

FinDev Canada
Accessibility
Canada Act (ACA)
2023 Annual
Progress Report

December 2023

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FinDev Canada *Accessibility Canada Act* (ACA) 2023 Annual Progress Report

Contact information

Accessibility lead

FinDev Canada – Operations Team

Online: Accessibility feedback form can be found on this [page](#)

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Accessibility feedback

We welcome feedback on barriers you may have encountered when visiting our workplaces or website, or during the implementation of our accessibility plan. Consult our **description of feedback** processes found on this [page](#) for

ways to provide feedback, and to learn how your information is used and safeguarded.

Alternate formats

Request alternate formats of our accessibility plan, progress report or description of feedback processes by email at Accessible@findevcanada.ca, or by using the accessibility feedback form found here: [Accessibility at FinDev Canada | Development Finance Institute Canada](#).

- Print
- Large print
- Braille
- Audio format
- Electronic format.

Areas in Section 5 of the Accessibility Canada Act (ACA)

We continue to apply an accessibility lens to our services, programs and products to remove barriers for people with disabilities and improve the customer and employee experience.

Employment

For this pillar, we are committed to applying an accessibility, inclusion, diversity and equity lens to all stages of the employment lifecycle to attract and retain employees with disabilities and build an inclusive work culture.

Through our parent company, Export Development Canada (EDC), we continue to monitor the ACA Standard on Employment (CAN-ASC-1.1), which has a revised target publication date of fall 2024. This standard, which covers all aspects of the employment lifecycle, will have significant impact and require a comprehensive road map to align accessibility priorities, sequencing of funding, and roles and responsibilities. Based on a preliminary review of the draft standard, we are confident that EDC and FinDev Canada will be well-positioned when it comes into force.

FinDev Canada benefits from a number of initiatives managed by our parent company:

- Outreach to external disability employment partners to attract employees with disabilities;
- Identification of candidates needing accommodation during the hiring process;
- Awareness-raising initiatives with the employees, including efforts to highlight wellness and mental health supports within our programming.

Built environment

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

We are continuing to monitor ACA standards for the built environment, namely and with application to FinDev Canada:

- Standard on Emergency Egress (Exit) (CAN-ASC-2.2) with a revised publication date of summer 2025; and
- Model Standard for the Built Environment (CAN-ASC-2.3) with a revised publication date of spring 2026.

The CSA/ASC B651, *Accessible Design for the Built Environment Standard*, which came into effect in 2023, revised an existing standard and contains requirements for making buildings and other facilities accessible to individuals with a range of physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities.

In advance of these standards, our parent company's Real Estate team, which also serves, FinDev Canada, is developing a built environment road map for 2024–2026 and beyond. It will identify resourcing and funding needs in order to respond to new standards and support FinDev Canada's commitment to creating an inclusive and accessible workspace for everyone.

In 2023, FinDev Canada initiated a planning process to design its new head office, a leased facility in a commercial tower in downtown Montreal.

Requirements will include meeting accessible design standards, while respecting budgetary limits. FinDev Canada will aim to build towards the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification with an element that will include considerations for invisible disabilities.

In addition, consideration will be given to the availability of facilities in the new office that will serve to make FinDev Canada a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace. For example, consideration will be given to a meditation/prayer room and a location for parents to attend to a child's needs during office visits.

[Regional offices](#)

FinDev Canada's Ottawa regional office is located on the 6th floor its parent company's building. Likewise, the Toronto regional office is placed within the EDC Toronto community hub. The proactive approach being taken for the parent company's building also applies to our Ottawa and Toronto offices, and accessibility thinking is being applied to all re-designs planned for these spaces.

In late November 2022, the Rick Hansen Foundation conducted an on-site accessibility assessment of EDC's Ottawa Community Hub, where FinDev Canada's Ottawa office is located, to rate the site and determine its level of meaningful access. The Ottawa Community Hub is on its way to officially becoming Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certified (RHFAC) and will be listed on the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Public Registry, a public listing of sites that have completed the RHFAC rating process.

The Rick Hansen Foundation report for the Ottawa Hub has been shared with the building landlord as many of the recommendations are specific to the landlord. Dialogue with the landlord has started in order to prioritize considerations in the report based on cost, impact and level of difficulty.

Guidelines and best practices for physical spaces included in the Rick Hansen Foundation report are being incorporated into the re-design of all EDC spaces in Ottawa, including FinDev Canada's 6th floor space, to help build a model for EDC and FinDev Canada offices in Canada and abroad.

Health and Safety

Our Floor Warden Program was updated and improved to support our hybrid work model since we could not assume employees who served as floor wardens would be in the office on the day of an emergency. By adopting an approach of "everyone is a floor warden," all employees are now responsible for floor warden responsibilities, in the event of an emergency evacuation of the buildings where FinDev Canada has its offices. A short mandatory learning module, *Everyone's A Floor Warden*, was launched in September 2023 to reinforce this message for employees. FinDev Canada's Health and Safety Committee has equally reinforced this message through all-staff meetings. First Aid training was provided to twelve (12) Montreal-based employees by a professional trainer, thus improving FinDev Canada's ability to respond to emergencies.

FinDev Canada's Health & Safety Committee was quite active in 2023 strengthening its membership and procedures and providing health and safety messaging to staff.

Information and communication technologies (ICT)

We are advancing our technology and digital capabilities to improve our client and employee experience through improvements to our website, information technology and communications (ITC) tools. Each is described below.

[FinDev Canada's website](#)

FinDev Canada is working on updates to its website. With this in mind, a Request-for-Proposals (RFP) process is underway to replace the existing website with one compliant with the WCAG 2.1 AA and Plain language standards. In 2024, FinDev Canada will work with the vendor selected via the RFP to develop a new, more accessible website.

In addition, in 2023 an assessment of the current accessibility status of FinDev Canada's website was conducted using various audit tools, including browser tools and extensions, such as Accessibility Insights for Web, Axe DevTools debugger, Chrome's Lighthouse accessibility report and Firefox's Accessibility tools. This work will continue in 2024.

Going forward, FinDev Canada will continue to analyze new contents to be published on the website, using the same tools, to ensure they are WCAG 2.1 AA compliant. For example, FinDev Canada will ensure that new integrated media have correct alternative text, e.g., alternative text used by screen

readers to describe images for those who cannot see images. Also, FinDev Canada will continue to check color contrast is sufficient on new website elements.

Information Technology Tools

In 2023, FinDev Canada prepared a style guide for Power BI reports and dashboards. The main goal is to harmonize all contents created by various contributors of FinDev Canada, including instructions regarding accessibility, to ensure readability (color contrast, minimum size of text, etc.). This style guide will be rolled out to users in 2024.

Similarly, a style guide will be developed by end of 2023/beginning of 2024 for Microsoft Power Apps.

On a continuous basis, FinDev Canada has been increasing employee awareness and use of accessibility features embedded in the technology, platforms and digital tools regularly used at FinDev Canada, such as built-in accessibility features in the Microsoft Teams meetings functionality, and the technology in FinDev Canada boardrooms. More work will be undertaken in 2024 to raise awareness of accessibility solutions.

Communications (other than ICT)

It is important that stakeholders be able to reach FinDev Canada with any questions or concerns about the organization's accessibility plans and approaches. Testing was completed on the accessible@findevcanada.ca e-mail functionality to ensure messages are properly received and processed. In addition, work was completed to identify an accountable resource for ongoing

monitoring of the traffic into the mailbox. Monitoring of the mailbox will continue throughout 2024.

Procurement of goods, services and facilities

Our procurement initiatives at FinDev Canada are managed through our parent company, EDC. Here, the focus is on improving the availability of accessible goods, services and facilities, and the accessibility of procurement policies, programs, guidelines, and processes.

Through our parent company, we continue to embed accessibility into our procurement processes even though there is no current targeted publication date for an ACA Standard for Procurement. The EDC Procurement team has committed to providing diverse supplier data for inclusion in the 2023 annual report and ESG (environmental, social and governance) scorecard.

EDC's *Supplier Code of Conduct*, which also covers FinDev Canada, was updated and approved in June 2023, after consultation with relevant stakeholder groups, to establish external accessibility expectations of suppliers. Accessibility requirements are being incorporated into various internal procurement documents. For example, an internal competitive procurement procedure checklist now includes a step during the initiation phase to assess and incorporate, where appropriate, accessibility considerations into Statements of Work. A justification checklist is being developed with input from Adaptability Canada to document the timely assessment of accessibility considerations within public competitive procurement processes.

Similar to the employment pillar (see above), FinDev Canada benefits from the partnerships and initiatives of its parent company, EDC. Examples include:

- corporate member of the Inclusive Workplace Supplier Council of Canada (IWSCC) in 2022 wherein EDC now advises IWSCC of upcoming competitive procurement notices which they, in turn, share these with their diverse suppliers;
- A Supplier Diversity Program;
- A *Meet the Buyer* event series to raise internal awareness of diverse suppliers followed by a May 2023 match-making event with four diverse suppliers certified through IWSCC; and
- Partnering in Adaptability Canada's research project, *Accessible Procurement: Models for Driving Inclusion & Innovation* which is

assessing EDC's procurement program and includes a visual mapping of procurement processes, barrier identification.

Design and delivery of services and programs

FinDev Canada's parent continues to partner with the ACA working group, other partners, and representatives across EDC, including people with disabilities, to embed accessibility into our daily practices and raising awareness that accessibility impacts everyone everywhere to ensure persons with disabilities are not excluded from all phases of design and delivery of services and programs.

Transportation

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

Through our parent company, we are monitoring the development of the ACA standard on *Accessible Travel for Persons with Disabilities* targeted for publication in fall 2026.

Our aim is to build accessibility into meetings, conferences and events and on our website to advise employees, visitors and guests of the accessibility features available when visiting FinDev Canada sites and to encourage use of our Accessibility Feedback form to give them an opportunity to share their accessibility requirements.

Consultations

Through our parent company, we are building a culture to ensure we are consulting with both internal and external partners and stakeholders to inform all phases of the design and delivery of our products and services.

In late 2022, EDC became a corporate partner in the accessible procurement research project, [*Accessible Procurement: Models for Driving Inclusion & Innovation, led by Adaptability Canada*](#) with the support of [Carleton University \(READ Initiative\)](#), [Canadian Accessibility Network](#) and the [Inclusive Workplace & Supply Council of Canada \(IWSCC\)](#).

Adaptability Canada is also providing consultation services to help prioritize 2024 accessible procurement initiatives and budget requirements and identify initiatives to engage disabled suppliers without major changes to our existing procurement processes.

Our parent company's partnership with CNIB, Canada's largest non-profit supporting people who are blind or visually impaired, is growing. FinDev Canada benefits from this. As part of our National Accessibility Awareness Week, CNIB provided an overview of their *Come to Work Program* and the practical strategies that can be used to create inclusive workplaces for people with vision impairments or loss.

User feedback from a mobility impaired employee at EDC's Ottawa Community Hub also identified a few areas without automatic door openers, preventing access by the employee and some blind spots in the lobby. Based

on this feedback, improvements have been made to the EDC building where FinDev Canada's Ottawa office is located.

Feedback

FinDev Canada's accessibility feedback form was launched with the publication of our first accessibility plan in November 2023. FinDev Canada has not received any submissions through this official online feedback channel.

We continue to receive internal feedback through our parent company's ACA Working Group and other partners across EDC, which is helping to identify priorities and actions. Through these informal channels, we have identified the need to increase internal awareness of accessibility.

What we have learned

We will continue to execute our three-year Accessibility Plan with a focus on the customer and employee experience, specifically for people with disabilities. Proactive incremental steps are being taken to embed accessibility into everything we do at EDC and FinDev Canada.

During the first year of our three-year plan, we have learned:

- An accessibility lens needs to be applied to all major transformation and operational initiatives early and throughout all phases to inform

product, service design and delivery. Cross-functional collaboration is imperative as many ACA pillars overlap with each other such as ICT, Employment, Communications and Procurement.

- We will need to rely on our parent company, EDC, for the resources and skillsets to implement our Accessibility Plan, as well as technologies to test against standards in compliance, and best practices in usability for persons with disabilities.
- Meaningful engagement of users with disabilities needs to be embedded into processes for all products and services.
- Greater progress will be made if we move from tactical, project-level, siloed activities that produce limited gains that are not scalable and sustainable, to ACA action plans, with cross-functional collaboration to design and deliver scalable and sustainable activities.
- Dedicated ACA funding to increase internal knowledge, skills and capacity to execute cross-functional road maps.
- Finally, a move to a strong governance model with shared accountabilities for the ACA action plans, which includes risk and issue awareness and resolution, prioritization, funding, resourcing and sequencing across groups, will help FinDev Canada achieve its ACA goals more significantly and on time.

Training

We continue to benefit from our parent company's collaboration with representatives from EDC's Learning, Communications and Wellness and Accommodations teams, the DiversAbility Employee Resource Group, and employees with disabilities, to design and deliver awareness and training activities to advance accessibility and disability inclusion at EDC, including FinDev Canada.

All new training content developed by our parent company's Learning team is accessible and meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1, level AA (WCAG2.1AA) standards. Enhancements to the user interface design of learning management modules conform with WCAG2.1AA standards for employees using laptops or desktop devices to ensure superior learning experiences for employees with visual and hearing impairments.

A mandatory training course for EDC and FinDev Canada employees, Digital Accessibility, was developed by the EDC Learning team to increase employee awareness about the need to create accessible content and ensure technology being used to perform a job is accessible.

Finally, comprehensive mental health training programs continue to be offered to educate and provide resources and tools to all employees and leaders.