



Office of the Chief Information Officer

# Guideline

## Records and Information Inventory

### Governance

Authority: MOIA

Audience: Information Management professionals and other resources responsible for the implementation and operation of a records and information management system (also referred to as an Information Management Program) within a department or other public body, as defined in the Management of Information Act.

Compliance Level: Recommended

Issuing Public Body: Office of the Chief Information Officer  
Application and Information Management Services  
Information Management Services

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Forward questions and/or comments related to this document to [IM@gov.nl.ca](mailto:IM@gov.nl.ca).

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## 1.0 Overview

A department or other public body uses the Records and Information Inventory Guideline to prepare for, organize and carry out an inventory of its records and information holdings. The information collected through an inventory provides the foundation for the management and protection of information assets in all formats. The inventory is a foundational requirement for many key areas of an Information Management (IM) Program including the development and implementation of a classification plan for operational records.

Results gained through an inventory will also support decision making for 1) records lifecycle management; 2) leverage a department or other public body's ability to respond to Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) requests; 3) protect sensitive information; 4) evaluate risk; 5) increase business value of information holdings; 6) support statutory compliance; 7) practice due diligence for a safe work environment; and 8) improve the use of equipment, resources, and space.

Departments and other public bodies should establish and maintain a current and complete records and information inventory that includes an information systems inventory and an inventory of electronically stored information (ESI). When completing an inventory it is important to define all information asset areas/locations, and formats through creation/receipt, use, and disposition. These include, but are not limited to:

Physical Information Storage including format,

Electronically Stored Information (ESI) including format, sensitivity and security

Information Systems including email, business applications, network shares, cloud solutions, desktop software, mobile devices, etc.

Other Information Assets including individuals working on behalf of the organization (e.g., accounts, access requirements, etc.), IT hardware, etc.

A vital records inventory may be part of a records and information inventory, or it may be a separate initiative. Establishing a vital records management program is much easier to do when records series and disposition processes are already in place, and the

identification of records and information supporting critical business processes has been completed. The information gathered in a vital records inventory will also support the organization's ability to provide services in the event of a service disruption.

## 2.0 Purpose

The Records and Information Inventory Guideline provides a recommended approach that will serve to drive the design, development, implementation and management of an effective IM Program. This Guideline is part of a broader GuideBook that supports the requirement set forth in the Management of Information Act (MOIA) for permanent heads of departments and other public bodies to implement a records and information management system.

The GuideBook, also known as the Guide to IM for Public Bodies, includes the following guidelines.



Graphic: 1 - GuideBook Contents

### Expected Deliverable(s)

1. The development of a records and information inventory to provide adequate and meaningful data about records and information holdings that will support decision making in the management and protection of information assets.

### 3.0 Definitions and Acronyms

A complete listing of terms are located on the OCIO website - Information Management and Protection (IM&P) Glossary of Terms.

Information Asset - An information asset is a body of information, defined and managed as a single unit so it can be understood, shared, protected and exploited effectively. Information assets have recognizable and manageable value, risk, content and lifecycles. (Source: The National Archives, UK)

Information Management – Information Management (IM) is the field of management responsible for establishing and implementing policies, systems, and procedures to capture, create, access, distribute, use, store, secure, retrieve, and ensure disposition of an organization’s records and information. (Source: ARMA)

Public Body – As defined under the MOIA, a public body is:

- i) a department created under the Executive Council Act or a branch of the executive government of the province,
- ii) a corporation, the ownership of which, or a majority of shares of which, is vested in the Crown,
- iii) a corporation, commission, board or other body, the majority of the members of which, or the majority of members of the board of directors of which, are appointed under an Act of the province, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council or a minister of the Crown,
- iv) a court established under an Act of the province, and
- v) the House of Assembly and committees of the House of Assembly. (Source: MOIA)

Record – A record means a correspondence, memorandum, form, paper, parchment, manuscript, map, plan, drawing, painting, print, photograph, magnetic tape, computer disc, microform, electronically produced document and other documentary material regardless of physical form or characteristic. (Source: MOIA)

Corporate Record – A corporate record, often referred to as an administrative record, are those created by all organizations to support administrative functions, including human resources, general administration, facilities management, financial management, information and information technology management, and equipment and supplies (material) management. (Source: CRIMS)

Government Record - A government record is a record created by or received by a public body in the conduct of its affairs and includes a Cabinet record, transitory record and an abandoned record. Disposal of a government record must be sanctioned by a records retention and disposal schedule (RRDS) that has been approved by the Government Records Committee (GRC). (Source: MOIA)

Operational Record – An operational record is a record that reflects the unique mandate of an organization. Records of programs, projects, and service delivery are examples of operational records. Unlike corporate records, these will be different in each organization. (Source: OCIO)

Transitory Record – A transitory record is a government record of temporary usefulness in any format or medium having no ongoing value beyond an immediate and minor transaction or the preparation of a subsequent record. Transitory records can be securely destroyed when no longer of value without authorization of the Government Records Committee. (Source: MOIA)

Vital Records - Vital Records are records that are fundamental to the functioning of an organization. Certain vital records contain information critical to the continued operation or survival of an organization during or immediately following a crisis. Such records are necessary to continue operations without delay under abnormal conditions. They contain information necessary to recreate an organization’s legal and financial status and to preserve the rights and obligations of stakeholders, including employees, customers, investors, and citizens. Some vital records may be unique and not easily reproducible, or the cost of reproduction or replacement may be considerable. They may be required in their original form to meet or fulfill evidential requirements. The term vital records also includes documentation subject to a vital records program such as pertinent IT systems, help manuals, or emergency contact lists. (Source: ANSI/ARMA 5-2010)

The table below includes common abbreviations used by OCIO as well as acronyms found within this document.

Abbreviation	Description
ATIPP	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy
ERDMS	Electronic Document and Records Management System
GB	Gigabyte

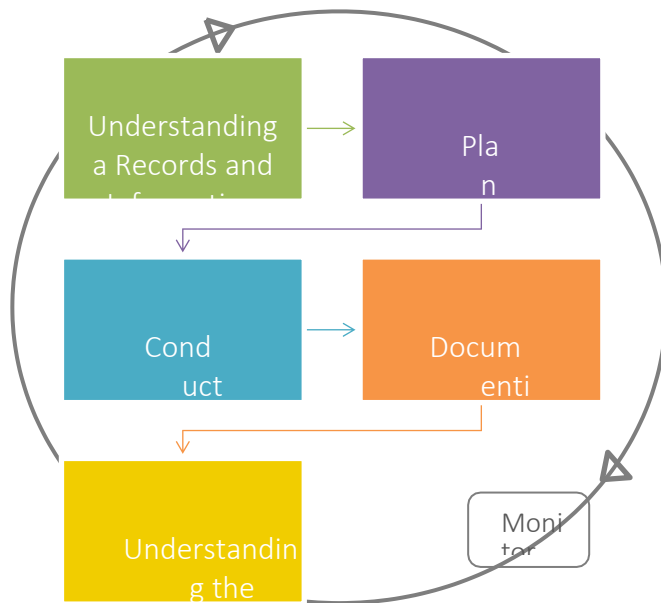


Abbreviation	Description
IM	Information Management
IM&P	Information Management and Protection
IP	Information Protection
MOIA	Management of Information Act
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
PIA	Privacy impact Assessment
RRDS	Records Retention and Disposal Schedule

## 4.0 Recommended Approach

The intent of this Guideline is to provide recommended actions, general approaches and operational behaviors that when implemented will serve to drive the design, development, implementation and management of an effective IM Program through the development of a Records and Information Inventory.

After reading this document, a department or other public body should be able to apply the knowledge and have an understanding of the organization’s records and information inventory requirements.



Graphic: 2 - Recommended Approach

## 4.1 Understanding a Records and Information Inventory

The creation of a records and information inventory is a foundational component of an organization's IM Program. It is one of the first IM initiatives a department or other public body should engage in; as it is a fundamental process from which many other IM decisions will be made.

An inventory is a valuable reference tool when completing activities such as transferring records and information to alternate storage and media conversion; enforcing litigation holds; responding to ATIPP requests and legal discovery; conducting risk assessments; classifying information for security; preparing for records management implementation and other application implementation; developing plans and reporting on information management and protection; planning for equipment and space; determining disposition authorities that need to be developed and/or implemented; and other information management and protection initiatives.

The inventory should document the entire records and information holdings of the department or other public body. It should include all information assets physically and electronically stored in offices, and off-site locations as well as on computer drives, or storage devices, servers and off-site data storage repositories. This involves all levels of staff accountable and responsible for the management and protection of the information assets. This includes IM Directors and other staff responsible for the development and implementation of an IM Program as well as all individuals working on behalf of a department or other public body. The inventory process includes devising a plan to oversee the activities; training and adapting survey tools for data collection; collecting and compiling data; and analyzing and reporting on the results.

There are a number of benefits of an inventory, including but not limited to:

- provides primary control over records and information holdings;
- identifies and establishes proper ownership of records and information;
- identifies and establishes proper business process for the access and retrieval of records and information;
- assists in determining retention period for records, format(s), secure protection, destruction date, archives date, transfer date and means of destruction; and

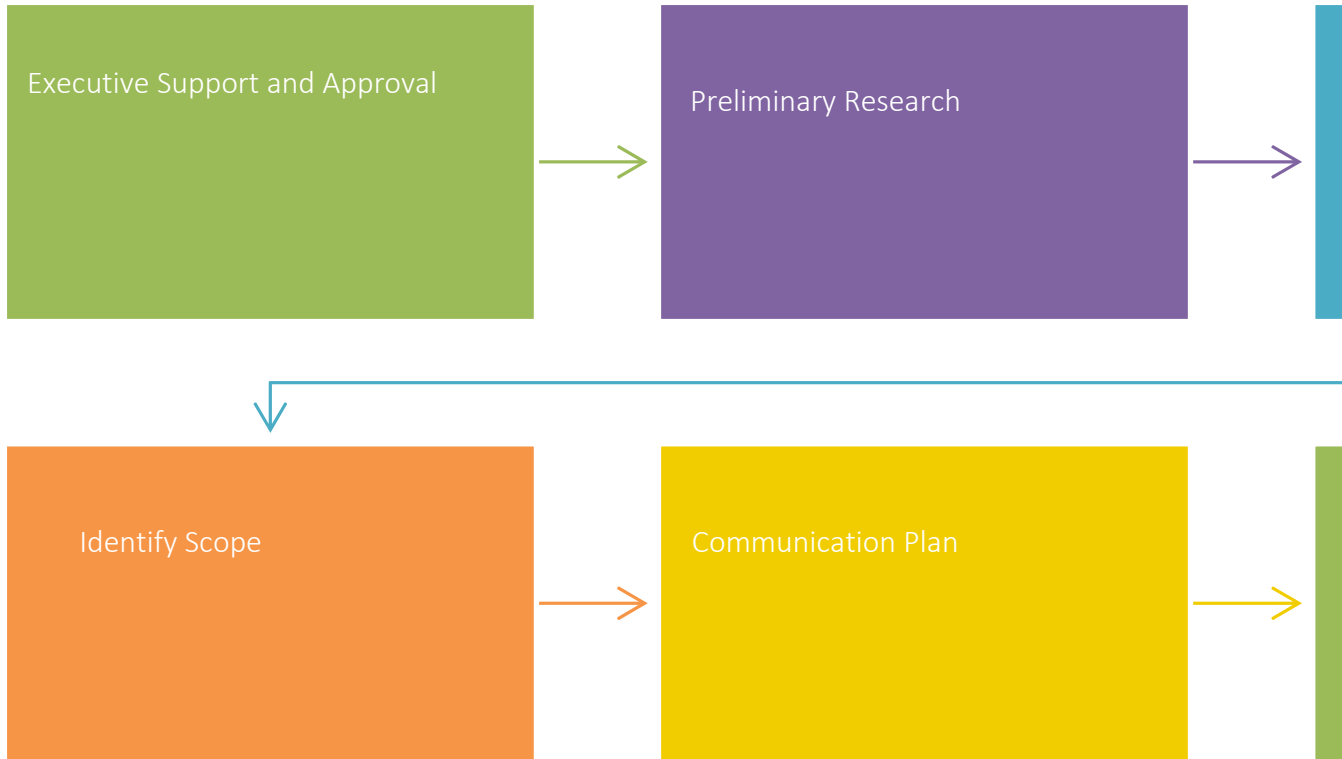
- forms a foundation for understanding records and information assets.

The information collected from the inventory identifies:

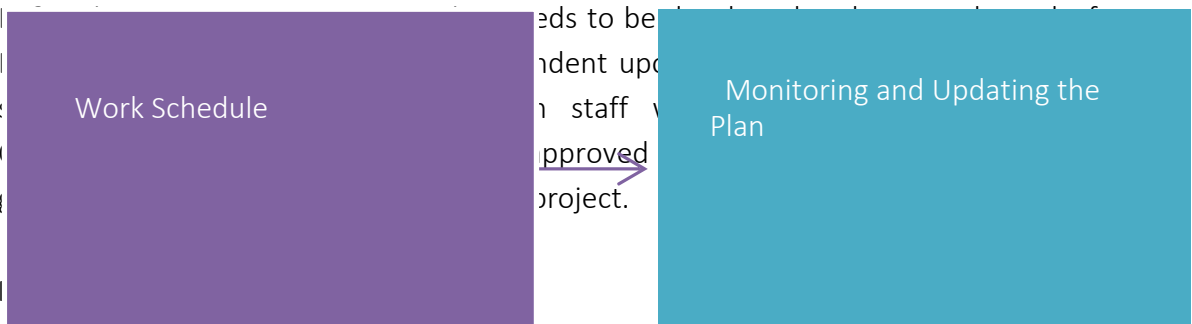
- what the records and information are;
- where they are located;
- what format they take;
- the extent (boxes, files, gigabytes, etc.);
- how they are stored and their storage conditions;
- who creates them;
- who accesses them; and
- why and how they are created, used and managed.

## **4.2 Planning the Inventory**

Getting organized and overseeing the activities and processes involved in conducting an inventory is critical to a successful outcome.



**4.2.1 Executive Support and Approval**



**4.2.2**

Gather information to estimate the effort and resources needed to complete the inventory. For paper records, the benchmark for one person is 20 – 30 cubic feet of records per day. A standard records storage box is approximately 1 cubic foot (2,000 sheets) and a standard filing cabinet drawer ranges from 1.5 (letter size) to 2.0 (legal size) cubic feet. For electronic records, the benchmark varies significantly based on the format, system and tools available but 1 Gigabyte (GB) is approximately 10,000 files.

The below steps will assist in gathering the initial information needed prior to development of an inventory plan.

Step 1: Obtain a current organizational chart that describes the functions of each office. Contact staff to locate physical records and electronic record holdings (e.g., shared drives, email, business applications, etc.). Identify contacts that might have lists already prepared.

Step 2: Compile a listing of areas that need to be inventoried and map physical and/or electronic file locations. A quick walkthrough of office and storage areas surveying the bulk of records is a good starting place to get an idea of the volume and the accessibility of the physical records. Flag any hazards and note any problems with records or space. This needs to be completed for all locations in which information assets are stored. For electronic records have IT provide reports that outline number of files, locations, storage volume size, etc.

Step 3: Compile a list of supplies including a flashlight, gloves and dust mask for physical storage areas. If necessary, estimate the cost of additional resources to be included in the plan, such as hard hats, protective footwear and clothing and more sophisticated breathing apparatus if deemed necessary. It is important to consider occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements that may be required for both the storage area and condition of records. For electronic records, consider access to systems, account setup and even licensing.

### **4.2.3 Plan Development**

Using the information gathered in your preliminary research, develop a plan that outlines the effort and resources necessary to complete the inventory. The plan should contain the purpose and objectives of a records inventory; a strategy outlining the scope of the inventory and how it is being done; a communications plan; a list of project staff; and the work schedule.

### **4.2.4 Identify Scope**

Identify the scope of the inventory and include which business units and locations will be inventoried. Typically, surveyed by record series related to specific business units regardless of media or format. Collected on worksheets the data is then entered in a spreadsheet, the Inventory File, and then analyzed for reporting.

Describe the roles and responsibilities of staff and group leaders participating in the inventory. Staff in the business unit and staff responsible for IM should work together during the survey to support knowledge transfer and accuracy. Consult with branches and divisions to determine what will work best for their specific business units. Program staff

are the specialists on how the records they create are used, and play a key role in understanding the needs of their division or work unit.

#### **4.2.5 Communication Strategy**

When the inventory plan is complete and has Executive approval, communicate it to all staff who will be involved in the inventory including Executive and senior management.

The communication strategy should be right-sized to meet the needs of your organization and may include:

- formal and informal communication to staff from Executive demonstrating their support for the project and to assist with staff cooperation;
- a presentation communicating which areas will be inventoried, the role of staff in each area and the projected work schedules to the Executive and senior management groups;
- orientation and training for staff involved in the project;
- continuous communication through email or Intranet outlining the progress of the project highlighting successes as well as additional areas for improvement; and
- a wrap-up or follow-up presentation to all involved reporting on the overall outcomes of the project and its findings.

#### **4.2.6 Staff Training**

Conduct training workshops with staff involved in the project. Those working with the records and information are best positioned to provide information to support an accurate inventory.

#### **4.2.7 Work Schedule**

Schedule the order of divisions or work groups to be inventoried and consult with managers and supervisors to ensure that times selected are appropriate. Establish time-lines and completion dates. Adjust the work schedule as the project progresses.

#### **4.2.8 Monitoring and Updating the Plan**

Monitor plan time-lines and update the plan as often as necessary. Timelines are likely to be affected due to the abilities and availability of staff; unexpected findings such as a cache of hidden records; work-safety issues; and the loss of resources such as inventory staff leaving during process. Adjust the plan and report to Executive and senior management on a regular basis about progress and any adjustments or setbacks.

### **4.3 Conducting the Inventory**

The scope of the inventory should include all the records and information holdings. This means all records (physical and electronic data repositories) as well as on-site and off-site including main offices, off-site in other offices, records storage areas, as well as all electronic records stored in shared drives, personal drives, hard drives, other external storage devices, and applications or other software as a service (SaaS). The inventory includes active records used in current business processes; semi-active records used infrequently; and, inactive records that have served their primary business purpose and are no longer used. Non-records, such as blank forms and reference materials, should not be included in the inventory. If they are discovered during the course of the inventory and are no longer required by the organization they may be disposed of appropriately.

#### **4.3.1 Inventory Approach**

The inventory starts out as being location and business function specific. The physical arrangement of the records, regardless of format, provides clues as to the business function or part of an organization that owns the records. Begin at a specific location and proceed systematically following a logical progression. Mapping the room, filing cabinets, network share folders, etc., and numbering ahead of time will be useful. Tag or label each area (file drawer, volume, network file folder, etc.) as it is inventoried. Flag vital records and those identified by the business section as having enduring value. Regardless of format the process is similar and should be followed for all information assets.

During the process, it might be useful to note the locations of non-government information and records that do not belong to the department or other public body as an aside to be followed up on during a planned disposition review. However, this information should not form part of the organization's Inventory File.



### **4.3.2 Inventory Data Collection**

Information about a department or other public body's records initially collected on an inventory worksheet should then be entered into a spreadsheet, an Inventory File. Records are generally arranged systematically by record series to follow business needs and usage. It is important to include staff working in each section to assist in the inventory because their knowledge about the records will add value to the inventory process.

The inventory is a collection of record series which are groups of identical or related records that are identifiable as a unit. Details at the folder or document level are not included in the inventory unless their identification is questionable or they have been disconnected from the business function in some way; for instance: lost in a move or found unlabeled on a shelf.

The business unit that creates or uses the records typically knows the title of the record series. It should accurately represent the content of the record series and be distinguished from other series. From time to time, the contents of folders and other containers may be examined in order to identify the correct record series, business function, or part of the public body to which it belongs.

File and box lists can be useful for gathering information to complete inventory worksheets; however, it is important to check the lists and the physical and/or electronic location to confirm that the information is accurate. A formal description of electronic systems and the information contained within including any privacy impact assessments (PIAs) would also be useful.

## **4.4 Documenting the Inventory**

As each section in each physical and/or electronic location is completed, the worksheets should be examined for completeness. Be prepared to follow-up with staff involved in the process before entering data into the spreadsheet, the Inventory File. Note: Maintain the worksheets until information has been transferred to the spreadsheet and the accuracy of the resulting report has been confirmed by each section.

Data entry of worksheet contents into the Inventory File supports data analysis and generating reports. It is important to generate an inventory report for each business unit as their section is completed and request feedback to ensure that the information is correct and to confirm the proper identification of their record series.

Once the Inventory File has been compiled, it is analyzed for decisions related to disposition authorities. This supports the cleanup of records, the scheduling of record series to off-site storage, secure disposal authorization or transfer to the Provincial Archives, and in cases where vital records are needed for business continuity or other purposes. After implementing approved disposition authorities, the inventory should be updated. Since the design of the Inventory File is by record series and most records and information management activities occur by record series, there will be less effort necessary for ongoing maintenance and verification.

Initially, the Inventory File provides primary intellectual control over the physical arrangement and location of records. Its secondary use could be expanded to support other IM activities within a department or other public body such as legal discovery and disposal of records. The Inventory File could be expanded to include fields to be used for information about legal holds, ATIPP requests, and retention/disposal values from an approved disposition authority.

Where possible, the inventory results could be imported into the organization's electronic document and records management system (EDRMS). At this stage, the department or other public body is ready to move forward with the classification plan development and implementation.

#### **4.5 Understanding the Findings**

Effectively evaluating information gathered from the inventory, including concrete examples and recommendations, supports an overall understanding of the information assets of an organization and the overall information risk.

Information contained in the Inventory File is analyzed and tabulated for various continual improvement purposes. Typically, an Inventory File pulls together a complete picture of the department or public body's records and information holdings beginning with the basics such as scope, purpose and quantity of record series.

This information can be analyzed to:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Determine which records the organization owns and identify any records that the department or other public body may have in their possession that it does not own.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Plan for future physical and/or electronic space and security needs.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conduct a risk analysis of retaining current record inventory levels or series.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Identify gaps in records.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Develop and implement a records classification plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support filing system improvement.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support creation of standard shared directory structures for electronic records.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Develop and implement a records retention and disposal schedule.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Plan migration and reformatting strategies.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assess and improve storage conditions.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conduct Occupational Health and Safety due diligence.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assess and improve information protection.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support business continuity planning (BCP).
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support ATIPP and other discovery requests, collection, preservation and access.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enforce legal holds.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Support other activities relating to the management and protection of information assets.

There are common findings or issues that often occur when an inventory is completed. A few examples have been included in the below table.

Finding/ Issue	Recommendation
Old record series found in closet or other previously unknown storage area.	Determine if there is an approved disposition authority (e.g., RRDS for Operational Records) for the records series. If there is no approved disposition authority, submit a disposition authority (e.g., Request for One Time Disposal) for approval to the GRC.
Duplicate records (paper and/or electronic)	Review approved disposition authorities (e.g., Transitory Records Directive). Determine and/or establish which version is the official version of the records (electronic or paper). If assessed as duplicate information then securely dispose of the records identified as copies.
Inadequate labelling of files or boxes	Develop and/or apply appropriate naming conventions and box listings where applicable.
Un-labeled computer diskettes, portable drive, etc.	Review contents and label, include date ranges of information.
Record series found from business or program area that no longer exists	Review the organization's internal and external compliance requirements on the disposition including transfer of abandoned records.
Abandoned records from another department, agency or business unit that no longer exists	Review the organization's internal and external compliance requirements on the disposition including transfer of abandoned records.

## 4.6 Monitor and Verify

A review and validation of an organization's records and information inventory are the mechanisms for monitoring and verifying IM. The records and information inventory components and supports need to be lifecycle managed to ensure they are providing accurate and relevant information to the organization. These elements should also be assessed to validate that they continue to support an accurate reflection of the organization's records and information assets.

## 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Deputy Minister or Permanent Head or Designate

(Department or other Public Body)

- Support the department or other public body's compliance with MOIA as well as OCIO-issued policies, directives, standards and guidelines, and ensure that proper protocols are in place to properly develop and manage a records and information management system, often referred to as an IM Program.
- Support the development, maintenance and continual improvement of a records and information inventory in the organization's IM Program.

Directors responsible for IM

- Align organization-issued materials with the guidance provided by the OCIO in the development and implementation of records and information inventory within the organization's IM Program.
- Apply a continual improvement approach to the management of the organization's IM Program to ensure the review and inclusion of all records and information assets in a managed inventory.

Office of the Chief Information Officer

As part of OCIO's administration of the MOIA, the OCIO:

- Recommends to Treasury Board policies for adoption.
- Develops, manages, monitors, and communicates IM&P policy instruments and supporting materials to departments and other public bodies.
- Provides direction on IM&P best practices, resource requirements, organizational structure, recordkeeping systems and IM Programs to departments and other public bodies.
- Assists departments and other public bodies to improve their IM&P capacity.
- Provides IM&P advisory, training and awareness services and support to departments and other public bodies.
- Supports IM forums, committees, and other professional practice communities, consisting of IM representatives from departments and other public bodies.
- Manages the Provincial Records Centre (PRC).
- Provides administrative support to the Government Records Committee (GRC).

In addition, the OCIO will:

- Develop, implement and maintain this Guideline as well as the GuideBook, also known as the Guide to IM for Public Bodies.

- Provide education and awareness on the implementation of a Records and Information Inventory.

## 6.0 Supporting Materials and Version History

### Supporting Materials

Below is a listing of supporting materials hyperlinked to the published location.

#### Management of Information Act

<http://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/m01-01.htm>

#### Information Management and Protection Policy

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/ocio/im/policy-instruments/im-ip-policy>

#### Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015

<http://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/a01-2.htm>

#### Rooms Act

<https://assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/statutes/r15-1.htm>

#### Directive - Disposition

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/ocio/im/policy-instruments/disposition>

#### GuideBook – Guide to IM for Public Bodies

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/ocio/im/policy-instruments/guidebook>

#### OCIO Website

<https://www.ocio.gov.nl.ca>

### Version History

The following table highlights the version history of this document including date issued and version number.

Date (yyyy-mm-dd)	Version
2010-11-05	1.0
2015-03-18	2.0
2022-02-15	3.0

## Appendices

Appendices listed below directly relate to the Guideline – Records and Information Inventory and are published independent of this Guideline on the OCIO website, <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/ocio/im/policy-instruments/guidebook>.

Appendix	Title
A	Checklist – Records and Information Inventory
B	Quick Reference – Records and Information Management System
C	Records and Information Inventory Worksheet
D	Records and Information Inventory

Other GuideBook References:

Classification Plan Development and Implementation

Information Protection