

# information management strategy

*Alberta* 



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# Message from the DM

Service Alberta is focused on working collaboratively to foster an open, transparent, accountable and participatory government. We recognize that information, along with people, finances and infrastructure, are key strategic resources in the Government of Alberta, and are at the very core of our operations. Service delivery activities, decision-making, policy development and planning activities are all founded on information.

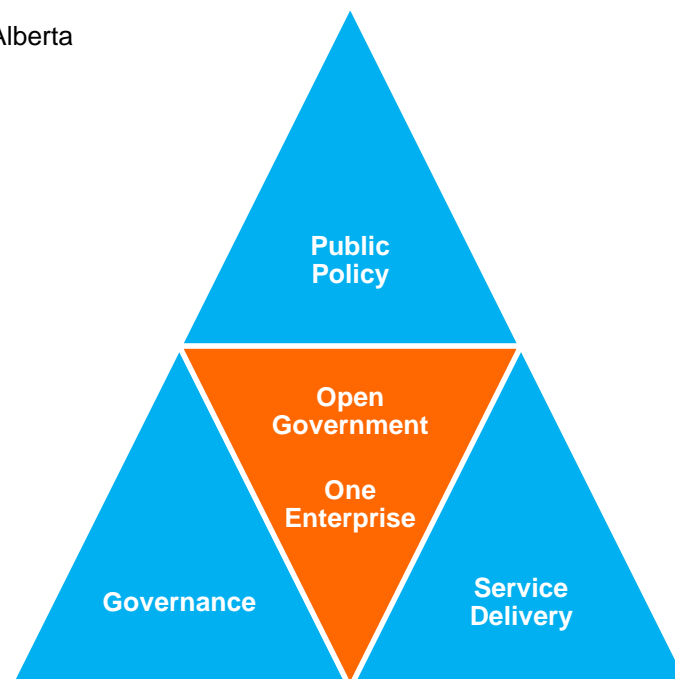
The quality, reliability and integrity of information are critical to good-decision making in the government. Proper management of information will transform the delivery of program and service outcomes, protecting Albertans from information security and privacy risks. This will help ensure that the needs of Albertans are met through efficient and effective operations.

The Information Management Strategy creates the foundation we need to continually improve, transform and increase information sharing, accountability and transparency in the government. It articulates a clear vision with three goals that address key business drivers, and works toward promoting effective and innovative information management practices within the organization.

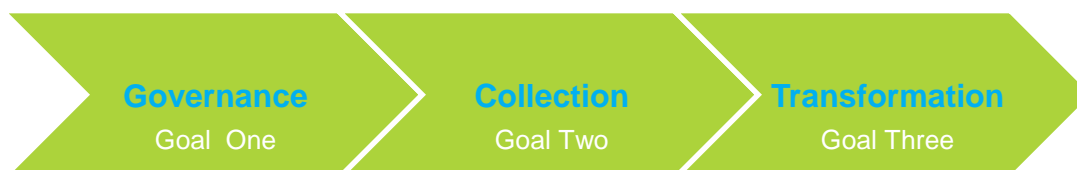
I approve and support this strategy.

**(original signed by)**

Annette Trimbee  
Deputy Minister, Service Alberta  
November 2013



## Information Management: Critical Success Factor



# Strategic Alignment

This strategy builds from the foundation that was established in the Information Management Framework (IMF), which was adopted by Deputy Ministers in 2003 as well as from the Information Management and Technology (IMT) Strategic Plan 2012-2017 issued by the Corporate Chief Information Officer (CCIO) in November 2011. This IM Strategy delivers on the GoA's commitment to manage and leverage our information as a strategic resource, ensuring that public funds spent on information resources result in the maximum value possible.

The Information Management Strategy (IMS) strives to coordinate the disciplines associated with information technology, records management practices, and business requirements, thereby enabling the GoA to effectively manage its information holdings.

This Strategy is sponsored by the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), Information Services, Service Alberta and presents an enterprise approach to managing information within the GoA.



**ADM Sponsor, Information Services –  
Service Alberta**

*Increasing the availability of government information will multiply the economic and social value of this prime resource, and will enable the use of information resources to innovate and create additional value. Providing access to GoA information can also create benefits of more complete awareness of Albertans' preferences and needs, allowing us to build smart programs and services. We require information management in the form of new enterprise information standards, policies, and tools to make this transformation possible.*



# The Vision

The Government of Alberta is a trusted steward of information held on behalf of Albertans.



INFORMATION IS:  
**COLLECTED ONCE;**  
MANAGED DIGITALLY IN AN  
**OPEN AND SECURE**  
ENVIRONMENT;  
**ACCESSIBLE;**  
AND  
**USED TO ITS**  
**FULLEST POTENTIAL.**

*Given the business value generated from information, and the long-term value of the Government of Alberta's information holdings, it is important that we define a vision for information management in the Government of Alberta.*

# Executive Summary

The Government of Alberta (GoA) produces and collects vast amounts of information, which when managed appropriately, offer significant opportunities. Our current Information Management (IM) practices, however, tend to be disjointed across the GoA, limiting those opportunities.

Some departments treat information as a strategic resource, and fund its management accordingly, making headway in terms of proactively releasing information to the public or to other agencies, providing significant opportunities for reuse and innovation to occur within the GoA and in our broader society. The GeoDiscover Alberta portal is one such example. It is populated with geospatial data from eight separate departments and agencies. Other examples include the Information Sharing Strategy, which proposes to enable greater information sharing across departments and agencies dealing with the health and social wellbeing of our citizens, and the recently launched Open Data Portal.

**By leveraging the work done across the GoA, and incorporating best practices at an enterprise level, we will be able to reduce our costs, administrative burdens, and transform government operations, breaking down barriers between information silos.**

Through the Results Based Budgeting reviews and Open Government Initiatives we have the expanded opportunity to take a strategic look at the management of the GoA's information resources. These are the prime resources and products created by the GoA, with the potential to impact success or failure, efficiency and effectiveness, innovation, and economic opportunities for Alberta depending on how they are managed.

**“ The primary objective of this strategy is to *explicitly acknowledge the value of information, the importance of managing that information at an enterprise level, and the benefits of treating information as a strategic communal resource.***



**Premier Alison Redford –**  
Cabinet Mandate Letters

*Albertans have given this government a clear mandate — change how government works to better reflect their needs and the realities of the province in today's world. Delivering that change will require listening to Albertans, increasing transparency and accountability, and building strong collaborative relationships with all our partners.*

We have heard from a number of colleagues and stakeholders that the information collected and created by and for the GoA is essential for policy development and to support programs and service delivery. Our current information environment consists of separate information repositories that cannot be accessed across the organization, resulting in the need to have Albertans repeatedly provide the same information in order to receive services.

**We need to increase the ease with which information is collected and used between government entities to facilitate integrated service delivery for Albertans.**

This strategy describes information, IM, and outlines why IM is important within the GoA. It articulates a clear vision for IM, the key business drivers that our clients have relayed to us through our consultation process, as well as specific goals, strategies, and projects to address those business drivers.

In addition, a Tactical Plan accompanies this strategy, recognizing that shared accountabilities will be negotiated across the organization in order to ensure mutual success and effective use of existing resources.

# Introduction

## What is Information?

Information is the only resource and product created by the GoA. Depending on how it is managed, information has the potential to impact success or failure, efficiency and effectiveness, innovation, and economic opportunities for the GoA. Information includes everything from single granular facts to the most complex, highly contextualized analysis conveyed through our publications. It is a valuable resource, and the cornerstone of accountable and transparent government. Information is generated from many diverse sources, and resides in multiple different formats (paper, datasets, web content, etc.).

The GoA and other public bodies collect and create information in order to administer programs and services. Information is needed to inform policy development and make evidence-based decisions, as well as to ensure accountability to the public.

Information is organized for a purpose and presented within a context that gives meaning. All recorded information (records), from the smallest of data elements to the comprehensive publications issued by the GoA, must be managed.

### Example: The Day Forward Imaging Project

The Day Forward Imaging project, implemented by the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program in Human Services, demonstrates that effective information management not only facilitates efficiencies in the business process, but also service delivery to AISH clients.

With the imaging process, new documentation is scanned and stored in a centralized database, which is accessible to AISH staff throughout the province. The system automatically assigns the client to a workflow queue, which is then processed by AISH staff on a first come-first serve basis. This new practice has resulted in reduced application

processing and review times, increasing the opportunity to focus on client needs.

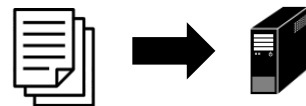
Electronic systems filing of client information has also increased the ease of updating, and accessing client files, and reducing the need to pull paper files for reference.

## What is Information Management?

IM is the means through which the organization ensures that the value of its information resources is identified so that these resources may be utilized to their fullest potential. The primary objective of IM is to ensure that the right information is available to the right person, in the right format at the right time. IM is the way in which an organization plans, identifies, captures, manages, preserves and disposes of its information across all formats, (physical and digital), and includes the management of all functions associated with information, such as security, metadata management, quality management, etc.



**48.9%** of **803,437** records in a sample of 5 litigation cases were **duplicates**. Migrating to an electronic filing system will not only help address duplication but also yields



**\$1,465,717 in savings**

**Source:** Calculations based on presentation. Podemski, E., & Dupuis, H. "Litigation: What RIM Professionals Should Know.." April 2013. PowerPoint presentation.

## Why is Information Management important for the GoA?

The GoA's ability to respond to the needs of Albertans depends on how well it can create, use and preserve information to make decisions and take action to achieve its operational and strategic goals. Along with people and finances, information is a key business resource for the GoA, and as such, the management of that information is critical to achieving the government's priorities.

Currently, individual government sectors are responding to their own information pressures with the creation of specific solutions to address their needs. For instance, the GeoDiscover Alberta portal has highlighted the need for specific policies, standards, and practices to improve the availability of data, promote integration of technology, encourage collaboration among partners, and extend access to multiple stakeholders.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the Integrated Resource Management System, which includes a number of specific initiatives, seeks to examine the combined effects of existing and future developments by bringing previously disparate functions under the new Single Regulator, and ensuring that environmental monitoring information is accessible and transparent to stakeholders.

Within Human Services, the Information Sharing Strategy has been developed to ensure information sharing practices within government and with service agencies support the best decisions possible for the health, education and safety of children and families.<sup>2</sup> The Children First legislation builds from the Information Sharing Strategy to define the "tent" within which this information can be shared including government departments, educational bodies, health care bodies, police services, parents or guardians or others.<sup>3</sup> The aim is to enable information sharing in order to ensure the child's safety, well-being,

security, education, or health, while retaining professional discretion in ascertaining when the sharing of information would be in the child's best interest.

These initiatives demonstrate the challenges being experienced in specific departments or areas within the government, and link to the importance of managing information to make it barrier-free. We have the opportunity, through the realization of this strategy, to leverage the work that has occurred in these initiatives while adopting an enterprise approach to the management of our information resources.

The enterprise governance of IM is mandated to Service Alberta through the *Records Management Regulation*. This strategy and tactical plan represents the foundation for the implementation of a pragmatic approach to the management of the GoA's information resources that will position the GoA to offer best-in-class service delivery to its citizens, in a transparent and accountable manner.

- All information must be managed no matter the form or format;
- All lines of business have IM components, including Open Government, Information Technology, the Freedom of Information Privacy Act, and Records Management;
- Information should not be collected and reproduced multiple times for the same purpose; and
- The key to success lies in executive understanding and commitment to managing information at an enterprise level.



### **Enterprise and Advanced Education – Government of Alberta**

*The information that the GoA collects, creates, uses and shares is a key strategic resource for Alberta and for future generations of Albertans. As such, we will need more innovative information management (IM) processes and systems in order to support Alberta businesses and institutions in creating and applying knowledge. This will give us a stronger competitive advantage and allow us to obtain greater value from all our natural and human resources.*

<sup>1</sup> Standards used within GeoDiscover Alberta. <https://geodiscover.alberta.ca/geoportal/catalog/info/standards.page>. Retrieved May 14, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Alberta's Information Sharing Strategy – Alberta Human Services. <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/department/14802.html>. Retrieved May 14, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Children First Legislation – Alberta Human Services. <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/16594.html>. Retrieved May 14, 2013.



# Business Drivers

Business areas and programs use information in every aspect of their work - from the information collected to determine program or service eligibility, to the research and stakeholder engagement discussions that are part of the policy development process. As such, there are a number of business-driven IM requirements that need to be addressed and/or supported by the Information Management Strategy. The following represents a sample of those business drivers:



## Process Driver 1

### Identify and Use Trusted Information Sources

There are many sources of information in the GoA, including structured information held in databases and other applications (such as IMAGIS, or Curam), along with huge volumes of unstructured electronic and paper documents. To be trusted, information must be up-to-date, and recognized as the source of truth. We must be able to prove that it is authentic, and to trust it as a full and accurate representation of the relevant facts, transaction or business process. It must be complete, unaltered, and be available for as long as it is required. We must identify who is responsible for each information source, to ensure that the information is kept accurate and up to date.



## Process Driver 2

### Appropriate Collection of and Access to Information Resources

In order to effectively manage information, the GoA must first assess the extent of the information being collected, and ensure that it is only collecting the information elements necessary for business purposes. Given the multiple points of collection for the same information across the GoA (e.g. personal information about Albertans), there are opportunities to consolidate information collection processes and transform the way in which the information is accessed by those programs and services requiring it.



## Process Driver 3

### Support for Increased Transparency and Citizen Engagement

Albertans are placing increased emphasis on openness, transparency and an expectation that the public sector will document its policy or decision-making processes, all of which will demand change in the GoA's approach to how it manages its information. The pressure to achieve these objectives is raising awareness of the importance of IM with senior executives, as an enterprise approach to IM it is necessary for the GoA to act with accountability and transparency and continue to earn public trust and confidence in government decisions.



## Process Driver 4 Legislated Compliance

All departments must ensure compliance with obligations to maintain records of decisions and respect the privacy of Albertans. While traditional records and IM practices for physical records tend to be well-established, we need to adapt to the changing requirements of an electronic information environment, the proliferation of electronic documents, and the ever-expanding amount of data that is being collected and created by the GoA.

IM policy, in the form of over-arching information legislation, regulation and other policy instruments, will ensure that the GoA has the appropriate reference authorities in place to govern the management of information resources at an enterprise level.



### **Final Report –**

*Cross Government Report: Review of Records*

*Government's need for transparency and for protection and privacy of information necessitate good records (information) management. Records are required to reflect or be in compliance with a variety of legislative requirements; some of which are program specific, such as the Health Information Act (HIA), while others have impact across government entities, such as the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). E-discovery as part of legal challenges also requires the ability to readily access and retrieve all applicable records.*

*An effective and efficient government requires good governance of records management to allow it to carry out its everyday business, protect the interests of all stakeholders, and preserve the history and knowledge of government. How these records are created, used, retrieved and disposed of needs to be in keeping with the policies and procedures set out by the Government of Alberta (GoA) and current best practices.*



## Outcome Driver 1 Support Collaboration

Effective enterprise IM practices will support inter-departmental collaboration for policy development and seamless service delivery for Albertans. Across and within the various departments, there are many information silos. In order to allow for genuine collaboration across the organization, efficient group interactions and cross-departmental decision-making is important. We need to integrate IM practices and automate business processes to better facilitate knowledge sharing, access, and re-uses of our existing information resources. In moving our business process towards the inclusion of digital information collection and management, we will decrease our paper footprint and enable an environment in which information can be accessed across multiple business areas and departments.



## Outcome Driver 2 Clarity regarding Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

One of the top considerations revealed during consultation with stakeholders was regarding the lack of clarity for IM roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities, and the associated lack of capacity. We must ensure that endorsed standards and practices for IM are in place, and we need to proactively improve the IM knowledge and skills of staff to fulfill their roles. We must seek to introduce and improve an IM culture for the GoA, and provide a long-term commitment to IM through executive support and long-term funding. We must increase the capacity of IM professionals in the GoA, at both the enterprise and department levels.



## Outcome Driver 3

### Improved Information Risk Management

Information risk management relates to integrity, quality, availability and confidentiality of information resources and the information environment. There is very little value in information that is not available when you need it to make a decision or deliver a program or service. In addition, failing to meet acceptable standards of availability and integrity may also pose significant risk when faced with litigation, as does the practice of keeping information beyond its business requirement.

Complex organizations like the GoA require sophisticated, enterprise information security policies to prevent access to information by any unauthorized individuals, as well as mechanisms to prevent authorized persons from taking the information outside the GoA-authorized domain (information leakage). Information risk is a key operational risk for the GoA, posing a threat to business continuity.



**Report of the Auditor General of Alberta –**  
October 2012

*“Without adequate security policies, the ability to monitor and enforce them throughout government, or the need for government entities to demonstrate they adequately protect public information assets, government information and the personal information of Albertans is at risk of unauthorized use or disclosure.” p. 10*

# Strategic Goals

Based on discussions with business and IM community stakeholders, three core goals have been established that will serve to address the identified business drivers.



## Goal One

### Build enterprise governance and accountability for information

In order for the GoA to be the trusted steward of Albertans' information, we must be able to demonstrate that we have appropriate IM governance models in place. We must clearly identify the GoA's enterprise IM program and mandate for IM, and clarify IM roles and responsibilities across the GoA. IM legislation and policies may be required, as is a performance management framework to ensure compliance with established standards.

#### Enabling Strategies

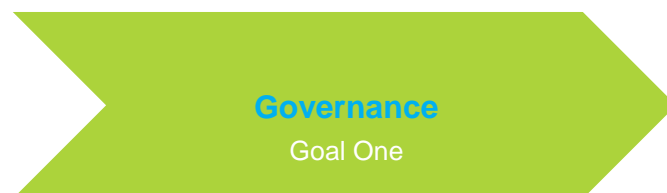
- Enhance and implement Enterprise IM Program;
- Develop IM Legislation;
- Enhance and implement IM Awareness and Skills Strategy;
- Develop IM Performance Management Framework.

#### Business Drivers Addressed

- Outcome Driver 2 – Clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and accountabilities;
- Outcome Driver 3 – Improved information risk management; and
- Process Driver 4 – Legislated compliance.

#### Outcomes

- The importance of IM within the GoA is realized;
- Clarity regarding accountabilities for IM;
- Regular evaluation and continuous improvement of IM; and
- GoA information sharing is facilitated to support better program and service delivery for Albertans.





## Goal Two

# Transform information collection, access and use

In order to achieve our vision, information collection and management practices must be addressed. Business processes should enable the collection of digital information resources that can be utilized across the organization. Structures will be required in order to ensure that the information owners are identified and can be held accountable for the maintenance and management of that information. Individual departments have developed approaches that may be suitable for adoption across the organization (e.g., Environment and Sustainable Resource Development Data Management, Alberta Official Statistics Quality Assurance and Metadata Standards, etc.).

### Enabling Strategies

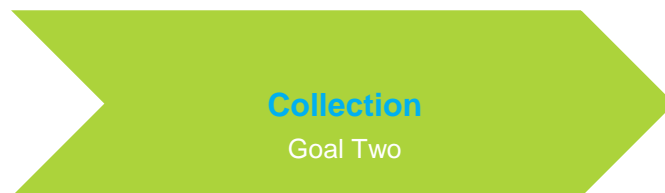
- Develop Enterprise Information Management Policy Instruments;
- Develop an Information Assurance Framework.

### Business Drivers Addressed

- Process Driver 1 – Identification and use of trusted information sources;
- Process Driver 2 – Appropriate collection of and access to information;
- Process Driver 3 – Support collaboration;
- Outcome Driver 6 – Improved information risk management; and
- Outcome Driver 7 – Legislated compliance.

### Outcomes

- Seamless service delivery to Albertans;
- Increased efficiencies; and
- Credible, quality information is available to support policy development and evidence-based decisions.





## Goal Three

# Maximize the potential of our information

As a strategic resource, our information currently offers potential that remains unexploited. By leveraging the opportunities offered through the robust use of digital information sources, we will support more efficient collaboration and innovation within the GoA and with Albertans, as well as reducing the amount of paper being produced and stored. In order to accomplish this, we must first understand what information the GoA currently holds, what would be required in order for that information to be made available across multiple boundaries, or with the public and what strategies are needed to ensure that digital information resources with historical value can be preserved for posterity.

### Enabling Strategies

- Support the development and implementation of the Open Government Strategy;
- Enhance the administration of access and privacy legislation (e.g. FOIP);
- Develop and implement a Digital Transition Change Management Strategy;
- Develop the GoA's Digital Continuity Strategy;
- Support Business Transformation.

### Business Drivers Addressed

- Process Driver 1 – Identification and use of trusted information sources;
- Process Driver 2 – Appropriate collection of and access to information;
- Process Driver 3 – Support increased transparency and citizen engagement;
- Process Driver 4 – Legislated compliance;
- Outcome Driver 1 – Support collaboration; and
- Outcome Driver 3 – Improved information risk management.

### Outcomes

- Increased efficiency of program and service delivery, internally and externally;
- Improved information risk management;
- Increased transparency, and accountability;
- Information is available for re-use by present and future generations of Albertans;
- Alignment between enterprise-wide IM/IT initiatives, including those initiated by mandates outside SA; and
- Reduce environmental footprint.



# Moving Forward

The ADM IM/IT Committee has accountability for the implementation of the tactical plan, and will work with key stakeholders to ensure that the actions are completed. The IM Directors across the GoA will work under the direction and guidance of the ADM IM/IT Committee and collaboratively with the CIO Council to achieve the specific projects and deliverables to support the Tactical Plan while working to achieve their departmental priorities.

The Records and Information Management Branch will continually review and update the Tactical Plan, as well as managing and monitoring compliance against approved IM policies and procedures, while actively promoting IM awareness across the organization.

## Measuring Performance

The ongoing measurement of performance is critical to ensuring that our information resources are being managed appropriately. As such, one of the priorities will be the development of a performance management framework for IM across the GoA. This will allow regular assessments of IM programs, policies, and procedures, which will not only guide IM practice, but will also serve to inform the need for ongoing revision to the strategy, tactical plans, and to our policy instruments.



## Contact Us

For further information please contact:

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# Acknowledgements

Information Services Division is committed to working collaboratively with the GoA's business and Information Management (IM) leaders to ensure that business needs drive the application of IM practice. This strategy represents a partnership with ministry representatives, and is the product of their input and feedback. We gratefully acknowledge these partners for their contributions to this strategy:

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# Glossary

## Digital Continuity

Digital continuity is the ability to use digital information in the way that you need, for as long as you need. It is about ensuring that your information is complete, available and usable for your business needs. Information is usable when you can find, open and work with it in the way you need to, understand what it is and what it is about, and trust its source.

(Source: The National Archives, United Kingdom)

## Information Management Framework (IMF)

Enterprise framework, which fosters a disciplined approach to managing information resources that is consistent across the government. Focusing on information content and the use of information enables government to capitalize on the value of its information resources.

(Source: Information Assets in the GOA: A Management Framework)

## Records and Information Management (RIM)

The field of management responsible for efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintain evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records.

(Source: *Information and Documentation - Records Management - Part 1: General* [ISO 15489:2001])