



Content Inventory: Guideline

Service Alberta, Government of Alberta

Created: November 2019

Last Updated: November 2019

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Introduction

This guideline outlines the approach that must be used to conduct a content inventory. Inventory information will be collected through high-level analysis of each business area's processes. A process is defined as one or more sequences of transactions required to produce an outcome that complies with governing rules.

An example of a process could be the activities and content related to "Landlord/Tenant Notice." "Landlord/Tenant Notice" involves:

- an explicit organizational mandate (*Government Organization Act*, Schedule 11, 10(2));
- a trigger (Leasing receives W5 instructions from Asset Management Branch, Property Management, a Tenant or a Landlord);
- inputs (W5 instructions, notice from a Tenant or Landlord, working file, and Nintex workflow);
- steps that must be undertaken (preparing the notice or response);
- outputs (signed notice or acknowledgement of notice);
- content associated with the process (including, but not limited to, templates, working files, Nintex workflows, email correspondence, BLIMS entries); and
- a conclusion (Leasing sends the notice to the Tenant or Landlord and a copy is delivered to the Lease Administrator for processing).

For more information regarding processes, please refer to Service Alberta's [Work Process Analysis Methodology IMT Standard](#).

NOTE: "Content" encompasses all of the records, data and/or information, regardless of format, state and/or classification (e.g., official, transitory, active, semi-active, inactive, open, closed, etc.) that are part of, or are affected by, a business area's processes.

Purpose

Before a business area can organize and fully realize the value of its content, it must first be aware of all content in its custody and/or under its control.

This guideline is intended to assist IMT professionals with:

- planning, conducting and actively maintaining an inventory that captures key information (e.g., location, security classification, etc.) regarding the content in the custody and/or under the control of a business area;
- describing the processes (and the associated content) of a business area; and
- ensuring that the inventory process is conducted consistently GoA-wide.

NOTE: This guideline uses the term “business area” in reference to the area in which an inventory is being performed; however, this term can encompass anything from entire IMT sectors to teams made up of a few people.

Benefits

Once established, an inventory is a living reference tool that supports:

- accurately identifying the types (e.g., physical versus digital) and locations (e.g., file room, shared drive, system or application, etc.) of content currently in the custody and/or under the control of the GoA;
- ensuring that business areas are only collecting and/or using content in accordance with legislated mandates;
- classifying content in accordance with the [Data and Information Security Classification \(DISC\) Standard](#);
- identifying compliance with approved records retention and disposition schedules;
- identifying and mitigating information management risks; and
- the enhancement of information management maturity.

Authority

The creation and maintenance of an inventory is essential for the effective management of records in accordance with the policies, standards and procedures established under the Records Management Regulation (RMR):

4(2) For the purpose of providing the details for the operation of the records management program, the Minister may establish, maintain and promote policies, standards and procedures for the creation, handling, control, organization, retention, maintenance, security, preservation, disposition, alienation and destruction of records in the custody or

under the control of departments and for their transfer to the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

In addition, the RMR establishes that the responsibility for the creation and maintenance of an inventory resides at the department level:

(9) The deputy head of a department must ensure that records in the custody or under the control of the department are managed in accordance with the policies, standards and procedures established under section 4(2).

Scope

This guideline applies to all departments as defined in section 14 of Schedule 11 of the *Government Organization Act* and agencies, boards and commissions as defined in schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Regulation.

Agencies, boards and commissions that are not contained within schedule 1 of the FOIP Regulation are encouraged to align with this guideline.

This guideline applies to all GoA data, information and records, regardless of format, as defined under the *FOIP Act*.

Considerations

Working under the direction of sector Information Management Directors, IMT professionals must coordinate with business areas to:

- establish timeframes for performing an inventory;
- ensure that business obligations can be fulfilled with minimal interruption; and
- ensure that processes and associated content are captured in a consistent manner that supports analysis at the department, IMT sector and/or enterprise level.

In order to ensure continual improvements to the inventory process and the removal of barriers to information sharing, it is strongly recommended that IMT professionals collaborate across sectors to:

- establish a community of practice for inventory collection; and
- share supporting documentation and inventory collection strategies.

Because an inventory will document all of the content associated with a business area's processes, gaps and/or improvement opportunities may be discovered (e.g., content that is not

scheduled in accordance with an approved records retention and disposition schedule). How and when a business area responds to these gaps and/or opportunities should be decided on a case-by-case basis—some gaps may need to be addressed immediately (e.g., additional security controls around potentially vulnerable information), but others may be addressed after a content inventory is fully populated.

NOTE: Halting or delaying an inventory to address gaps and/or opportunities is not generally advised.

Consideration must also be given to security and privacy. The collection and combination of certain elements into a single location (i.e., a database) may constitute a security and/or privacy risk. Collaboration or consultation with security and privacy subject matter experts (e.g., appropriate FOIP offices, IMT professionals, Sector Information Security Officers, etc.) may be required.

Inventory Elements

An inventory must capture many elements. Other than three elements listed first (in order: **Process Name**, **Process Description**, and **Content**), the arrangement of elements within the inventory can be adjusted as needed.

See **Appendix 1 – Sample Inventory** for an example of a populated inventory.

- **Process Name** – A brief, descriptive title for the process. May describe either the action undertaken or the purpose/outcome of the process (e.g., policy development, licensing, etc.).
 - Avoid generic, vague, or confusing terms (e.g., administration, management, writing, etc.).
- **Process Description** – A brief summary of the purpose, inputs, providers of inputs, steps involved in a process, outputs, and output recipients of the process. It is strongly recommended that process descriptions be kept at a high level.
 - **Process Description** must be captured; however, depending on the business area, individual aspects of the **Process Description** may be captured as

separate elements (separate elements may include, but are not limited to, **Process Trigger, Process Inputs, Process Outputs**, etc.).

- **Content** – Examples of the records, data and/or information that are part of, or are affected by, a business area’s processes.
 - For example, the **Content** associated with the process “Landlord/Tenant Notice” may include (but is not limited to) “Clauses and precedents,” “Templates,” and “Working files”.
 - This is not an itemized list. For example, **Content** would be listed as “Proposals,” rather “Proposal1.doc,” “Proposal2.doc,” “Proposal1-COPY.doc,” etc.
- **Controller** – The area or individual (i.e., position) with the responsibility and decision-making authority for content throughout its lifecycle, including creating, classifying, restricting, regulating and administering its use or disclosure.
 - Within the GoA, information ownership flows from the Crown to government ministers to deputy ministers (or equivalent). Information controllership may be further delegated by the deputy minister.
- **Custodian** – The area or individual (i.e., position) that maintains or administers content on behalf of the Information Controller.
 - Custodianship includes responsibility for accessing, managing, maintaining, preserving, disposing and providing security for the content.
- **Location** – Where the content is currently being maintained.
 - For digital content, list the system(s) or application(s) (e.g. “OpenText,” “EIM SharePoint Site,” “OPRA,” the name of the specific database or data management system, etc.).
 - For physical content in file rooms/approved storage locations, list the file room(s) and the building(s) (e.g., “3rd floor File Room, Commerce Place”).
- **Mandate** – The acts or regulations that mandate and/or direct the process (e.g., the content collected and maintained under the *Health Information Act*).
 - Where possible, reference must be made to specific sections of legislation.
- **Medium** – The format(s) in which the content is maintained (e.g., XML, .pdf, .docx, CSV, DVD, paper, microfiche, X-ray, map, .tiff, blueprint, etc.).
- **Personal Information Bank** – Identify whether or not personal information (or elements that can be combined to identify an individual) is captured in the content.
 - If there is any personal information in the content, provide the Personal Information Bank (PIB) under which it falls. If an appropriate PIB cannot be identified, contact [FOIP services for the business area](#).
- **Records Retention and Disposition Schedule** – The records retention and disposition schedule under which the content falls at the time of the inventory. Must include the name of the records retention and disposition schedule and, when possible, the

applicable item number(s) (e.g., Administrative Records Disposition Authority (ARDA) – 1986/050-A017, Item 0115).

- If content is identified as not currently attached to a records retention and disposition schedule, the inventory must capture that fact—gaps in information management must be identified to inform subsequent information management priorities.
- **Security Classification** – Refers specifically to the security classification(s) assigned to the content at the time of the inventory.
 - It is possible that some content may have multiple security classifications attached—the inventory must reflect this.
 - If content is identified as lacking a security classification, the inventory must capture that fact—gaps in information management must be identified to inform subsequent information management priorities.
 - Analyzing and/or applying security classification to content should not occur during an inventory.
- **Vital Records** – Content that is necessary to ensure business continuity (e.g., content needed to preserve legal and financial rights and obligations, content needed to establish government authority).
 - If content cannot be definitively classified as vital or non-vital, the inventory must capture that fact—gaps in information management must be identified to inform subsequent information management priorities.

Performing an Inventory

Inventory Activities

The number of people required to populate an inventory will vary. Regardless of where an inventory is being performed, it is recommended that the process adhere to project management best practices. Populating an inventory requires that staff members (ideally IMT professionals) be appointed to fulfill the following activities:

- **Coordination**
 - leading the inventory process for a business area;
 - ensuring that the inventory process is followed; and
 - ensuring clear, timely communication throughout the inventory process.
- **Research**
 - collecting and reviewing available materials (e.g., legislation on Queen's Printer, process maps, etc.) to determine a business area's mandate; and

- prepopulating an inventory as much as possible.
- **Facilitation**
 - supporting development of relevant inventory documents as required (including, but not limited to, communications pieces, consultation questions, etc.);
 - leading inventory consultation meetings; and
 - working with business areas to validate information collected before, during, and after the Research and Consultation/Validation Phases of the inventory process.
- **Recording**
 - supporting the inventory consultation meetings;
 - recording information during consultation meetings; and
 - populating the inventory with information before, during, and after the Research and Consultation/Validation Phases of the inventory process.

Inventory Process

The inventory process involves two phases:

- Research; and
- Consultation/Validation.

Research Phase

The purpose of the Research Phase is to:

- leveraging readily available material to understand a business area's processes; and
- prepopulating as much of the inventory as possible in preparation for consultation.

The Research Phase process is as follows:

1. Identify the business area that will take part in the inventory process.
2. Research the legislated mandates of the business area (i.e., what content they are legally obligated to create and/or collect).
3. Collect any available background information on the business area; this information may include, but is not limited to: process maps, procedures, previous inventories, etc. This information may be requested from the business area or obtained via research (e.g., scanning of intranet sites, distribution of surveys, etc.).

Consultation/Validation Phase

Face-to-face interviews with business area staff are the most effective way to collect and validate the required information needed to populate an inventory. Business area staff have a detailed understanding of the work that occurs within a business area, and will be instrumental in identifying the processes and content necessary to populate an inventory.

For detailed guidance on performing consultations (including a list of recommended consultation questions), please refer to the Content Inventory Facilitator Manual.

The Consultation/Validation Phase is as follows:

1. Identify business area staff to participate in the consultation process. Identification of business area staff with the required knowledge will be determined in collaboration with supervisors, managers, and/or executives.
2. In collaboration with identified business area staff, validate any information collected during the Research Phase. Additional background information may be provided in the course of validation.
3. Work with identified business area staff and any other relevant stakeholders to develop a consultation strategy. The number of consultation sessions necessary to fully populate and validate the inventory can vary from business area to business area.
4. Hold consultation sessions with identified business area staff to identify, collect and validate information regarding the business area's processes and associated content.
5. Compile information obtained in the consultation sessions to populate the inventory fully.
6. Validate compiled inventory with business area and any other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the inventory is complete, accurate and useable.

It is strongly recommended that validation of the information collected from the business area is conducted throughout the Consultation/Validation Phase to ensure its accuracy.

Maintenance

An inventory must be regularly evaluated and updated based on appropriate timeframes determined by the business area. It is recommended that a business area appoint or select a business area role (ideally, a business area role that was involved in the consultation process) as an inventory coordinator that is responsible for updating the inventory as required—this will support maintenance of an inventory regardless of changes in organization and/or staff.

Contact

For support before, during and after the inventory process, please contact the appropriate Information Management Director.

For questions regarding the inventory process or the Content Inventory Guideline, please contact [Enterprise Information Management](#).

Appendix 1 – Sample Inventory

Process Name	Process Description	Content	Controller	Custodian	Location	Mandate	Medium	Personal Information Bank	Records Retention and Disposition Schedule	Security Classification	Vital Records
Landlord/Tenant Notice	<p>The purpose of this process is to send or respond to a notice to a Tenant or Landlord.</p> <p>The process is triggered when Leasing receives W5 Instructions from Asset Management Branch, Property Management, a Tenant, or a Landlord.</p> <p>The process includes preparing the notice or response.</p> <p>The process concludes when Leasing sends the notice to the Tenant or Landlord and a copy is delivered to the Lease Administrator for processing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clauses and precedents 	Leasing	Asset Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leasing File Room (3rd floor, Infrastructure Building) • Central Records 	Government Organization Act, Schedule 11, 10(2)	Paper	No	1989/108-A001	Protected A	UNKNOWN
Landlord/Tenant Notice	See previous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Templates 	Leasing	Leasing	Shared Drive (S:\INFRAS\PSM\Templates)	Government Organization Act, Schedule 11, 10(2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .docx • .xls 	No	1989/108-A001	UNKNOWN	Non-Vital
Landlord/Tenant Notice	See previous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working files 	Leasing	Leasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SharePoint • BLIMS (Building and Land Information Management System) • FAMIS (Facility Administration and Maintenance Information System) 	Government Organization Act, Schedule 11, 10(2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • .docx • .xls • .pdf • CSV • Visio files 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial/banking information • Contact information 	1989/108-A001	Public, Protected B	Vital (Business Application Ownership and Criticality)
Landlord/Tenant Notice	See previous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nintex Workflow 	Leasing	Asset Management	Nintex	Government Organization Act, Schedule 11, 10(2)	CSV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial/banking information • Contact information 	UNKNOWN	Protected A	UNKNOWN
Landlord/Tenant Notice	See previous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email correspondence 	Leasing	Tenant/Landlord	Outlook	Government Organization Act, Schedule 11, 10(2)	.msg	UNKNOWN	1989/108-A001	Protected B	UNKNOWN