



Information
Management

Benchmarking Information Management Practices: An Assessment Tool

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Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

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Introduction

The Government of Alberta (GoA) has developed an Information Management Framework for managing information assets across the government. It was approved by the Deputy Ministers' Committee in April 2003.

One of the priorities identified in the framework was the need to benchmark information management practices across the government.

This assessment tool was designed to collect information for benchmarking purposes in the 2001-2002 fiscal year. It has been published for ministries to continue measuring their progress on a regular basis. Other outcomes are:

- to assess the extent to which directives of the framework have already been acted upon across ministries;
- to report on the “state of information management”;
- to identify priority areas of improvement for planning purposes; and
- to identify “best practices” that can be leveraged across government.

The items or questions provided in this document are meant to guide ministries in their self-assessment of information management work related to each of the directives within the IM Framework. The tool is organized around each of the 18 directives of the IM Framework and identifies activities or practices that support each directive.

The items may not comprehensively identify all activities towards achievement of the IMF Directives. They are, however, common practices that contribute to the objective. Space is provided for ministries to identify other activities that contribute to each directive.

Also, the items are not mutually exclusive as specific information management activities may contribute to more than one directive. Thus, there is some level of redundancy in the items listed.

Using the Tool

It is likely that ministries will have made some progress on various components of each directive, and will have plans to achieve other components in the future. Thus, at the end of each section, there is a 10-point scale you can use to summarize the general state of progress on each directive.

Accessibility: Information is easily accessible to those who need to use it and are authorized to access it.

1.1: Ministries must ensure that information systems are designed and implemented to easily locate and retrieve information, and to facilitate sharing the information within ministries, across government, with other levels of government and with Albertans, subject to legal constraints.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Do ministry information systems allow for the sharing of information across the ministry?					
Are shared drives accessible across the ministry (as opposed to within specific work groups)?					
Does the ministry have procedures for sharing of information not in electronic format?					
Do system development procedures include specific plans related to access and retrieval of information by staff, by other ministries and by the public?					
Are procedures in place to ensure access to relevant information by other ministries and the public?					
Does the ministry have an inventory or map of its information repositories and their contents?					
Does the ministry have metadata standards and procedures for labeling electronic information?					
Has the ministry adopted an electronic information management system (EIMS)?					
Are tools in place to help users (staff and/or the public) find information (e.g., search engines, thesauri, subject classification pick lists)?					
Are common data standards employed across the ministry?					
Are naming conventions in place for electronic files?					
Are security practices in place to prevent unauthorized access to print and electronic records?					
Does the ministry have an Intranet? Is staff consulted on how easily they can find information on the Intranet?					
Does the ministry measure employee assessment of the ease with which information can be found or the extent to which information is shared?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little progress, <i>ad hoc</i> initiatives 									
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information systems allow sharing across portions of the ministry Some guidelines and procedures have been developed, not fully implemented Staff can find information but say it is difficult 						
								<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems allow for sharing across entire ministry Guidelines and procedures are used regularly Evidence of staff being able to find and/or share information easily 	

1.2 Ministries must develop access standards and practices, including practices for routine disclosure of information. Ministries will ensure that all employees understand the access standards and have the skills to implement them.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Does the ministry have policies or standards for access to information (e.g. identifying public information; distinguishing between public information and information that is protected, confidential, or secret)?					
Does the ministry have written procedures on how to apply policies and standards?					
Does the ministry have procedures in place for identifying information that is publicly available or can be released on a routine basis? To what extent are these standards the result of legislation? Policy? Practice?					
Have staff been provided these policies and standards and procedures? How?					
Do staff receive training on procedures for applying access standards and disclosing information to the public? How often are these training programs offered (or are they available online)?					
Are there clear procedures for responding to requests for information? Do the procedures include authorization or approval to release?					
Does the ministry track the amount of information that is routinely disclosed?					
Are security standards in place to protect confidential information or information that should be protected (i.e., document or file labeling with classification)?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little progress, <i>ad hoc</i> initiatives 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards for routine disclosure have been developed Staff only have some awareness of these standards Standards are only being applied in some areas and no formal process has been established to make the information generally available 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards for routine disclosure have been developed Staff are aware of and understand the standards and apply them regularly Where possible, information identified for routine disclosure is being made available through the ministry web site or through other channels 		

1.3 Ministries must establish plans for the electronic delivery of information to stakeholders and the public, including standards for service level commitments.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Does the ministry have a long-term strategy for the electronic delivery of information to stakeholders and the public?					
Is the plan approved by senior executives? Is it updated annually?					
Does the plan link delivery of services to Service Alberta? Is the plan specific on commitments to Service Alberta?					
Has there been a communications/education program for staff on the plan?					
Has the ministry integrated the various media of delivery in the plan – print, CD-ROM, Internet, Video, etc.					
Does the ministry have standard protocols or practices related to management of information products and services (e.g., product plan, marketing plan, evaluation plan, and formation of product team)?					
Does the ministry measure demand for its electronic information products and services?					
Has the ministry set service level standards (e.g., response time, transaction completion time, and availability of service) for electronic delivery of information?					
Does the ministry have a content management strategy related to delivery of information products and services over the Internet?					
Is there a formal governance structure in place for content management?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
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- Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

- A plan has been developed
- The plan is only partially implemented
- Some information is available electronically but the ministry is working towards much more

- A plan has been developed
- The plan has been fully implemented
- All appropriate information is available electronically
- Demand for the electronic information is well understood

Usability: *Information meets the needs of employees, clients, partners and stakeholders and is timely, relevant, accurate and easy to use.*

2.1 Ministries must establish and apply quality control procedures to ensure the information they produce is based on the demonstrated needs of users, is accurate and reliable, and is easy to use.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Does the ministry conduct regular assessments of user needs as they relate to information?					
Do these assessments address the needs of employees?					
Do these assessments address the needs of clients?					
Do these assessments address the needs of stakeholders?					
Do these assessments address the needs of the public?					
Does the ministry have tools staff can use for these assessments of user needs?					
Are results from user needs assessments easily accessible by all in the ministry?					
Does the ministry have standard protocols or practices related to management of information products and services (e.g., product plan, marketing plan, evaluation plan, and formation of product team)?					
Does the ministry have documented procedures for quality control related to information products and services?					
Do quality control procedures include evaluation of the accuracy, integrity, authenticity of information?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little progress, <i>ad hoc</i> initiatives 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some form of user needs assessment has been conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least partial planning is underway for applying the results of the assessment to quality control A process for assessing accuracy and reliability has been developed 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive evaluation of user needs has been conducted A plan is in place for applying the results of the assessment to quality control Quality control standards are promulgated, communicated and being implemented across the ministry A process for assessing accuracy and reliability has been developed and implemented 		

2.2 Ministries must establish procedures to regularly review the value of information products and services for intended users, including the disposition of information that is no longer useful.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Have procedures and timetables been established for reviewing information products and services? What are they?					
Does the ministry have an up-to-date and accurate inventory of information products and services? How recent is it? How was it compiled?					
Have any reviews been conducted so far? Have any products or services been eliminated based on a review? Which ones? What criteria were applied?					
Are staff aware of these procedures and are they applying them?					
Does the ministry have procedures in place to ensure that information that is no longer of value is disposed of in the appropriate manner?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
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- Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

- Procedures and timetables for reviewing information products and services have been developed
- An inventory of products and services is at least in the planning stages

- Procedures and timetables for reviewing information products and services have been developed
- An inventory of products and services is complete
- Reviews of information products and services is being conducted throughout the ministry

2.3 Ministries must assess opportunities for leveraging the value of information through cross-ministry sharing of information, combining information from several ministries to create new information products, and ensuring that existing information is available to meet new business challenges.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Has the ministry established processes, and connections, to enable them to leverage cross-ministry sharing of information? What forms do they take?					
Does the ministry have Memoranda of Understanding or other agreements to leverage its information?					
Are these agreements with other ministries?					
Are any of these agreements with stakeholders?					
Are any of these agreements with other levels of government?					
Are any of these agreements with other external partners?					
Has the ministry estimated the asset value of its information? If so, what methods were used?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
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■ Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

■ Processes and strategies are planned or under development to enable the ministry to leverage inter-ministerial sharing of information

■ Processes and strategies have been developed to enable the ministry to leverage inter-ministerial sharing of information
 ■ The ministry has already embarked on information sharing initiatives

Accountability: Accountability for the management of information in the custody or under the control of each ministry is clearly defined.

3.1 Ministries must designate an “executive champion” responsible for information management within the ministry.

Activity	None	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Has the ministry designated an “executive champion?” (If yes, who is he or she and what position do they hold?)					
Is the executive champion directly responsible for information management functions within the ministry?					
Does the executive champion report to the Deputy Minister?					
How involved are they in information planning and management? What activities have they participated in?					
How much time have they committed to championing information management?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
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■ Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

■ The ministry is in the process of designating a champion

■ The ministry has designated a champion
 ■ The champion is actively involved in promoting information management

3.2 Ministries must develop accountability structures related to information management practices.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Has the ministry developed an accountability structure for information management?					
Are accountabilities defined for executives?					
Are accountabilities defined for managers?					
Are accountabilities defined for IM professionals?					
Are accountabilities defined for all staff?					
Is staff familiar with the accountability requirements?					
Does the ministry do annual performance measures (either alone or in conjunction with others) for accountability as it applies to managing information? At what levels?					
Are incentives and measures being used to monitor accountability?					
Has a reward structure been put in place to reward exceptional contributions in information management?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
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- Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

- Roles and responsibilities are being defined
- A plan is being developed to communicate roles and responsibilities

- Roles and responsibilities have been defined
- A plan has been implemented to communicate roles and responsibilities
- Annual reviews and performance measures have been modified to encourage accountability as it applies to managing information

3.3 Ministries must implement assessment processes to evaluate progress in implementing information management.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Are procedures in place to evaluate progress or audit the implementation of management practices?					
Have variables or metrics been established?					
Has an evaluation been conducted? Is it conducted at regular intervals (e.g., annually)?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

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■ Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

■ Processes to evaluate progress in implementing information management are planned or under development.

■ Processes have been established to evaluate progress in implementing information management

■ An evaluation been conducted

■ The ministry has a good sense of how much progress has been made in IM

Integrated Approach: Information assets are managed throughout their entire life-cycle regardless of the medium in which they are held.

4.1 Ministries must implement plans and practices related to the life-cycle of information — creation, capture or collection; organization; storage; access and use; and disposition (destruction or permanent retention).

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Have plans and procedures been established related to the life-cycle of information?					
Are the following media included in the plans and procedures?					
Databases					
Internet content					
Paper records					
Electronic records, including electronic mail					
Other media (maps, photos, etc.)					
Are these procedures communicated to staff? How?					
Does the ministry have a classification system for information?					
Is the classification system used for both print and electronic information?					
Are there well understood and applied retention and disposition schedules?					
Have staff been trained on transitory records?					
Is electronic information being maintained throughout its life-cycle?					
Are tools available to staff to assist them in managing information throughout its life-cycle?					
Is the management of information through its life-cycle monitored and assessed (e.g., management of e-mail records and other electronic information)?					
Have variables or metrics been established?					
Has an evaluation been conducted? Is it conducted at regular intervals (e.g., annually)?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

4.1 Ministries must implement plans and practices related to the life-cycle of information — creation, capture or collection; organization; storage; access and use; and disposition (destruction or permanent retention). [continued]

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Little progress, <i>ad hoc</i> initiatives 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plans and processes related to the life-cycle of information are under development ■ Staff only have some awareness of these plans and processes ■ A plan is being developed to communicate and implement new plans and processes and educate staff 					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plans and processes have been developed related to the life-cycle of information ■ New plans and processes have been thoroughly communicated to staff ■ An evaluation has been conducted to ensure staff have the required knowledge and are using it ■ Tools have been developed and are being used to support managing information throughout its life-cycle

4.2 Ministries must ensure that information, regardless of type or the medium in which it is stored, is managed under the same principles and is captured in appropriate systems so that the information can be organized and described to facilitate access and ongoing management of the asset.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Is information in both electronic and print media maintained according to the same principles?					
Have staff received training on managing information in multiple media?					
Does the ministry have a classification system for information?					
Is the classification system used for both print and electronic information?					
Are metadata standards in place to describe information in print or electronic records? If so, what standards are in place? How are they applied?					
Does the ministry have other standards in place for print and electronic information (e.g., use of ministry identity, titles, ISBN registration)?					
Has an evaluation been conducted? Is it conducted at regular intervals (e.g., annually)?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
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- Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

- A plan has been developed to ensure information in both electronic and print media is maintained according to the same principles
- The plan is only partially implemented
- A plan is being developed to train staff in managing information in multiple media

- A plan has been implemented to ensure information in both electronic and print media is maintained according to the same principles
- Staff have been trained in managing information in multiple media
- The use of electronic records as the primary record has been explored

4.3 Ministries must identify core competencies related to information management and provide skills development opportunities to ensure staff acquire these competencies.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Have core competencies been identified as they relate to information management? If yes, what competencies have been identified? Do they form part of individual job descriptions?					
Are staff assessed against these core competencies? How?					
Is training available for staff to ensure these core competencies are developed?					
Is training voluntary or compulsory?					
How many staff have received training so far and at what levels?					
Have competencies been identified for information management professionals in the ministry (e.g., libraries, Internet, records management, publishing, etc.)?					
Are professional development plans in place for information management professionals in the ministry?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥	⑦	⑧	⑨	⑩
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- Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

- Core competencies are being identified as they relate to information management
- A plan is being developed to assess staff against these core competencies
- Training courses are being developed to ensure these core competencies

- Core competencies have been identified as they relate to information management
- A plan is in place to assess staff against these core competencies
- Training courses have been conducted to ensure these core competencies
- At least 50% of staff have attended training courses

Planned and Coordinated Approach: *Coordinated planning for the management of information is linked to business and budget planning.*

5.1 Ministries must integrate information management planning into the business and budget planning cycle, highlighting major IM strategies in the annual ministry business plan.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Has the ministry integrated IM planning into the business and planning cycle?					
Are information needs assessed against each objective/activity in the business plan?					
Were major IM initiatives included in the last annual plan? (If yes, what were they?)					
What criteria are used to budget for and approve major IM initiatives?					
Is information planning linked to the ministry's annual IT plan?					
Is information planning a part of business continuity planning?					
Is information planning a part of the ministry's financial planning?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

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■ Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

■ The ministry has occasionally integrated IM planning into the business and planning cycle

■ The ministry has integrated IM planning into the business and planning cycle

- Major IM initiatives were included in the last annual plan
- IM Planning is included in IT planning, continuity planning and financial planning.

5.2 Ministries must ensure that a coordinated approach is taken to information management such that the expertise of various IM disciplines (archives management, data management, FOIP, library management, print and electronic publishing, and records management) is brought together to support business units in the implementation of information management practices.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Is expertise coordinated between the various disciplines and business areas? How?					
Are there links (formal or informal) between IT, Records Management, Communications and other IM professionals? What are they? Are there standing committees that bring them together regularly?					
Do the various areas coordinate training and service delivery to the other business areas? (If yes, how?)					
Does the ministry have a protocol in place to involve information management professionals in the planning, development and delivery of programs and services (e.g., as part of project management protocols)?					
Is expertise coordinated between the various disciplines and business areas? How?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

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■ Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

■ The ministry has developed a plan to ensure formal links between IT, Records Management, Communications and other IM professionals

■ The ministry implemented formal links between IT, Records Management, Communications and other IM professionals

■ There are standing committees that bring them together regularly to plan and coordinate IM in the ministry

■ The various areas coordinate IM training and service delivery to the other business areas

5.3 Ministries must integrate information planning into succession plans to ensure the capture and maintenance of corporate history.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Has the ministry taken steps to include information planning in succession planning? Is this applied across the ministry?					
Are policies and procedures in place to assist managers when developing and implementing succession planning?					
Does hiring allow for adequate overlap between staff to allow for knowledge transfer and learning on the part of the replacement person?					
Does the ministry have procedures in place to identify information or knowledge gaps?					
Does the ministry have procedures in place for knowledge transfer to maintain corporate expertise?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

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■ Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

■ Policies and procedures are being developed to assist managers when developing and implementing succession planning

■ Policies and procedures are in place to assist managers when developing and implementing succession planning

■ The ministry includes information planning in succession planning across the ministry

■ Hiring allows for adequate overlap between staff to allow for knowledge transfer and learning on the part of the replacement person

Optimize the Value of Information Assets: *Information assets will be managed to optimize the investment of the Government of Alberta*

6.1 Ministries must identify intellectual property assets that are information-based to be protected in business transactions.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Has the ministry identified intellectual property assets that are information-based? (If yes, what criteria are used to identify these assets?)					
Does the ministry measure and track these investments and the value of the investments?					
Is information part of broader asset management within the ministry?					
What agreements are in place to benefit from the use of these assets?					
Are procedures in place to protect new assets (e.g., registering copyright; sale or pricing for use of information; brand management)?					
Does the ministry have policies and methods for pricing information products and services?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

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■ Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

■ The ministry has identified intellectual property assets that are information based
 ■ Some agreements are in place
 ■ Minimal measure or tracking of these investments

■ Intellectual property is fully integrated into asset management within the ministry

6.2 Ministries must ensure that business continuity plans include the identification of vital records, disaster recovery procedures for information, and information aspects of business resumption plans.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Do the ministry's business continuity plans include identifying vital records, disaster recovery procedures and business resumption plans?					
Are they in place for the entire ministry?					
Have these plans been communicated to staff?					
Have staff awareness levels been assessed? (If yes, how?)					
Have they ever been applied? How well are they working?					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

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■ Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

■ The ministry's business continuity plans are being reviewed and updated to include identifying vital records, disaster recovery procedures and business resumption plans

■ The ministry's business continuity plans include identifying vital records, disaster recovery procedures and business resumption plans

- They are in place for the entire ministry
- Staff are well aware of what they are required to do in an emergency

6.3 Ministries, in cooperation with the Provincial Archives, must ensure that information created by government that is of permanent and enduring value is preserved.

Activity	No	Planned	Implemented	Integrated	Remarks/Examples
Are procedures in place to identify information of permanent and enduring value? Are they up-to-date? Do they apply to the whole organization? Do they apply to all media (including electronic information)?					
How are these procedures carried out?					
Are there periodic audits to ensure that this is done? (If yes, what are the audit procedures?)					
Other activities contributing to this directive (specify)					

Estimate of Progress Meeting the Objective

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■ Little progress, *ad hoc* initiatives

- Procedures are being developed to ensure that information due to be sent to the archives is packaged and sent on a regular basis
- A procedure for conducting audits is being developed

- Procedures are in place to ensure that information due to be sent to the archives is packaged and sent on a regular basis
- Periodic audits are conducted to ensure that this is done