions

- Launching the Future Ready: Skills for the Jobs of Tomorrow plan
- Accelerating the timeline to connect all B.C. communities to high-speed internet
- Creating a Small Business Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan
- Collaborating on an Indigenous economic development agency
- Building a new Trades and Technology Complex at the British Columbia Institute of Technology

B.C.'s Economic Plan features two key goals
and six missions that will shape our economy to work for everyone

CLEAN GROWTH



Meeting B.C.'s Climate Commitments

- Delivering on B.C.'s commitment to reduce climate pollution and build a cleaner B.C.
- Helping people and business transition to clean energy solutions
- Supporting industries to become low-carbon



Leading on Environmental & Social Responsibility

- Helping develop, promote, and market environmentally and socially responsible goods and services
- Positioning B.C. to compete and win in a global economy that puts a premium on ESG
- Investing in the development of low carbon goods and technology



Fostering Innovation Across Our Economy

- Helping B.C.'s high-tech sector find talent and scale-up
- Creating new manufacturing opportunities in an innovative economy
- Adding value to natural resources

New actions

- Developing a Mass Timber Action Plan
- Creating a Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy
- Engaging on a Trade Diversification Strategy
- Establishing Integrated Marketplaces to amplify innovation and connect local businesses with customers
- Creating an Industrial and Manufacturing Action Plan
- Establishing an ESG Centre of Excellence to promote Environmental, Social and Governance principles for products and services
- Creating an Agritech Centre of Excellence
- Initiating a Goods Movement Strategy

Inclusive Growth



MISSION 1: SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

The well-being of people and families across B.C. is the point of a growing economy. No matter how much wealth is created, if people and families aren't benefiting, then the economy is failing.

Through the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#), our government is supporting people and families across a range of initiatives to make life better and more secure. We're taking action to reward hard work, make life more affordable, help parents balance the needs of work and home, expand opportunities for education and training, and support the most vulnerable.

This mission will result in more cohesive communities where opportunities and wealth are shared more broadly. British Columbians will have the skills they need to drive productivity in an innovative and growing economy; household incomes will go further and those traditionally under-represented will have the supports needed to be able to engage more fully in our economic and civic life.

KEY ACTIONS

- Keeping people safe as we navigate through and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Cutting ICBC rates, eliminating MSP premiums, free bus travel for children, eliminating interest on student loans, and taxing housing speculators.
- Expanding quality affordable child care.
- Creating thousands of new spaces at our universities, colleges and institutes, expanding co-op programs and graduate student scholarships.
- Supporting workers and rural communities transition into new industries.
- Increasing income and disability assistance, doubling of the senior's supplement and supporting vulnerable families.
- Implementing five days of paid sick leave to help keep businesses safe, open and thriving.
- Increasing the minimum wage and closing the gender pay gap.
- Delivering on a Pathway to Hope, a roadmap for making mental health and addictions care better for people.
- Introducing new anti-racism data legislation that will pave the way for fair and better services.



Median Hourly Wage Rate



Courtesy: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0063-01 Employee wages by industry, monthly, unadjusted for seasonality.



Inclusive Growth



MISSION 2: BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Jobs and economic opportunity flourish in communities that have the tools they need to adapt and grow in a world where challenges posed by the pace of technological innovation, the climate emergency, and global economic integration is accelerating change at a dizzying rate.

Through the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#), our government is providing communities with those tools. We're building modern economic and social infrastructure, including good schools, hospitals and affordable housing. We're making substantial investments in fire, flood and emergency event preparedness and mitigation. We're ensuring access to local food. And through CleanBC we are supporting people and businesses to transition to a carbon-neutral economy. Because resilient communities must be climate resilient.

This mission will strengthen the social and economic fabric tying communities and people together. British Columbians will be better connected to each other, the province and the world. We will continue to learn in good public schools, get treated in good public hospitals and health care facilities and enjoy more affordable living options as owners and renters. We will also lower carbon emissions and be better prepared for future climate events and natural disasters.

KEY ACTIONS

- Building 9,000 more family homes through our Housing Hub.
- Expanding transit and building modern, low-carbon economic infrastructure.
- Connecting communities to each other and the digital economy by expanding high-speed internet connectivity.
- Supporting B.C.'s next generation of construction workers with Community Benefit Agreements.
- Improving accessibility and working to remove barriers for everyone in B.C.
- Implementing the recommendations of the Tourism Task Force.
- Building health facilities like the new urgent and primary care centres, and new cancer centres in Surrey and Kamloops.
- Upgrading and building new schools across the province.
- Helping food entrepreneurs grow their businesses through shared-use equipment at Food Hubs.
- Ongoing support for B.C.'s thriving television and film industry — the greenest in the world.
- Strengthening community resilience through a new climate preparedness and adaptation strategy.



A THRIVING TOURISM INDUSTRY

People from all over the world want to visit B.C. And we are proud and welcoming hosts.

Tourism is one of B.C.'s iconic industries. It is an engine for jobs, opportunity and entrepreneurship.

Tourism employs more than 160,000 British Columbians, adds billions of dollars to GDP, and contributes to the well-being of people and communities throughout the province.

Although the last two years have been extremely challenging for tourism businesses and workers, the future for tourism is bright. Few places on earth offer the variety and richness of experiences for visitors to enjoy.

A flourishing tourism industry is a key pillar of the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#). Through Destination BC, our government is partnering with industry to meet ambitious goals for growth, sustainability and stewardship.

We are giving more visitors more reasons to travel to B.C. – from hosting world-class events to investing in B.C.'s iconic destinations and supporting Indigenous tourism opportunities. And we are ensuring that the social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits that come with a thriving tourism industry are enjoyed by all British Columbians.



BUILDING B.C.: SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, ROADS AND TRANSIT

Building, restoring and expanding infrastructure helps meet the needs of our growing population, while creating jobs and economic growth in both the short-term and the long-term.

Last year we committed to making historic levels of infrastructure investment in B.C. It will allow us to build the infrastructure B.C. needs to keep moving forward — housing, schools, hospitals, and highways. And it will create an estimated 85,000 jobs.

In addition to direct work like planning, engineering and construction jobs, infrastructure projects also provide indirect jobs and provide opportunities to develop marketable made-in-B.C. green innovation and technology.

Expanded transit infrastructure helps us meet our CleanBC targets while opening up new, cleaner, and faster modes of transportation. Integrated development around new SkyTrain stations offers opportunities to create affordable housing and local economic development. We have invested in the Broadway Subway Project and have committed to building the Surrey Langley SkyTrain Project all the way to Langley City Centre.

Finally, the disastrous flooding in 2021 reminded us that our transportation infrastructure is vital to our supply chains. We are working with all of our partners to build back climate-resilient infrastructure, designed to withstand the effects of climate change and extreme weather.





BUILDING THE HOMES WE NEED

Housing is essential infrastructure for a thriving economy that works for everyone. Living close to work, school, services and transit lowers costs for families, while reducing traffic, pollution and commute times. Good affordable housing makes life better for families and it helps employers to recruit and retain the workers they need.

For decades, federal and provincial governments stepped back from this important responsibility.

The pressure on housing is growing, as record numbers of people choose to move to B.C. for a better life. They join thousands of British Columbians looking for homes to pursue their dreams, whether starting a family, taking a job, or enrolling in a training or education program.

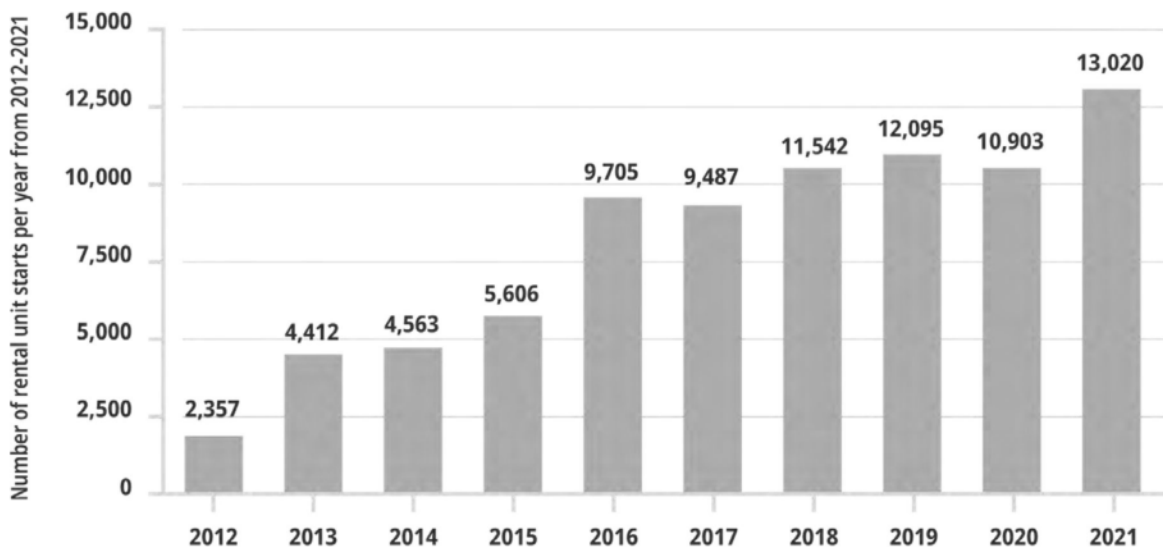
Our government is making better choices to support people. We are making the largest investment in housing in the province's history – \$7 billion to build 114,000 new affordable homes. Since 2017, nearly 32,000 of these new affordable homes have been built or are underway. Because of this investment and other initiatives more than 52,000 new homes were registered for construction last year in B.C., the highest level in

a single year since BC Housing started tracking this two decades ago. In the past five years, we have built or have in development 5,680 new on-campus student housing beds, compared to just 160 student housing units built between 2002 and 2017.

But the work isn't done. We need to build tens of thousands of new rental units and homes across the province to meet the urgent demand. We're helping municipalities streamline rezoning processes, especially near transit hubs, so badly needed housing can be built more quickly. We're also working to speed up provincial approvals to make sure they don't hold up new housing either. Local governments are also now getting funding to develop regular reports on housing needs. This ensures municipalities are planning for the future.

Affordable homes so people can work and live in their community are key to inclusive growth. Our government's programs and policies are encouraging construction of all types of homes people need. This work is helping to expand opportunities to build our growing economy in a sustainable way that supports all families and communities.

Progress on rental homes for B.C.



Courtesy: CMHC's Housing Market Information Portal



Inclusive Growth



MISSION 3: ADVANCING TRUE, LASTING AND MEANINGFUL RECONCILIATION WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Through the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#), our government is working to advance our shared commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through economic development.

We are working with Indigenous Peoples to address barriers to their full participation and leadership in all aspects of B.C.'s economy; supporting First Nations control over their own land and resources; acknowledging, respecting and upholding Indigenous rights and First Nations title; and building enduring and productive forums for Indigenous Peoples to lead and contribute to economic development initiatives.

This mission will advance lasting and meaningful reconciliation through economic development that recognizes Indigenous Peoples are leaders and partners in all aspects of the economy.

KEY ACTIONS

- Collaborating with Indigenous partners to deliver the action plan required under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.
- Moving to long-term agreements, treaties and other constructive arrangements that recognize rights and advance self-determination, economic independence and prosperity.
- Partnering with First Nations for decisions on land and resource use through shared decision making.
- Engaging with First Nations in setting the long-term direction of the economy.
- Working towards an economy that respects, acknowledges and upholds Indigenous rights and First Nations title, is co-led with Indigenous Peoples, and ensures that all Indigenous Peoples have access to economic opportunities and benefit from the lands and resources in their territories.
- Partnering with Indigenous Peoples to lead the development of an economy, workforce and business climate that supports greater leadership, inclusion and participation of Indigenous Peoples and advances Indigenous rights, values, interests and goals.
- Collaborating and participating in ongoing, meaningful, and enduring dialogue to create a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable economy for the benefit of present and future generations that reflects Indigenous values, interests, goals and worldviews.
- Work with Indigenous Peoples to transform the economy by supporting the rebuilding of Indigenous economies, respecting and reflecting Indigenous economic knowledge, wisdom and practice, and facilitating holistic economic sustainability that improves the well-being of all British Columbians.



PARTNERING IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Working towards lasting and meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples is an economic advantage for the province.

Government's commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and respect for Indigenous rights and First Nations title and traditional territories, are fundamental to B.C.'s economic future, and central to this plan.

By engaging Indigenous Peoples as respected partners in the economy, B.C. supports certainty and clarity for projects and investment decisions, leading to increased economic confidence.

Many leading companies investing in B.C. have introduced successful models based on collaborative relationships with First Nations governments.

In our engagement sessions with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples, a number of key issues and themes emerged, including persistent and systemic barriers to Indigenous participation

in the economy, ranging from cultural discrimination and racism to regulatory burdens and limited access to capital.

Indigenous participants in the consultation expressed not only a willingness, but an urgency to become full partners in the renewed B.C. economy.

The unanimous passage of the Declaration Act by all parties in the Legislature enshrined into law the fundamental rights of Indigenous Peoples in B.C. Care has been taken in designing the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) to ensure consistency between it and the Declaration Act Action Plan.

Negotiating and respecting treaties has significant implications for the provincial economy by supporting meaningful partnerships and generating economic benefits for Indigenous Peoples while also addressing rights and title.

Inclusive Growth, New Actions

Future Ready: Skills for the Jobs of Tomorrow

A skills and talent shortage looms over the B.C. economy.

Business leaders across sectors have told us very clearly that developing, attracting and retaining talent is critical for productivity, innovation and competitiveness.

The B.C. Labour Market Outlook released in early February 2022 tells the story.

Of the more than *one million job openings* in B.C. over the next 10 years:

- Almost 80 percent will require post-secondary training and education
- The highest demand jobs will be in the caring economy and scientific and technical services sector.

- The demand will not be met without meaningful steps to reduce barriers keeping people out of the labour market

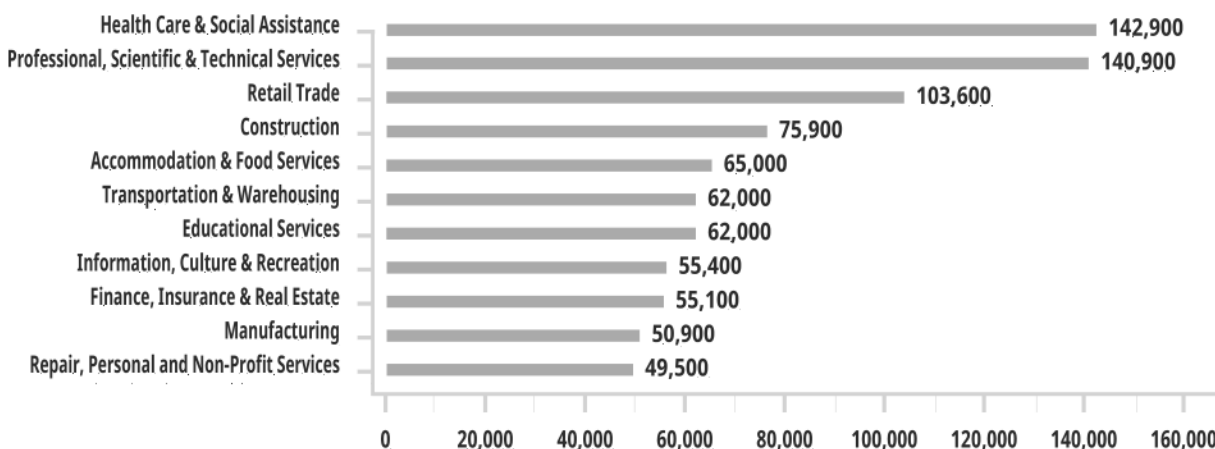
Our government is taking concrete steps to address this challenge.

We're helping today's workers upgrade their skills and train for new jobs

We've created thousands of new post-secondary tech spaces, reduced barriers to education by keeping tuition affordable, waived tuition for children in care, expanded grants, built 8,000 new student housing units, and restored compulsory apprenticeship and trades.

More needs to be done.

Job openings by Major Industry over the next decade



Courtesy: Labour Market Outlook 2021



The StrongerBC Economic Plan takes immediate action to close B.C.'s skills and talent gap with a generational commitment to accelerate talent development and skills training across the province.

The StrongerBC Economic Plan advances:

1. **The StrongerBC Training Initiatives** to support economic recovery
2. **The creation of 2,000 new tech-relevant spaces** in public post-secondary institutions on top of the 2,900 tech seats already created
3. **The expansion of student seats** in high opportunity sectors such as health care, high-tech, life sciences and agritech
4. **Support programs** to help workers, First Nations and communities through economic transition
5. **Support for Indigenous Post-Secondary Institutes** and skills training
6. **More graduate scholarships** and internships for innovation
7. **A digital services hub** so British

Columbians can more easily access education and training for in-demand jobs

8. **Expanding training** for health care workers

The plan also invests in infrastructure that helps build tomorrow's workforce, including \$136.6-million towards a new world-class ***Trades and Technology Complex on the BCIT campus.***

The new Trades and Technology Complex will give British Columbians access to resources and equipment they need to train for the tens of thousands of new, highly-skilled trade jobs that will open up in B.C. over the next 10 years.



Inclusive Growth, New Actions *continued*

The BCIT Trades and Technology Complex is one key initiative to give British Columbians the talents and skills they need for the jobs that are coming in high-tech, agrifood, transportation, health care, and sectors throughout our economy.

Over the coming months, these and other forward-looking initiatives designed to close the skills gap will be announced in coordination with Indigenous leaders, industry, labour and B.C.'s world-class post-secondary system.

Closing the Digital Divide

COVID-19 proved beyond any doubt the importance of connectivity for social inclusion and economic growth in our province. We know high-speed internet is essential to everyone, especially in rural and Indigenous communities. Without it, many British Columbians struggle to access the same information, services and economic opportunities as those who live in urban centres.

Our government committed to closing the digital divide with record investments.

The [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) aggressively accelerates the timeline to connect all B.C. communities to high-speed internet and successfully close B.C.'s digital divide.

This will mean that businesses of all types will have the same digital economic opportunities

in rural B.C. as in larger communities. It will also see many First Nations communities get connected for the first time, advancing reconciliation and self-determination.

Supporting Small Business Diversity and Inclusion

In British Columbia, small business is big business. There are more small businesses per capita in B.C. than anywhere else in Canada.

Ninety-eight percent of B.C. businesses are small businesses. They employ more than a million British Columbians, account for 36 percent of B.C. exports and 34 percent of B.C.'s GDP. Beyond the numbers, small businesses are part of the fabric of local communities. Many of us got our first jobs at a small business, or play on a softball team sponsored by one, or just rely on expert advice from the owner when shopping.

Through the pandemic, our government has worked closely with small businesses across the province to reopen, adapt, hire and grow. We've provided hundreds of millions of dollars to small businesses so they can stay open and keep people on the payroll. We've tailored direct support for some of our hardest hit sectors, like tourism, hospitality, and the arts. And we provided additional support across a range of initiatives including help for small businesses to sell products online, scale-up their operations, and streamline regulations.



Of the many small business people affected by the pandemic, Indigenous, Black and People of Colour (IBPOC), women, persons with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+, immigrants and young small business owners were disproportionately impacted. The [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) will provide comprehensive support, like new entrepreneur training, to these small business people through the development of the ***Small Business Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan***.

Indigenous Economic Development Organization

Self-determination of Indigenous Peoples is essential for an economy that works for

everyone. To help ensure our investments in economic growth are grounded in reconciliation, the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) will support the co-development of an external, **Indigenous-led agency focused on Indigenous economic development**.

The intent of this Indigenous-led institution will be to support opportunities for economic development and investment for Indigenous Peoples, and guide the expansion of provincial initiatives to support First Nation communities to secure new economic opportunities. This would be undertaken in a manner that advances the implementation of the *Declaration Act*, the Action Plan and other existing agreements and constructive arrangements.

Clean Growth



MISSION 1: MEETING B.C.'S CLIMATE COMMITMENTS

The impacts of climate change are all around us. And British Columbians know that delaying is not an option.

This plan delivers on *CleanBC: Roadmap to 2030* to meet B.C.'s emissions reduction targets for 2030 and reach net-zero by 2050. In doing so, more industries and communities will be powered with clean, renewable energy.

This mission will strengthen B.C.'s ability to attract investment and build economic opportunity for British Columbians by accelerating the transition to clean energy solutions.

KEY ACTIONS

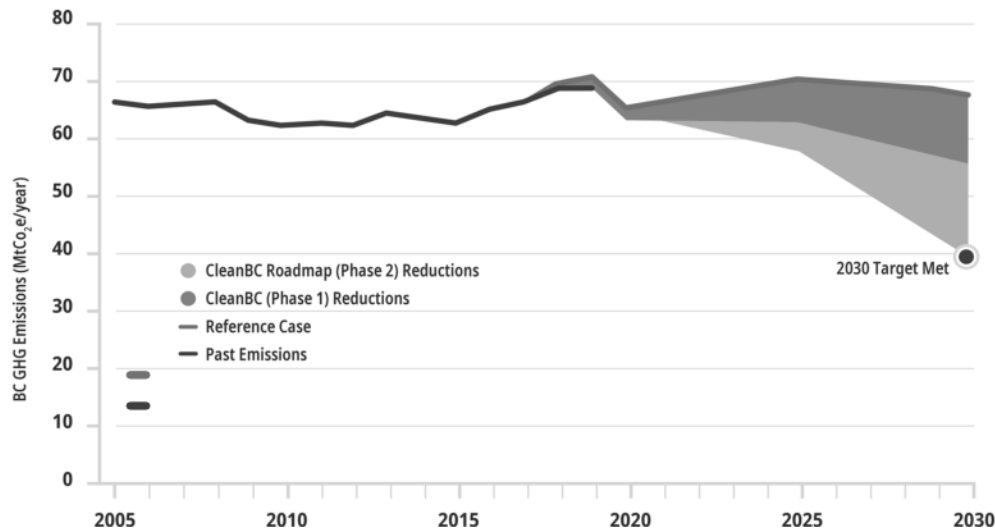
CleanBC supports innovation, growth and jobs by:

- Driving innovation in areas like clean hydrogen, the forest-based bio-economy and negative emissions technology.
- Making all new buildings zero-carbon by 2030.
- Adopting nation-leading targets for zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) by 2030 and 100% ZEVs by 2035.
- Supporting research, development, and commercialization of new clean energy technologies.
- Creating the new Centre for Innovation and Clean Energy to accelerate and scale-up B.C.-based energy technologies, including carbon capture and low carbon hydrogen.
- Developing new construction methods and building materials through the CleanBC Innovation Fund.
- Supporting industries to become cleaner and ready for opportunities in the global clean economy through the CleanBC Industry Fund and the Industrial Incentive Program.



cleanBC
our nature. our power. our future.

CleanBC Emissions Reductions



Courtesy: CleanBC: Roadmap 2030, 2021, p. 18

A NEW VISION FOR OUR FORESTS

Forestry is a foundation of the B.C. economy that provides good, family-supporting jobs. Our iconic old-growth forests are a cherished part of who we are as British Columbians.

Yet, for too long, short-sighted policies meant that control of B.C.'s forests was consolidated in the hands of too few and ecosystem health was not prioritized. This approach left workers and communities behind – and completely passed over First Nations.

That's why our government has a new vision for B.C.'s forests – one where our oldest and most ancient forests are protected, Indigenous Peoples are full partners in sustainable forest management, and workers and communities benefit from secure, innovative forestry jobs for generations to come.

This new approach to forests:

- Increases local control to ensure we better share all the benefits provided by B.C.'s forests
- Supports sustainable economies by transforming the sector from volume to value – with more made-in-B.C. manufacturing and fewer raw logs shipped overseas
- Advances reconciliation by creating more tenure opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and shared decision-making of forestry management



Clean Growth

MISSION 2: LEADING ON ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Of B.C.'s many economic advantages, the province's commitment to and reputation for environmental and social responsibility is increasingly important to improve our competitiveness and open up new markets for trade.

Through the StrongerBC Economic Plan, our government is securing B.C. as a world leader for championing corporate environmental, social and governance standards (ESG), helping British Columbians to develop, promote, and market environmentally and socially responsible goods and services. Our clean energy advantage is creating new opportunities in our electricity and natural gas sector that fit within CleanBC.

This mission will help position B.C. to compete and win in a global economy that puts a premium on ESG.

KEY ACTIONS

- Strengthening B.C.'s mining sector through the B.C. Mining Jobs Task Force to ensure environmental and regulatory excellence in mining, and the sustainable exploration for minerals needed in the new economy.
- Investing in the development of clean energy and clean technology with new initiatives such as the Centre for Innovation and Clean Energy.
- Launching a new ministry which will help ensure land-based permitting processes are transparent, timely and fair.
- Supporting low-carbon innovation and the low-carbon economy across sectors through the new InBC Investment Corp (InBC).
- Encouraging cleaner industrial operations through the CleanBC Industrial Incentive Program.





B.C.'S HYDROGEN STRATEGY

For British Columbia to meet its CleanBC goals, we must change how we produce and consume energy. When burned or used in a fuel cell, hydrogen produces no carbon emissions. It is one of the only solutions for decarbonizing sectors of the economy where direct electrification is not practical.

Therefore, renewable and low-carbon hydrogen will play an essential role in our sustainable energy future.

With our clean hydroelectricity, abundant natural resources and innovative companies, B.C. can be a world leader in the growing hydrogen economy – creating new cleantech jobs and opportunities for people across the province.

B.C. has already implemented robust policies to encourage hydrogen use in the transportation sector. The B.C. Hydrogen Strategy lays out 63 actions we will take together to speed up the

production and use of renewable and low-carbon hydrogen, and make B.C. a world leader in the growing hydrogen economy.

These actions include:

- Incentivizing the production of renewable and low-carbon hydrogen
- Developing regional hydrogen hubs where production and demand are co-located
- Financial supports for deploying fuel cell electric vehicles and infrastructure
- Expanding the use of hydrogen across different industrial sectors and applications
- Promoting the adoption of hydrogen in areas where it is most cost-effective in terms of emission reductions
- Creating the B.C. Centre for Innovation and Clean Energy to drive the commercialization of new hydrogen technology



Clean Growth

MISSION 3: FOSTERING INNOVATION ACROSS OUR ECONOMY

Businesses, industry, and government are harnessing the power of innovation to add value to products and services in new and traditional industries.

In B.C., the high-tech sector is growing quickly. In 2019, more than 130,000 British Columbians were employed in high-tech earning \$12 billion in income – the highest ever recorded.

Through the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#), our government is fostering innovation across the economy by supporting talent development, tech adoption, scale-up of small businesses, and collaboration between the innovation ecosystem and other sectors of the economy.

This mission will position B.C. as a global innovation leader so that British Columbians benefit from new jobs and opportunities across an innovation-driven economy.

KEY ACTIONS

- Helping high-potential businesses grow in B.C. through InBC, a \$500-million strategic investment fund that will deliver economic, environmental and social returns.
- Creating the new B.C. Centre for Innovation and Clean Energy.
- Positioning B.C. to be a world leader on quantum computing by creating the Quantum Algorithms Institute at Simon Fraser University.
- Developing a Coastal Marine Strategy, Wild Salmon Strategy and Watershed Security Strategy.
- Creating 2,000 new tech-relevant spaces in public post-secondary institutions on top of the 2,900 new tech spaces already created.
- Working with government and business leaders from both sides of the border, through the Cascadia Innovation Corridor, to create a global model for sustainable growth.
- Investing in B.C.-based carbon capture and storage and other low carbon technologies.
- Developing a long-term provincial shipbuilding strategy to ensure continued growth and jobs.
- Developing an intellectual property strategy to support the growth and innovation of B.C. companies.





THE ROLE OF INNOVATION

Innovation is the process of generating and applying fresh ideas to develop new or improved products and services.

Driving the expansion of B.C.'s tech, clean energy and life sciences sectors, while adding value to traditional industries like mining and forestry, innovation is a key contributor to new jobs and growth throughout B.C.'s economy. Innovation improves our productivity, increases wages, boosts investments, and increases exports.

The [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) fosters B.C.'s innovation eco-system through a *Future Ready: Skills for the Jobs of Tomorrow plan* to

develop and attract new talent, the *CleanBC: Roadmap 2030* to counter climate change, and new social and physical infrastructure to strengthen communities and promote economic development across the province.

Through Innovate BC, our government is also providing support to businesses, entrepreneurs, and non-profits across B.C. to bring new products and ideas to market, adopt leading-edge technologies, and secure talent, while opening doors of economic opportunity for Indigenous Peoples and traditionally under-represented groups.

Clean Growth, New Actions

Mass Timber Action Plan

For generations, British Columbia's resource workers built this province, generating the wealth we all depend on for our standard of living and quality of life. Almost three quarters of B.C. exports are from our natural resource sector. Natural resources account for 50 percent of B.C.'s economic base – the money brought into our economy through exports. Natural resource industries are, and will continue to be, key to B.C.'s long-term economic success.

Already, B.C. is a world-leader in the development of mass timber, a new value added low carbon technology that promises to revolutionize the way we build here at home and in emerging markets around the world. Compared to milling logs for lumber, mass timber can deliver up to seven times the economic value for an in-demand forest product that helps us meet our climate goals.

The **Mass Timber Action Plan** seizes on this opportunity for future growth by partnering with First Nations and Indigenous communities to support new business opportunities, modernizing regulations, training the mass timber workforce, and profiling mass timber to markets in Canada and the world. B.C. has the highest number of mass timber buildings per capita of any province or state in North America.

ESG Centre of Excellence

In an increasingly competitive global economy, British Columbia's high standards for environmental protection, social support, and democratic governance are an important and growing economic advantage. Around the world, interest in responsible investment is booming as concerns about the climate emergency, corruption, cyber security, and systemic discrimination have grown.

To support B.C. businesses and entrepreneurs to promote, develop, and market environmentally friendly and socially responsible goods, resources and services, our government is coordinating the development of an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy.

As part of that strategy, we will establish an **ESG Centre of Excellence**.

The new Centre will facilitate ESG investments in B.C., attract socially and environmentally conscious investors, and diversify markets for B.C.'s world-class goods and services under a respected and trustworthy ESG brand.

Position B.C. as a worldwide hub for Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing

B.C. is home to the fastest growing life sciences sector in Canada with more than 2,000 companies employing approximately 17,000 British Columbians.



Through the pandemic, B.C.'s life sciences companies have earned international recognition for new technologies and treatments that are being used around the world. Virtually every COVID-19 vaccine candidate that reached late-stage development in 2020 used components that were consulted, initiated, developed, or manufactured by a B.C. company or scientist.

To support the growth and diversification of B.C.'s life sciences sector, the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) accelerates investments in health research. Through the ***Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy***, the [StrongerBC Economic Plan](#) positions B.C. as a worldwide life sciences hub by nurturing new talent, developing new lab space, leveraging the research capacities of B.C.'s post-secondary sector, and supporting employment across the sector.

A Growing and Innovative Ecosystem for B.C. Manufacturers

COVID-19 has shown us all that we need to secure, shorten and make our supply chains more resilient.

That means we have to manufacture more of what we and the world need here at home.

Manufacturing is already British Columbia's second-largest contributor to GDP for goods-producing industries in B.C.'s economy.

The scope of manufacturing in B.C. is vast, from wood and paper manufacturing to specialty aerospace parts. An estimated 11,000 small and medium-sized manufacturing companies contribute almost \$16 billion for B.C.'s GDP and employ more than 167,000 British Columbians.

Guided by an ***Industrial and Manufacturing Action Plan***, we will create more domestic manufacturing capability, increase cross-sector collaboration, and create new jobs and high-value, sustainable goods across sectors.



Clean Growth, New Actions *continued*

The Action Plan will focus on ways to:

- **Increase investments** in capital upgrades, R&D and advanced technologies to drive growth and promote supply-chain resiliency
- **Increase diversity and volume** for exports of value-added B.C. goods and new products through innovation
- **Accelerate and adopt green and net-zero initiatives**, and champion B.C. products as having an ESG advantage

Establish Integrated Marketplaces

British Columbia's small, domestic market can make it challenging for B.C. clean technology companies.

Without sufficient domestic demand, small companies can have difficulty growing to compete in the global market.

To help overcome this challenge, through the StrongerBC Economic Plan, our government will work with identified sectors to establish **Integrated Marketplaces**.

Integrated marketplaces help connect local clean tech companies with B.C. businesses looking for clean tech solutions.

Think of them as matchmakers.

B.C. businesses that share clean tech needs will join forces to buy a product from a B.C. clean tech company. In doing so, they give the local clean tech company the opportunity to fill large

orders which reduces costs, helps them grow, and opens up doors for export. In this way, integrated marketplaces support the growth of B.C.'s clean tech economy and will help us meet our climate change goals.

Getting our Goods To Market

Transportation and logistics make up a major economic sector in B.C.: over 14 percent of our economic base. And they also enable growth in other sectors, by helping businesses get the materials they need and get goods to market.

B.C. businesses export goods all over the world. And the StrongerBC plan positions our province to continue to move to the forefront of meeting a growing global demand for products that reduce emissions. Doing all of this requires a competitive transportation and logistics network here at home.

The StrongerBC Economic Plan will develop a **Goods Movement Strategy**, to provide leadership and coordination among transportation industries and achieve greater coordination between roads, railways, and ports. The goal is to ensure inputs and final goods move as efficiently as possible and businesses are able to scale-up. The result will be economic growth throughout the province, including partnerships with Indigenous Peoples.

Projects like the Highway 99 Tunnel program and the Highway 1 - Kamloops to Alberta - Four Lane project are securing B.C.'s reputation as a global export leader.

Clean Growth, New Actions *continued*

Feeding B.C. and Beyond

When the pandemic disrupted supply chains, it made many of us pay attention to something we often take for granted — the food we eat. In B.C. we are lucky to have such incredible bounty right in our own backyard, and we help feed the world with it. Food is also a huge part of our provincial economy: our agriculture, seafood and processing sectors employ more than 64,000 British Columbians and contribute \$5.4 billion to B.C.'s GDP.

Food Hubs, already found in twelve communities around the province, help food entrepreneurs overcome barriers to growth by providing access to shared equipment.

British Columbia is also home to more than 150 innovative companies that are developing and using leading-edge technologies to enhance productivity, increase sustainability and improve food security. These companies are filled with workers who want to be farmers — just different types of farmers. The B.C. Food Security Task Force issued its final report to the government in 2020, highlighting key findings to remove barriers to help establish British Columbia as a leader in the next agricultural revolution. We now have an opportunity to position this vibrant and clean industry to provide socio-economic benefits while contributing significantly to GHG

reductions by using fewer resources all while feeding the province and beyond.

We are committed to making B.C. a global player in the agritech marketplace. A new **Agritech Centre of Excellence** will make B.C. a world-leader in creating an ecosystem that brings together government, industry, academia, and Indigenous partners to share innovation, best practices and knowledge all in the pursuit of enhanced food security and clean growth.

The Centre will help companies grow and scale-up including research and development, piloting, commercialization, incubation and mentorship and will help to create high-paying, high-quality, high-tech jobs in B.C. Our universities will demonstrate their world-class leadership and expertise by working directly with B.C. industry and companies and by sharing research and skills training. Through the centre, the province will also be positioned to capitalize on federal funding in support of agritech and agrifood.

Partnership opportunities with First Nations and Indigenous organizations, including direct training for more than 50 highly qualified personnel and piloting vertical indoor growing systems to grow traditional herbs, will be facilitated through the Agritech Centre of Excellence.





Helping Businesses Access New Global Markets

A distinct shift is underway in the world affected by geopolitical circumstances, the COVID-19 pandemic, and new international trade agreements. These events emphasize the increasing importance of a robust, resilient, and diversified trading base for British Columbia.

This is B.C.'s opportunity to form new relationships, explore markets in new geographic locations, and to identify fresh trading opportunities to help set the course for our future. The development of British Columbia's **Trade Diversification Strategy** will focus on promoting trade that pivots away from over-reliance on a single market, making B.C. more resilient to market volatility and

geographically specific trends and changes. This strategy will set the direction for increased opportunities to export our products and services, as well as for attracting foreign investment to support B.C. businesses.

We will continue to take full advantage of our competitive edge as a trade and investment jurisdiction renowned for our Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) values.

Opportunities to cultivate the participation of more diverse and under-represented groups in international trade will be a priority. One of the strengths of B.C.'s Trade Diversification Strategy will be our collaborative approach to exploring new opportunities by working with partners and stakeholders, in this province and across Canada.



TRACKING OUR PROGRESS

The StrongerBC Economic Plan focuses on the direction of growth as well as the rate of growth. The plan will help generate a strong, expanding economy, while also ensuring the benefits are shared more equally, and that environmental sustainability is a foundation for future growth. In short, the plan starts from the assumption that, while economic growth is essential, such growth on its own is not enough.

To ensure that the plan's inclusive and clean growth goals produce tangible results for British Columbians, it includes tools that allow government to measure progress toward achieving those goals and adjust course as necessary. Such tools are important — not only to demonstrate a serious commitment to meaningful progress, but because we can't achieve what we can't measure.

We have to take a new approach to measuring economic progress.

The most common measurement of economic growth and prosperity is gross domestic product (GDP). GDP calculates the total output of an economy over a period of time. This

measurement has been criticized both for what it does not measure (it misses anything not bought or sold through the market) and for what it does (wars and environmental catastrophes both generate new spending, raising GDP).

Governments and policy makers around the world have come to the same conclusion about needing a new approach. They have developed their own measurements. **Because what gets measured gets done.** The United Nations tracks progress towards its Sustainable Development Goals using a broad range of social, environmental and economic metrics. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Better Life Initiative is based on 11 key indicators. New Zealand's national budgets now include indicators to measure "well-being."

The B.C. government will continue to measure and report on GDP and starting with this plan, will also consider a broader set of indicators. For more information on the indicators used to track B.C.'s economic progress, please visit: StrongerBC.ca/plan



WWW.STRONGERBC.CA/PLAN

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

Title: Service Planning and Reporting

Revised: Date of last revision, February 17, 2023

Context and Legislation

- The annual service plan lays out the ministry's key priorities for the next three fiscal years and includes a series of measures to assess performance.
- Made public annually, the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* (BTAA) requires that three-year service plans are published on budget day, and service plan reports are published by August 31st.

Service Plan Guidelines Changes

- The Ministry of Finance, Crown Agencies Secretariat (CAS) made several significant changes to the 2023/24 service plan guidelines:
 - Performance measures are now tied to each goal, rather than each objective, making it easier to track long-term performance measures.
 - A new operating environment section is included, that provides readers with important internal and external factors that may impact the organization.
 - New discussion sections under key strategies are included to provide the reader with more context.

Significant CITZ Service Plan Changes from Last Year

- One performance measure was removed, another was refined, and a target was updated:

2023/24 Estimates Note Advice to the Minister

Ministry: Ministry of Citizens' Services
Minister Responsible: Hon. Lisa Beare

- The BC Bid measure (number of suppliers registered with the Province's BC Bid sourcing application) which appeared in last year's Service Plan has been removed as onboarding has been robust since launch of the new BC Bid system.
- The B.C. Data Catalogue measure (number of net new datasets in B.C. Data Catalogue) has been refined to track 'net new' datasets published in the BC Data Service. Since the number of datasets published at any given time is based on new data being added and old data being retired, it is a more accurate measure.
- The Service BC measure (citizen satisfaction with the Contact Centre) forecast and targets were changed to align with industry-leading standards for public sector organizations.

Contact:

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Ministry of Citizens' Services

2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan

February 2023



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Published by the Ministry of Citizens' Services

Minister's Accountability Statement



The Ministry of Citizens' Services 2023/24 – 2025/26 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa Beare". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Citizens' Services
February 14, 2023

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Strategic Direction

In 2023/24, the Government of British Columbia will continue our work to make life better for people in B.C., improve the services we all rely on, and ensure a sustainable province for future generations. Government will focus on building a secure, clean, and fair economy, and a province where everyone can find a good home – whether in a rural area, in a city, or in an Indigenous community. B.C. will continue working toward true and meaningful reconciliation by supporting opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be full partners in an inclusive and sustainable province. The policies, programs and projects developed over the course of this service plan period will focus on results that people can see and feel in four key areas: attainable and affordable housing, strengthened health care, safer communities, and a secure, clean, and fair economy that can withstand global economic headwinds.

This 2023/24 service plan outlines how the Ministry of Citizens' Services will support the government's priorities and selected action items identified in the [December 2022 Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

The Ministry will continue to support government's priorities and foundational principles identified in the [November 2020 Minister's Mandate Letter](#).

Purpose of the Ministry

The [Ministry of Citizens' Services](#) brings innovation, value and service excellence to the public service and citizens of British Columbia. In support of this, the ministry works with our partners to create opportunities, find innovative solutions, and implement the changes that support and enable government to achieve its priorities for British Columbians. The ministry is guided by several pieces of [provincial legislation](#).

Dedicated to making life better for British Columbians, the ministry provides accessible multi-channel services through a single-point-of-contact service approach to people in urban and rural communities through [Service BC](#), and delivers the digital face of government at www.gov.bc.ca. To help people connect to government supports and services, including virtual healthcare and online learning, the ministry enables the expansion of high-speed internet connectivity throughout this geographically vast and diverse province. Internet connectivity supports job growth, a strong and diversified economy, healthcare delivery, and resilient communities. In addition, the ministry supports other ministries with public engagement to reach out and learn from British Columbians on issues that matter to them.

The ministry provides strategic direction across government to modernize information-management and technology and improve transparency and access for British Columbians. This includes responding to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, providing trusted data services, and statistical and economic research and analysis to businesses and the public sector. The ministry also manages government's real estate assets and facilities-related

services, technology systems and equipment, including the procurement of high value contracts critical to delivering technology services to government and the broader public sector.

With a goal of creating more opportunity for businesses of all sizes to engage in government procurement, including increased participation by Indigenous businesses and communities, the ministry is working to support a resilient vendor marketplace and increased business opportunities to create rewarding jobs to benefit individuals, families, and communities across the province. The ministry also serves other ministries, the broader public sector and citizens in full cost recovery business areas including publishing and printing solutions via King's Printer, asset investment recovery, and BC Mail and product distribution.

Operating Environment

There are many internal and external factors that may affect the operating environment of the ministry in achieving its strategic direction, including social change, shifting demographics, technological innovation, the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery, and global market uncertainty. Climate hazards, such as extreme heat events, wildfires, and floods, can impact service delivery at government buildings and make government building infrastructure vulnerable. Working collaboratively with various levels of government, Indigenous partners, stakeholders, and the private sector impacts the ministry's work and implementation of priorities; for example, partnering with all levels of government and the private sector to expand high-speed internet across the province by 2027.

Evolving expectations of British Columbians are changing the way government does business; BC residents expect to access government services through multiple channels, including digital channels. To that end, the ministry is aiming to provide improved, easy-to-use services and information for all people, equitably, across the province. As British Columbians' expectations for service delivery evolves, the ministry needs to be responsive to these expectations to facilitate multi-channel service delivery, access to information, and coordinated services to the public.

There is increased expectation for government openness, transparency, and accessibility. The rapid evolution of technology has enormous potential to support service delivery improvement. At the same time, government is also managing the vast amount of information we collect, use, and produce in our daily operations while protecting privacy and ensuring accountability.

Recruitment and retention of skilled staff is critical to meeting ministry goals and objectives. Maintaining a high quality of service requires an engaged workforce that is prepared to meet the expectations of changing service demands. The ministry will embrace the opportunities presented by continuously working to redefine services and improving how citizens engage and interact with government.

Economic Statement

B.C.'s economy has been resilient to pandemic, geopolitical and climate-related disruptions. However, higher interest rates are expected to weigh on the economy in the coming years. Following a rapid recovery from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, high inflation led to successive interest rate increases from the Bank of Canada in 2022. The impact of higher interest rates has been evident in housing markets and there is uncertainty over its transmission to the rest of the economy in B.C. and among our trading partners. B.C. is heading into this challenging period in relatively strong position, with a low unemployment rate. The Economic Forecast Council (EFC) estimates that B.C. real GDP expanded by 3.0 per cent in 2022 and expects growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.6 per cent in 2024. Meanwhile for Canada, the EFC estimates growth of 3.4 per cent in 2022 and projects national real GDP growth of 0.5 per cent in 2023 and 1.5 per cent in 2024. As such, B.C.'s economic growth is expected to be broadly in line with the national average in the coming years. The risks to B.C.'s economic outlook center around interest rates and inflation, such as the risk of further inflationary supply chain disruptions, the potential for more interest rate increases than expected, and uncertainty around the depth and timing of the impact on housing markets. Further risks include ongoing uncertainty regarding global trade policies, the emergence of further COVID-19 variants of concern and lower commodity prices.

Performance Planning

Goal 1: Support a strong, sustainable, and innovative economy by making it easier to participate in government procurements and create opportunities for communities across the province.

Through modernized procurement and business registration services, and engagement across the province, the ministry will continue to explore how to improve the experience and create opportunities for small, medium, and large-sized businesses, including those in rural and Indigenous communities.

Objective 1.1: Create opportunities for small, medium, and large businesses to access government procurements.

Value for money is maximized when the contract types and procurement processes are scaled to meet business needs and align with the market, rather than a “one size fits all” approach. This enables a broad-based supplier community, including Indigenous businesses, and promotes supply resiliency for the timely delivery of government’s services and requirements.

Key Strategies

- Create culturally appropriate procurement practices and help build procurement capacity for Indigenous businesses, communities, and government employees through the [Indigenous Procurement Initiative](#).
- Provide leadership for continued upfront planning, engagement, and collaboration with small, medium, and large suppliers in communities across B.C. to make it easier to do business with government.
- Continue to develop policies, standards, and guidance for government procurement processes to help improve Indigenous, social, environmental, and economic outcomes for businesses and communities across the province.

Discussion

The strategies under this objective will create more opportunities for business – regardless of their size – to participate in government procurement by increasing capacity, responding more effectively to changes in markets and enhancing the user experience. Planned milestones include:

- Through an external advisory committee that includes representatives from Indigenous businesses and communities, an action plan will be co-developed to identify and implement short, medium, and long-term measures under the Indigenous Procurement Initiative.

- Conduct Discovery Day sessions, where government presents their challenges through requests for information, allowing vendors to get a better understanding of governments' needs and submit potential solutions.
- All purchases have the potential for economic, social, Indigenous, or environmental impact. The Impact Procurement project is a multi-year pilot project that will test a broadened scope of government's social impact purchasing guidelines. Progress will be monitored through information and data collection and will aid to develop the policies, standards, and guidance necessary to use purchasing power to improve Indigenous, social, environmental, and economic outcomes.

Objective 1.2: Enhance the experience for businesses when interacting with government.

Modernizing procurement and business registration services results in efficiencies for both government buyers and businesses wishing to do business with government. Making it easier for buyers to do business can increase participation in procurement processes, which results in increased business opportunities and economic growth for everyone in B.C., including in rural and Indigenous communities.

Key Strategies

- Ensure government services for businesses remain responsive through the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery by implementing support models for onsite and remote staff.
- Enhance extra-provincial business registration by modernizing BC Registry platforms, allowing for easier access and verification, and creating a consistent user experience.
- Streamline and simplify BC Registry services to make it easier for British Columbians to start up and maintain a business in B.C.
- Enhance digital security ensuring business information remains secure when accessed through government channels.
- Reduce and automate processes to simplify procurement interactions between government buyers and suppliers by expanding the [Sprint With Us](#) and [Code With Us](#) procurement programs, within the [Exchange Lab](#) and the [Digital Marketplace](#).
- Explore changes that can be made to be more inclusive of Indigenous languages in business name registration.

Discussion

The strategies noted above will make it easier for business to work with government. By creating the conditions for modern and responsive service delivery, the ministry can continuously enhance the experience for businesses that wish to conduct business with government. This flexibility is particularly important for the Digital Marketplace, which must be adaptive to the quickly changing business landscape in the technology sector.

In partnership with multiple service providers across government and the broader public sector, the ministry is completing a multi-year project to improve, modernize and enhance Registry services and BC business data, focused on improving technology, security, and efficiency, to streamline access to business information and support services for citizens.

The factors that may impact the ministry's ability to realize these objectives, include the availability of qualified technical resources and partner readiness as government systems are transitioned away from a mainframe infrastructure.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2011/12 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
1a Satisfaction with services to businesses provided by Service BC. ¹	89%	At least 90%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2024/25	At least 90%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2026/27

Data source: BC Stats.

¹ The margin of error is $\pm 2\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

Discussion¹

Progress is measured on biennial business satisfaction surveys that focus on the overall experience when accessing government programs and online services. The survey results reflect the overall experience that business representatives have with Service BC when requesting or receiving support.

Service BC strives to reach a business satisfaction score of at least 90%, which indicates Service BC met businesses' needs in a convenient and timely manner. Business satisfaction levels are evaluated using a survey conducted by BC Stats on a biennial basis. Data provided by these surveys are used to inform continuous improvement efforts in service delivery.

Goal 2: Provide greater public accountability by improving access to government information, while ensuring the protection of privacy.

Access to, use, and protection of government information and data is the foundation of a functioning democracy and is a fundamental duty of the public service. Government information, including the use of data, allows for evidence-based decision making and innovation to better meet the needs of British Columbians.

¹ The BCBid measure (Number of suppliers registered with the Province's BC Bid sourcing application) which appeared in last year's [Service Plan](#) has been removed as onboarding has been robust since launch of the new BC Bid system.

Objective 2.1: Enhance public access to government records.

The ministry provides corporate leadership across government with respect to government's information management legislation, policies, practices, operations, and training. These efforts focus on improving the capacity of public servants to effectively manage government information, protect sensitive and personal information and, ultimately, provide timely responses to FOI requests.

Key Strategies

- Review and improve access to information by onboarding all ministries to a new FOI system.
- Support government in creating and maintaining government information by moving government information with archival value to a new system that supports long-term preservation.
- Enhance access to information and support government's commitment to open information and transparency by proactively disclosing additional information so that citizens can access more government records without having to place an FOI request.

Discussion

The strategies noted above will work together to enhance the public's access to government records by proactively disclosing certain information to the public domain and by enhancing internal systems to improve timeliness and service delivery.

The FOI Modernization project is a multi-year initiative that will review and improve access to information. The project is creating a new system to process FOI requests and five ministries have already onboarded to this new system. In 2023/24, all ministries will onboard, making access to information services more efficient and easier for citizens. Progress will be monitored by the ministry through regular reporting.

The Digital Archives project will establish a new, modern system that supports the long-term preservation of historically important government information. Government information with archival value will be moved into the system and public access will be made faster and easier over time. Progress will be monitored by the ministry through regular reporting.

Proactive disclosure is the release of government information to the public without a formal FOI request. The practice of disclosing information on a proactive basis is the best way for government to improve access to information, transparency, and accountability. The ministry facilitates the publication of specific categories of information on behalf of government under proactive disclosure directives, and progress is monitored by reports to the minister.

Objective 2.2: Improve the use, management, sharing and protection of data for all British Columbians.

The province sets the laws and policies that ensure appropriate collection, management, and use of data within government. Reliable, timely, quality data is necessary to understand and identify real workable solutions to major issues in B.C., such as systemic racism, homelessness, the impact of climate change and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. This work requires thorough consideration so that government protects people's privacy, collects only what is necessary, and analyze data in such a way that ensures trust. Concurrently, strong cybersecurity practices are essential for the protection of sensitive information, enabling people to conduct their online transactions with confidence that the information entrusted to government is secure.

Key Strategies

- Address barriers to effective use of data in delivering services to British Columbians more efficiently and effectively.
- With the [*Anti-Racism Data Act*](#) as a foundation, develop a comprehensive policy and program framework in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and the Anti-Racism Data Committee and begin collecting and using data to identify systemic racism.
- Expand the use of cross-government data to increase evidence-based decision making and better inform public policy including focusing on priority research for anti-racism work in health, education, and policing.
- Increase the data catalogued through open data initiatives, including partnering with holders of high value datasets, to showcase data available and encourage its use.
- Establish and promote a distinctions-based approach to Indigenous data governance, including supporting the establishment of a First Nations-governed and mandated regional data governance centre in alignment with the First Nations Data Governance Strategy.
- Improve government's public sector data security and privacy practices to ensure that British Columbians' personal information is safeguarded.

Discussion

The ministry will monitor progress towards the regional data governance centre as part of the [*Declaration Act Action Plan*](#).

In 2021, government modernized [*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*](#) (FOIPPA) to help B.C. keep pace with technology, ensure timely access to information, and strengthen privacy protections. Additional initiatives will build on the foundation created by those legislative amendments and improve the use, management, and protection of data.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2016/17 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
2a Percent of on-time Freedom of Information requests.	80%	90%	90%	90%	90%

Data source: AXIS System, the ministry's internal Freedom of Information tracking system.

Discussion

An FOI request is a formal process to request records from a public body, including personal information requests when an individual requests their own information held by government, such as child in care records, and general requests for all other government information. Part of government's commitment to improve FOI service delivery is to prioritize British Columbians who are waiting for access to their personal information. The percentage of on-time responses to FOI requests measures the number of requests that were completed within the timelines defined in FOIPPA. It is one way for government to measure the effectiveness of its access-to-information program.

Timeliness reporting is significantly impacted by government's ongoing commitment to respond to overdue requests. It is important to note that a request's processing time is only calculated into the average timeliness measure when the request is closed. So, by closing an increased number of overdue files, the percent of on-time FOI requests will decline. This focus on overdue files is expected to impact the 2022/23 forecast for this performance metric even though it is a vital initiative to provide records to citizens waiting for access.

In 2023/24, the FOI Modernization project will onboard all ministries into a new FOI request system. In the long-term, this will improve timeliness and make access to information services easier for citizens. In the short-term, onboarding may impact the timeliness metric as cross-government users become familiar with the new technology and processes. Government also proactively discloses a high volume of records without the need for an FOI request, including summaries of all government briefing notes, executive calendars, travel expense summaries, contract summaries, transition binders, and estimates notes.

Performance Measure	2021/22 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
2b Number of net new datasets in B.C. Data Catalogue.	145	167	184	200	220

Data source: DataBC Website - <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset>.

Discussion

By working with partners across government and the broader public sector to increase the number and breadth of datasets in the BC Data Catalogue, the ministry is improving access to data and its use to support innovation and evidence-based decision making. Increasing this data catalogue will also support innovation through open data initiatives. Transparency into data holdings also ensures greater public accountability.

The performance indicator has been updated to track 'net new' datasets published in the BC Data Service. Since the number of datasets published at any given time is based on new data being added and old data being retired, it is a more accurate measure to track the work. By measuring only net new data being added to the catalogue, we are more accurately measuring this strategy.

Goal 3: Make life better for British Columbians by delivering the services that people count on.

Social change, technological innovation, climate change, and the expectations of British Columbians are changing the way government does business. To that end, the ministry is aiming to provide improved, equitable, easy-to-use services and information for people, regardless of how or where they live in the province.

Objective 3.1: High-speed internet is expanded with increased bandwidth in rural and Indigenous communities.

British Columbians depend on a reliable internet service to conduct business and to access fundamental needs such as healthcare and education and which supports job growth, a strong and diversified economy, and stronger communities. Internet connectivity is the foundation to several government priorities, including those for rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Key Strategies

- Leverage funds from other levels of government and the private sector to support investments in transport and last-mile digital infrastructure to support the expansion of high-speed internet services to every household in the province by 2027.
- Support the expansion of high-speed internet services (broadband) to under-served rural and Indigenous communities through the [Connecting Communities BC](#) program.
- Develop additional online tools, such as the [Community Information Tool](#), available to local governments to help with connectivity planning.

Discussion

On March 8, the [governments of British Columbia and Canada announced an agreement to invest up to \\$830 million \(\\$415 million each\)](#) to support expanding broadband infrastructure in the province to all under-served households by 2027. Funding for new projects is administered

through the [Connecting Communities BC](#) program. This is the next generation of the [Connecting British Columbia](#) program and a key part of [StrongerBC](#) and [B.C.'s Economic Plan](#).

The first intake of the program was launched in September 2022, and subsequent intakes will be launched as required, until the program has achieved its connectivity goal of 100 per cent of households connected to an internet service by 2027 of at least 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download speed and 10 Mbps upload speed. As the province works to close the gap in connectivity by 2027, tracking the remaining under-served areas in B.C. will require a more granular approach to be inclusive of the population that live outside of communities, and those households on and off reserves. Ongoing reporting will therefore reflect a household count. There were 115,000 under-served homes when the Connecting Communities BC program was announced in March 2022. As of November 2022, there are 93,500 under-served homes remaining in the province. In the future, the province will track this number until all households are served.

Objective 3.2: Government services are accessible, effective, and efficient.

The ministry strives to provide improved, easy-to-use, culturally relevant services and information for all people, equitably, regardless of how or where they live in the province.

Key Strategies

- Work with partners and the public to modernize government services and leverage best-in-class digital tools that enhance cross-sector coordination, and provide services that are efficient, equitable, and prioritize user experience, including publishing a government-wide Digital Code of Practice to help ministries design, build, buy and operate technology and digital services.
- Ensure government services remain responsive and accessible, including through the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery and other emergency situations by ensuring all supporting systems are in place, responsive and the appropriate business continuity strategies are identified.
- Enhance equity in government services by establishing data management policies, standards, and guidelines—including accommodating Indigenous language names and updated gender and sex codes in government systems and services—and supporting other ministries in their implementation of this guidance.
- Collaborate with program partners on supporting the reclamation of traditional names on the BC Services Card.
- Install more electric vehicle charging stations at government buildings throughout the province to support successful transition of government's fleet from internal combustion engines to zero emission vehicles.
- Implement energy upgrades at more government buildings throughout the province, such as improved heating systems and modernized building controls to reduce energy waste.

Discussion

The ministry is working across government to ensure that government services are accessible, inclusive, and connected for people and businesses across the province regardless of the channel through which they want to engage. This includes providing guidance to ministries, supporting investments in digital services, helping ministries hire digital experts to design and build digital services and providing shared technology products and services to support multi-channel service delivery.

By working across government, the ministry is helping to ensure information related to public health information campaigns (COVID-19, seasonal influenza, etc.) and critical emergency and recovery related information, is easily located and accessible. This work includes supporting the translation of priority content into multiple languages to enable transparent and equitable access to critical government information.

Government is working to transition their vehicle fleet of internal combustion engines to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) to meet emission reduction and vehicle uptake targets. A priority in upcoming years will be the installation of vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the province for citizen, employee, and government fleet vehicle use.

The ministry is on track to meet energy management and greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction targets legislated under the *Climate Change Accountability Act*. Work is underway to incorporate climate risks into energy and GHG reduction efforts to further the resilience of the provincial real estate portfolio.

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	2018/19 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
3a Number of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities ¹ that have benefitted from investments in high-speed internet. ^{2 3 4}	417	620	685	725	750

¹ Data source: Government of Canada: Geolocated placenames dataset: <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/fe945388-1dd9-4a4a-9a1e-5c552579a28c>.

² Data source: Ministry of Citizens' Services (Network BC) internal analysis.

³ The definition of 'community' refers to rural and remote communities and includes named places such as districts, Indigenous communities, municipalities, towns, villages as well as incorporated areas and strategic landing sites required for a network to operate. Communities may require one or more projects to be wholly served at the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Universal Service Objective of 50 Megabits per second download and 10 Megabits per second upload.

⁴ Figures represent a cumulative number of communities.

Discussion

The province helps develop strategies and programs that enable service providers to expand broadband infrastructure in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. This performance measure demonstrates the level of success in expanding the number of communities and/or households benefiting from incremental broadband internet investments.

The targets presented for the next three fiscal years are based on information received from multiple sources and are subject to change; factors like weather conditions, terrain and the remoteness of each community can affect the build process. This measure does not consider the uptake usage or subscription rate (i.e., end-user) of how many users there are and does not include access to cellular service.

Performance Measure[s]	2012/13 Baseline	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target
3b Citizen satisfaction with the Contact Centre. ^{1,2}	90%	At least 85%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2024/25	At least 85%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2026/27
3b Citizen satisfaction with Service BC Centres. ¹	90%	At least 90%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2024/25	At least 90%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2026/27

Data source: BC Stats.

¹ The margin of error is $\pm 1\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

² As of January 1, 2020, our contact centre aims for a satisfaction score of 85%. The target was changed to align with industry-leading standards for public sector organizations.

Discussion

This measure is based on biennial surveys that focus on the overall citizen experience when people access government programs and services, either in person through the province's 65 [Service BC Centres](#) or by telephone through the Service BC Provincial Contact Centres. The measure shows how satisfied people are with overall quality when they access government programs and services.

Service BC Centres target at least 90% satisfaction, while the Contact Centre strives to reach at least 85% satisfaction, which indicates people's needs were met in a convenient and timely manner. Data provided by these surveys are used to inform continuous improvement efforts in service delivery.

Financial Summary

Core Business	2022/23 Restated Estimates ¹	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Services to Citizens and Businesses	31,528	34,776	35,392	35,392
Office of the Chief Information Officer	1,640	2,023	2,095	2,095
BC Data Service	24,477	28,753	29,117	29,117
Connectivity	13,705	23,981	24,033	24,033
Procurement and Supply Services	8,753	10,324	10,811	10,811
Real Property	362,596	364,897	365,106	365,106
Enterprise Services	173,393	173,878	174,975	174,975
Corporate Information and Records Management Office	22,646	24,644	25,023	25,023
Government Digital Experience	8,561	9,484	9,484	9,484
Executive and Support Services	9,428	10,010	10,090	10,090
Total	656,727	682,770	686,126	686,126
Capital Expenditures (\$000)				
BC Data Service	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000
Procurement and Supply Services	480	753	150	150
Real Property	305,718	259,610	100,663	70,648
Enterprise Services	47,476	54,449	35,436	34,172
Executive and Support Services	336	210	210	210
Total	464,010	425,022	246,459	215,180

Core Business	2022/23 Restated Estimates ¹	2023/24 Estimates	2024/25 Plan	2025/26 Plan
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
Real Property – Strategic Real Estate Services				
Receipts	(1,000)	(700)	(300)	(600)
Disbursements	2,500	2,300	2,100	4,200
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	1,500	1,600	1,800	3,600
Total Receipts	(1,000)	(700)	(300)	(600)
Total Disbursements	2,500	2,300	2,100	4,200
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	1,500	1,600	1,800	3,600

¹ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2022/23 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2023/24 Estimates.

* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Capital Expenditures

The Nanaimo Correctional Centre Project is reported by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, as the project lead for reporting purposes. The capital budget for this project resides with the Ministry of Citizens' Services.

Ministry of Citizens' Services

2021/22 Annual Service Plan Report



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Minister's Accountability Statement



The *Ministry of Citizens' Services 2021/22 Annual Service Plan Report* compares the ministry's actual results to the expected results identified in the *2021/22 – 2023/24 Service Plan* created in April 2021. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa Beare".

Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Citizens' Services
July 28, 2022

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Letter from the Minister

The Ministry of Citizens' Services 2021/22 Annual Service Plan Report provides a summary of our achievements and progress made over the past year to support British Columbians.

Delivering fast, efficient, front-line support and services for the hundreds of programs and services the provincial government offers to residents and businesses is central to our ministry's vision to ensure British Columbians can access the information they need, when they need it. This past year, Service BC employees helped roughly four million visitors in 65 locations in the province, helping residents renew their driver's licence, pay a bill, or change their address.

Central to our province's long-term vision to build a sustainable economy for everyone is to ensure that by 2027, every British Columbian, regardless of where they are located in the province, has access to high-speed internet. Bridging the digital divide is a critical part of British Columbia's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and our commitment to reconciliation and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Driven by our strong partnership with the federal government, we're delivering on this commitment with an historic joint investment of \$830 million, meaning many First Nations communities will have high-speed internet access for the first time – advancing true, lasting and meaningful reconciliation and self-determination. Approximately 115,000 households in rural, remote and Indigenous communities that are still underserved will now have the same digital economic opportunities as larger urban communities. Connecting Communities BC is the next generation of our connectivity program and a key part of StrongerBC and the Economic Plan.

We continue to make good progress to better serve British Columbian businesses with the modernization of BC Registries and Online Services by replacing legacy applications with a more seamless and secure service. The changes made to BC Registries and Online Services will make it easier, faster and more secure for people and businesses to complete online transactions and filings, manage accounts and pay for services.

Our ministry has delivered on our promise to modernize the BC Bid system, the Province's online procurement marketplace, which is now open to buyers, suppliers and the public. The new BC Bid system provides a more modern experience, allowing businesses better access to contract opportunities offered by core government, crown corporations, health authorities and municipalities, delivering benefits for people and businesses across the province.

This focus on putting people first is fundamental to our government's guiding principles. I am proud of my ministry's accomplishments over the past year and look forward to delivering more of the services and programs British Columbians depend on.



Honourable Lisa Beare
Minister of Citizens' Services
July 28, 2022

Purpose of the Annual Service Plan Report

The Annual Service Plan Report is designed to meet the requirements of the Budget Transparency and Accountability Act (BTAA), which sets out the legislative framework for planning, reporting and accountability for government organizations. Under the BTAA, the Minister is required to report on the actual results of the ministry's performance related to the forecasted targets documented in the previous year's Service Plan.

Purpose of the Ministry

Dedicated to making life better for British Columbians, the Ministry of Citizens' Services is guided by several pieces of provincial legislation, delivers accessible, multi-channel services, through a single-point-of-contact service approach to people in urban and rural communities through Service BC, and delivers the digital face of government at www.gov.bc.ca. In addition, the ministry supports other ministries to reach out, engage and learn from British Columbians on issues that matter to them.

To help people connect to government supports and services, including virtual health care and online learning, the ministry provides leadership, management, facilitation, and support for the expansion of high-speed internet connectivity throughout this vast and diverse province. Internet connectivity supports job growth, a strong and diversified economy, health care, and stronger communities.

Providing strategic direction across Government, the ministry is modernizing information-management and information-technology resources to effectively meet the needs of British Columbians. This includes relevant responses to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests; providing trusted data services to government agencies; and statistical and economic research, information and analysis to businesses and the public sector.

The ministry manages the government's real estate assets and facilities-related services, technology systems and equipment. It also leverages procurement to realize the best value for taxpayers and increase benefits for communities. With a goal of creating more opportunity for businesses of all sizes to engage in government procurement, with a particular focus on supporting increased participation by Indigenous businesses and communities, the ministry is working to support a resilient vendor marketplace and increased business opportunities to create rewarding jobs to benefit individuals, families, and communities across the province.

Strategic Direction

The strategic direction set by Government in 2020, Minister Lisa Beare's 2020 Mandate Letter, and government's coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic shaped the goals, objectives, performance measures and financial plan outlined in the 2021/22 Ministry of Citizens' Services Service Plan and the actual results reported on in this annual report.

Operating Environment

In 2021/22 the ministry played a pivotal role in supporting government's response to dramatically changing global and regional environments and worked to advance government priorities to make life more affordable for British Columbians, improve the services people count on, and build a strong, sustainable economy in every corner of the province.

One of the ministry's core commitments is to ensure every British Columbian has equal access to high-speed internet by 2027. Internet connectivity supports job growth, a strengthened and diversified economy, health care, and stronger communities. As of the end of 2021/22, our government has invested \$190 million to advance work being done across the province to provide high-speed internet to rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. Strong telecommunications networks and connectivity are critical components of economic recovery and growth. The continued importance of providing funding to accelerate capital investments by internet service providers is vital to restarting the economy in rural B.C. during and post-pandemic.

The new BC Bid tool is part of a strategy to transform government procurement and make it easy for people to do business with the Province. In 2021/22, user readiness was assessed for the new BC Bid tool, government buyers were trained, information sessions were offered for suppliers and the broader public sector, and registration and onboarding was designed. Additionally, the procurement transformation strategy is in line with the StrongerBC initiative under B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan to build back a strong economy focused on inclusive growth for all.

Managed appropriately, government information can generate data-driven innovation as well as social and economic development. The ministry oversees all government records and access to information legislation, policy and practices across government. Freedom of Information (FOI) requests continue to grow in number, size and complexity. Government has now received over 10,000 FOI requests for the fifth year in a row, while it continues to increase the types of government records made available to people without the need for a request. There have been 75% more proactive disclosure directives added since December 2020.

People, businesses and organizations can access an improved BC Data Catalogue to find provincial government data, applications and web services that can be used to make informed decisions and create opportunities for British Columbians. The updated catalogue provides access to non-sensitive data, helping B.C. tech firms create new products for people in B.C. There are more than 3,000 sets of data in the catalogue, allowing businesses to easily make knowledgeable decisions, build new products or services, and develop new business models. The creation of new datasets has increased by 35% since improvements to the catalogue were made in fall 2021.

Citizens' Services remains focused on government commitments and foundational principles, including equity and anti-racism, and lasting and meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. To consider how diverse groups of people may experience our policies, programs, and initiatives, the ministry is working to implement the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* in all aspects of ministry business; and to address systemic discrimination and

inform policy and budget decisions, reviewing decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the operating environment for the ministry in 2021/22, as priorities and operations remained focussed on both economic recovery and pandemic response.

BC Registries enabled businesses' electronic meeting attendance, temporarily paused companies' dissolution status for failure to file annual reports, and supported electronic affidavit filing to support businesses in British Columbia in response to COVID-19.

The BC Services Card integration with the Health Gateway service, a critical component of B.C.'s COVID-19 response, allowed individuals to securely access their test results and proof of vaccination. The BC Services Card Program had over 1.6 million BC Services app activations for individuals to access online government services.

Service BC enabled access to the BC Vaccine Card and Federal Vaccine Card, using the Health Gateway through authentication with the BC Services Card app. This allowed people to access their Vaccine Passport online and save it to their mobile device so that it could later be presented in accordance with public health requirements.

The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) managed virtual tools that supported an unprecedented number of public servants working remotely. By December 2021, the OCIO was supporting 43+ million minutes of audio and video calls monthly.

The Government Digital Experience Division (GDX) ensured the public was informed with the latest information by managing the web presence for COVID-19 supports on gov.bc.ca/COVID19, gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated and gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard. From April 2021 to March 2022, there were 78.6 million page views.

In November 2021, B.C. experienced catastrophic flooding caused by atmospheric river events, resulting in severe floods and mudslides, which blocked every major highway connecting the Lower Mainland with the rest of the province. In response, flood web content and the Service BC flood support line were launched. Between mid-November 2021 and January 26, 2022, flood web content was viewed 427,000 times and the flood support line received 790 calls.

British Columbia's economic recovery strengthened in 2021. B.C.'s real GDP growth of 6.2 per cent was the second highest among provinces (behind Prince Edward Island), following a contraction of 3.4 per cent in 2020. Growth in B.C.'s real GDP was mostly driven by service-producing industries such as real estate, rental and leasing, healthcare and social assistance, and professional, scientific, and technical services. Goods-producing industries also experienced growth with gains in most sectors, led by mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction. While B.C.'s recovery broadened in 2021, it remained uneven as sectors such as accommodation and food services, and arts, entertainment and recreation have yet to fully recover to pre-pandemic levels. B.C.'s labour market strengthened in 2021, with employment growth of 6.6 per cent while wages and salaries increased by 11.3 per cent. Consumer spending on goods remained at elevated levels and nominal retail sales posted overall growth of 12.6 per cent. Meanwhile, inflation grew throughout the year and increased by 2.8 per cent on an annual basis, largely due

to supply-chain disruptions, resilient demand for goods and services, and high energy prices. Residential construction activity reached a record high in 2021, with housing starts increasing by 25.6 per cent. At the same time, home sales also reached a record high in 2021 while the average home sale price saw double-digit increases. On the external front, B.C.'s international merchandise exports grew by 36.0 per cent, reflecting a combination of the recovery in global demand and higher commodity prices amid impacts from the B.C. floods and landslides in November 2021.

Report on Performance: Goals, Objectives, Measures and Targets

Goal 1: Support a strong, sustainable, and innovative economy by making it easier to participate in government procurements and create opportunities for communities across the province.

Objective 1.1: Create opportunities for small, medium, and large businesses to access government procurements.

Key Highlights

- Hosted eight Discovery Day sessions in support of the [Procurement Concierge Program](#). Sessions bring together buyers and vendors to explain government issues or problems and present requests for information so vendors can submit potential solutions to address government challenges.
- Launched training for government buyers on using the [new BC Bid](#) tool, offered information sessions for suppliers and the broader public sector, designed buyer and supplier registration and onboarding, and conducted an assessment to ensure that we are ready to start onboarding users.
- Established and maintained a streamlined process for ministries to contract with qualified Indigenous facilitators to help ensure government's engagements with Indigenous peoples are culturally safe.
- Leveraged procurement opportunities under a facilities management services contract for all government building locations to support local and small businesses.

Performance Measure(s)	2017/18 Baseline	2020/21 Actuals	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Actuals	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
1.1 Number of suppliers registered with the province's BC Bid sourcing application. ¹	4,800	6,890	5,800	5,965	6,000	6,200

Data source: BC Bid database – monthly BC Bid Subscribers Report.

¹ Data indicates the number of suppliers who purchased e-Notification and e-Bidding subscriptions. e-Notifications allow suppliers to be alerted when opportunities that match their areas of interests are posted to BC Bid. e-Bidding capabilities allow a supplier to submit their bids electronically through BC Bid.

Discussion of Results

BC Bid is the online marketplace tool that businesses use to gain access and insight to contract opportunities offered by core government and hundreds of publicly funded organizations, such as crown corporations, health authorities, and municipalities. The number of suppliers who are registered with BC Bid provides a measure for the breadth of small, medium, and large suppliers who do business with government in communities across B.C.

The 2021/22 target was achieved. This was a result of a consistent set of suppliers maintaining their registration in BC Bid for 2021/22. While registration was down from the previous year, this is likely a direct correlation to 20% fewer procurements being posted for all of government and the broader public sector during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Objective 1.2: Enhance the experience for businesses when interacting with government.

Key Highlights

- As part of a phased, multi-year modernization, enabled cooperative associations to complete filings online, making for a more seamless and secure service; developed a modern program for businesses requesting a business name, improving their experience and assisting businesses in understanding business naming rules; and launched a new Personal Property Registry providing an enhanced experience and greater security.
- Completed 27 procurements, 5 Sprint With Us¹ and 22 Code With Us², all of which went to contract. With these 27, a total of 100+ procurements have completed with the BC Developers' Exchange and the Digital Marketplace.
- Continued to support businesses by enabling electronic meeting attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic, temporarily pausing companies' dissolution status for failure to file annual reports, and supporting filing of electronic affidavits.

Performance Measure(s)	2017/18 Baseline	2020/21 Actuals	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Actuals	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
1.2 Satisfaction with services to businesses provided by Service BC. ¹	89%	87%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2022/23	Biennial survey; next survey in 2022/23	At least 90%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2024/25

Data source: BC Stats.

¹The margin of error is $\pm 2\%$ at the 95% confidence level.

¹ Sprint With Us is a procurement mechanism that allows the B.C. Government to procure Agile software development teams.

² Code With Us is a procurement mechanism for public sector organizations in British Columbia to pay developers for code.

Discussion of Results

Service BC strives to reach a business satisfaction score of at least 90%, which indicates Service BC met businesses' needs in a convenient and timely manner. Business satisfaction levels are evaluated using an arms-length survey conducted by BC Stats on a biennial basis. Data provided by these surveys are used to inform continuous improvement efforts in service delivery.

There were no results for 2021/22 as the last survey occurred in 2020/21 and the next survey is scheduled for 2022/23. Biennial survey results reflect the overall experience that business representatives have when requesting or receiving support from Service BC.

Goal 2: Provide greater public accountability by improving access to government information, while ensuring the protection of privacy.

Objective 2.1: Enhance public access to government records.

Key Highlights

- Launched a pilot to five ministries for a modernized and unified FOI request management system that automates many routine administrative tasks as part of a multi-year project to improve and modernize Freedom of Information services, focusing on improving timeliness and making access to information services easier for citizens.
- Enhanced access to information by adding monthly summaries of ministerial briefing notes to the [types of government records](#) available to people without a freedom of information request.
- Created a new online form, so people have a more streamlined process for submitting personal or general FOI requests.

Performance Measure(s)	2017/18 Baseline	2020/21 Actuals	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Actuals	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
2.1 Percent of on-time Freedom of Information requests.	80%	85%	85%	81%	90%	90%

Data source: AXIS System, the ministry's internal Freedom of Information tracking system.

Discussion of Results

The percentage of on-time responses to FOI requests is an essential way for government to measure the effectiveness of its access to information program. This measure provides an indication of government's annual performance in responding to FOI requests within the timelines defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Government continues to receive a high number of requests and has now received over 10,000 requests for the fifth year in a row. Although government's timeliness target was not achieved, government continues to prioritize responding to overdue FOI requests while also investing in systems development to modernize and improve timeliness.

Government also proactively discloses a high volume of records without the need for an FOI request, including summaries of all government briefing notes, executive calendars, travel expense summaries, contract summaries, transition binders, estimates note and the newly added summaries of ministerial briefing notes.

Objective 2.2: Improve the use, management, sharing and protection of data for all British Columbians.

Key Highlights

- Supported 19 separate project teams to access and use the Data Innovation (DI) Program, putting data to work for people by providing a trusted approach for safe analysis, empowering data-driven decision making and policy innovation, and applying privacy and security protections. Additionally, the DI Program was expanded to academic researchers who, along with the B.C. Government, can now apply to begin a population-level research project.
- Released an updated data catalogue to increase discovery and access to government data, including increased access to non-sensitive data to help B.C. tech firms create new products that help people in B.C.

Performance Measure(s)	2017/18 Baseline	2020/21 Actuals	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Actuals	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
2.2 Number of datasets in B.C. Data Catalogue.	2,750	3,107	3,000	3,172	3,050	3,100

Data source: DataBC Website - <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset>.

Discussion of Results

By working with departments across government and the broader public sector to increase the amount of data sets in the Data BC Catalogue, the ministry is ensuring greater public accountability and improving access to government data, resulting in evidence-based decision making. The availability of data and mapping expertise helps other government departments and agencies deliver on their mandates.

The 2021/22 target was surpassed due to an increased profile of the value of data through the BC Data Council and its dedicated engagement efforts. BC's Data Council is a cross-government group of data experts that support an all-of-government approach to management of public sector data to facilitate data use by government, academia, the private sector, and citizens.

Goal 3: Make life better for British Columbians by delivering the services that people count on.

Objective 3.1: High-speed internet is expanded with increased bandwidth in rural and Indigenous communities.

Key Highlights

- Initiated construction on the Connected Coast project, bringing high-speed internet and improved connectivity to hundreds of B.C. rural, remote, and Indigenous communities on the North Coast, Northern and Central Vancouver Island and Central Coast via subsea fibre optic cable.
- Allocated \$1.6 million in funding from the Connecting British Columbia program, so that 151 households in Lytton and the Indigenous communities of Klahkamich 17 and Klickumcheen 18 (approximately 329 residents) will see their fibre optic network rebuilt.
- Leveraged funds contributed by the federal government to support investments in transport and last-mile digital infrastructure in 2021/22, including:
 - \$3.28 million towards the \$10.6-million cost of building a fibre-to-the-home network to serve residents of Chetwynd and surrounding areas.
 - \$908 thousand towards the \$2-million cost of building a fibre-to-the-home network to serve residents in four Indigenous communities of Okanagan 1, Paul's Basin 2, Nooaitch 10 and Kamloops 1.
- Allocated \$3.1 million to expand cellular coverage along an estimated 92 km of Highway 3 by adding eleven new cell towers between Hope and Keremeos.
- In March 2022, the Governments of B.C. and Canada announced a partnership to invest up to \$830 million to support connectivity infrastructure projects. This funding will support connecting the remaining underserved 347 rural and 115 Indigenous communities in B.C. by 2027.

Performance Measure(s)	2017/18 Baseline	2020/21 Actuals	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Actuals	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
3.1 Number of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities ¹ that have benefitted from investments in high-speed internet. ^{2,3,4}	417	527	570	600	620	685

¹ Data source: Government of BC: Geographic Names dataset:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/celebrating-british-columbia/historic-places/geographical-names>

² Data source: Ministry of Citizens' Services (Network BC) internal analysis.

³ The definition of 'community' refers to rural and remote communities and includes named places such as districts, Indigenous communities, municipalities, towns, villages as well as incorporated areas and strategic landing sites required for a network to operate. Communities may require one or more projects to be wholly served at the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Universal Service Objective of 50 Megabits per second download and 10 Megabits per second upload.

⁴ Figures represent a cumulative number of communities.

Discussion of Results

The Connecting British Columbia program has leveraged federal funding and private sector capital investment to expand access to high-speed internet in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. In the context of the program, communities include locations that have benefitted from local (last mile) infrastructure and transport builds. The ministry tracks connectivity status to federally defined communities and locations not defined by the federal government.

The province helps develop strategies and programs that enable the private sector to expand broadband infrastructure in rural, remote, and Indigenous communities. This performance measure demonstrates the level of success in expanding the number of communities benefitting from broadband internet investments. In December 2016, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission announced measures to help ensure Canadians, regardless of where they live, have access to internet service at speeds of at least 50/10 Megabits per second as the new standard for download/upload speeds. The new standard includes populations living outside of established or defined communities.

The 2021/22 target was surpassed, and over 570 new communities have benefitted from program investments.

Factors like weather conditions, terrain and the remoteness of each community can affect the build process. This measure does not consider the uptake usage or subscription rate (i.e., end-user) of how many users there are and does not include access to cellular service.

Objective 3.2: Government services are accessible, effective, and efficient.

Key Highlights

- Launched a modernized public feedback tool that makes it easier for citizens and businesses to share their experiences and supports the continuous improvement of services.
- Expanded the usage of the BC Services Card/App to access government services including: Get My Pen, wherein students can obtain their Personal Education Number; ICBC Online Services, for individuals to renew their vehicle insurance online; and Security Programs Services – Criminal Records Check.
- Installed 152 electric vehicle charging stations at government buildings throughout the province, as of March 2022, with many more planned for coming years.
- Implemented energy upgrades at 36 government buildings throughout the province, including lighting, improved heating systems, and better insulation; and modernized the building controls in more than 90 buildings, which allows for optimal energy consumption and reduced energy waste.
- The Buildings for People: Barrier Free Program articulates the ministry's approach to ensuring more meaningful accessibility in government buildings. Gender-inclusive washrooms are a priority area of focus under Buildings for People. The Barrier Free Design Guide for Sanitary Facilities was created in 2021 to make washrooms more

inclusive while meeting all relevant legislated requirements and serving the diversity, safety, hygiene, and access needs for staff and citizens.

Performance Measure(s)	2017/18 Baseline	2020/21 Actuals	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Actuals	2022/23 Target	2023/24 Target
3.2 Citizen Satisfaction with Service BC Centres and Contact Centre. ¹	90%	85%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2022/23	Biennial survey; next survey in 2022/23	At least 90%	Biennial survey; next survey in 2024/25

Data source: BC Stats.

¹ The margin of error is $\pm 1\%$ at the 95% confidence level. Citizen satisfaction is calculated as a weighted average of the in-person and telephone survey results based on the volume of citizens served by each channel.

Discussion of Results

Service BC strives to reach at least 90% satisfaction, which indicates citizens' needs were met in a convenient and timely manner. Resident satisfaction levels are evaluated using an arms-length survey conducted by BC Stats on a biennial basis. Data provided by these surveys are used to inform continuous improvement efforts in service delivery.

There were no results for 2021/22 as the last survey occurred in 2020/21 and the next survey is scheduled for 2022/23. Biennial survey results reflect the overall experience that business representatives have when requesting or receiving support from Service BC.

Financial Report

Discussion of Results

The ministry's 2021/22 net operating budget was \$604,304 million plus other authorisations of \$5,455 million, ending the year with approved operating expenditures of \$609,759 million, or \$608,490 million after prior year accrual adjustments. Capital expenditures were \$221,256 million, underspending was primarily due to changes in project timelines. The ministry supported broader government in achieving its mandate priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and catastrophic weather events. Services were provided to the public directly and indirectly through supporting other ministries in their service delivery, while ensuring strong fiscal management.

Financial Summary

	Estimated	Other Authorizations ¹	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Operating Expenses (\$000)					
Services to Citizens and Businesses	31,528	-	31,528	30,588	(940)
Office of the Chief Information Officer	2,695	-	2,695	5,180	2,485
Digital Platforms and Data	19,072	-	19,072	22,426	3,354
Information Communication Technologies	11,505	762	12,267	14,130	1,863
Procurement and Supply Services	8,053	-	8,053	10,931	2,878
Real Property	345,970	408	346,378	348,658	2,280
Enterprise Services	136,174	4,285	140,459	124,344	(16,115)
Corporate Information and Records Management	22,146	-	22,146	24,759	2,613
Government Digital Experience	8,136	-	8,136	8,761	625
Executive and Support Services	19,025	-	19,025	19,982	957
Sub-total	604,304	5,455	609,759	609,759	(0)
Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual ²	-	-	-	(1,269)	(1,269)
Total	604,304	5,455	609,759	608,490	(1,269)

	Estimated	Other Authorizations ¹	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
Ministry Capital Expenditures (\$000)					
Digital Platforms and Data	110,000	-	110,000	90,959	(19,041)
Procurement and Supply Services	150	72	222	202	(20)
Real Property	246,658	6,641	253,299	103,922	(149,377)
Enterprise Services	32,543	914	33,457	26,094	(7,363)
Executive and Support Services	145	-	145	79	(66)
Total	389,496	7,627	397,123	221,256	(175,867)
Other Financing Transactions (\$000)					
Real Property - Strategic Real Estate Services					
Receipts	(1,100)	-	(1,100)	(71)	1,029
Disbursements	2,500	-	2,500	61	(2,439)
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	1,400	-	1,400	(10)	(1,410)
Total Receipts	(1,100)	-	(1,100)	(71)	1,029
Total Disbursements	2,500	-	2,500	61	(2,439)
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	1,400	-	1,400	(10)	(1,410)

¹ "Other Authorizations" include Supplementary Estimates, Statutory Appropriations and Contingencies.

² The Adjustment of Prior Year Accrual of \$1.269 million is a reversal of accruals in the previous year.

³ For "Other Financing Transactions", this represents Real Property, Strategic Real Estate Services (SRES).

Capital Expenditures

The Nanaimo Correctional Centre Project is reported by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, as the project lead for reporting purposes. The capital budget for this project resides with the Ministry of Citizens' Services.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

Third Session, 42nd Parliament

OFFICIAL REPORT
OF DEBATES
(HANSARD)

Wednesday, April 6, 2022
Afternoon Sitting
Issue No. 183

THE HONOURABLE RAJ CHOUHAN, SPEAKER

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