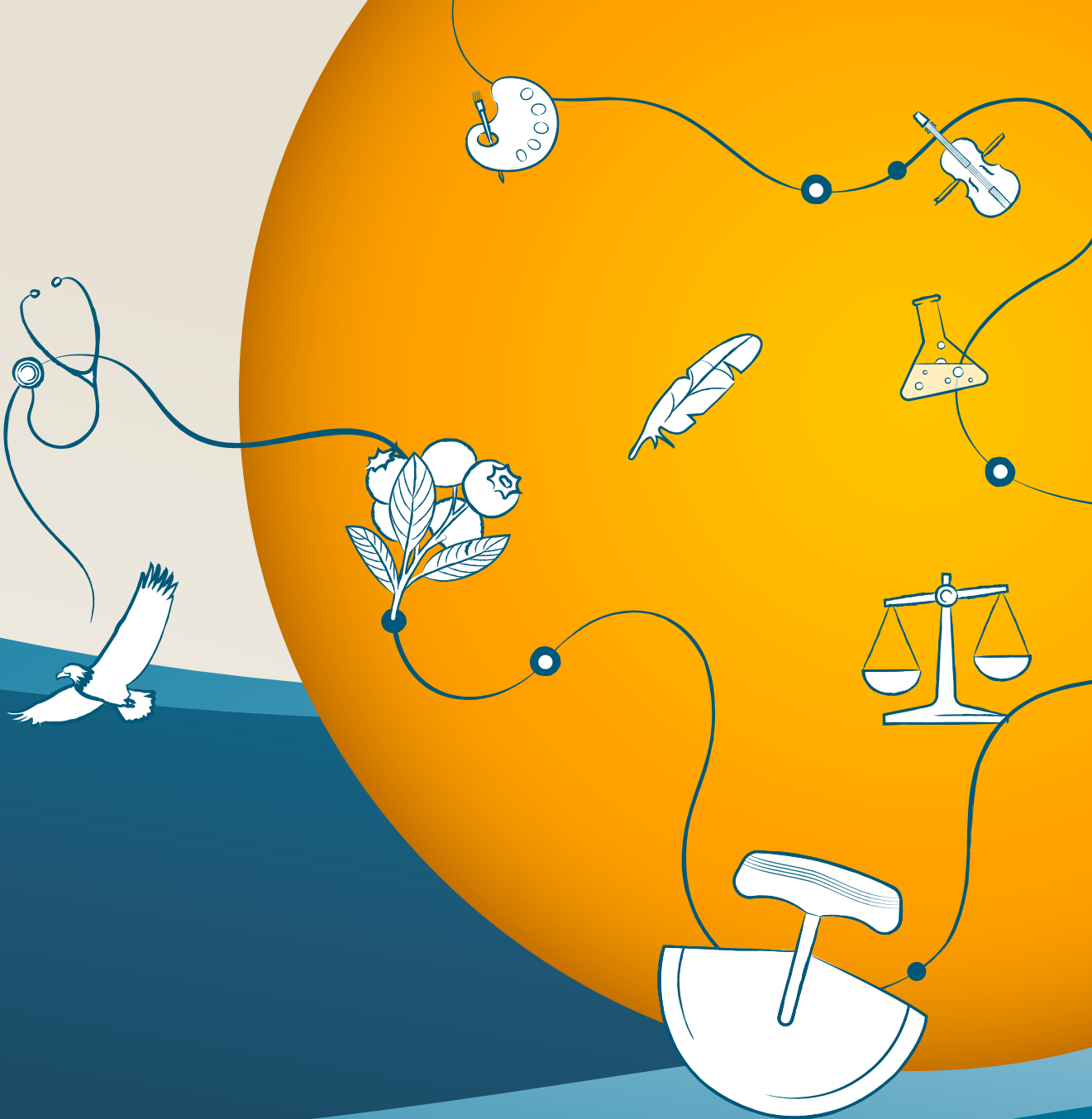




# Inclusive Innovation Action Plan

2023-2026



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# Executive summary

Driven by [Mitacs's Strategic Plan](#) to prioritize equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and Indigenization across all its actions and decisions, Mitacs has developed the Inclusive Innovation Action Plan (IIAP) to help foster an inclusive ecosystem in Canada. The IIAP advances Mitacs's commitment to EDI and reconciliation by addressing innovation gaps and inequities faced by all equity-deserving communities, with emphasis placed on **five priority groups**:



**Indigenous Peoples**



**Women and gender diverse individuals**




**Racialized groups**



**Persons living with disabilities**



**LGBTQ2S+ communities**



The IIAP aims to catalyze sustainable and long-term change through measurable goals and actions for 2023-2026. The IIAP is developed holistically through **three interrelated streams**:

**Stream 1: Equitable systems and processes** focuses on Indigenizing and incorporating EDI principles across Mitacs's internal systems, policies and practices. The goal of Stream 1 is to build a strong foundation internally for Mitacs to deliver equitable practices and decisions toward inclusive innovation. This includes improving Mitacs's human resource processes to recruit, retain and grow a diverse workforce; increasing support to build an inclusive culture and more career development opportunities; embedding social and Indigenous innovation as core elements in Mitacs's funding and proposal agreements; and developing strategies to Indigenize Mitacs's internal capacity for reconciliation.

**Stream 2: Access and support for equity-deserving students** addresses gaps and inequities in Mitacs's external programming, with the goal of increasing access and opportunities for diverse research talent to enter the innovation ecosystem. Various forms of wraparound supports will be developed under this stream to fully realize the potential of diverse talent, and to empower Indigenous and other equity-deserving students to participate in the innovation process. Barriers to access Mitacs's programs will be identified and addressed to increase the number of Indigenous and other equity-deserving students in the Mitacs ecosystem. Furthermore, targeted communication strategies will be developed to increase accessibility and awareness of the various materials and resources available for all participants.


**Stream 3: Networks and partnerships** looks to integrate Mitacs's reconciliation and EDI efforts across its network to build inclusive innovation across the entire ecosystem. Mitacs seeks to continue its long-standing collaboration with academic partners to expand its efforts and engage with diverse student bodies across campuses. Outreach efforts will be broadened to diversify partnerships with industry and community organizations, both nationally and internationally. Mitacs also plans to incorporate Indigenous procurement and supplier diversity practices to support diverse businesses across the country. And lastly, to leverage Mitacs's unique position in the innovation ecosystem, the IIAP positions Mitacs to take on a convenor role to foster cross-institution, cross-sector, and cross-industry collaboration.

# Background

Mitacs and other key rights holders and stakeholders recognize the importance of EDI and reconciliation in the innovation ecosystem. As outlined in [Mitacs's 2021 Strategic Plan](#), Mitacs is committed to advancing EDI in all our actions and decisions to build a shared, equitable future with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples together. The [Government of Canada](#) released a report in 2018 to signal the importance of inclusive innovation to solve Canada's most pressing social and environmental challenges. This commitment was renewed in 2021 by Canada's Prime Minister and Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, with a [strong message](#) on the importance of reconciliation and EDI in advancing Canada's innovation ecosystem.

The [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#) published its 94 Calls to Action in 2015 to rally key actors to Indigenize the education, corporate, and innovation ecosystems. Universities in Canada were encouraged by the [Canada Research Chairs](#) program in 2020 to develop EDI action plans to address underrepresentation across their communities.

Mitacs's commitment to addressing inequities and removing barriers for Indigenous Peoples and other equity-deserving stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem is exemplified by the IIAP. Beginning its implementation in April 2023, the IIAP lays out strategic goals and actions to propel Mitacs and its partners (both academic and industry) forward in our journey toward inclusive innovation. Specifically, the IIAP is driven by this **strategic direction**:



To empower the social, cultural and economic well-being of Indigenous Peoples and all individuals in Canada by cultivating inclusive innovation through equitable systems and research processes.

To develop impactful and focused strategies, Mitacs strives to address inequities faced by all equity-deserving communities, with an emphasis on **five priority groups**:



**Indigenous Peoples**



**Women and gender diverse individuals**



**Racialized groups**



**Persons living with disabilities**



**LGBTQ2S+ communities**

# Methodology

To date, several research methodologies have been carried out to inform the development of the IIAP.



**EDI audit/assessment:** Partnered with Canadian Equality Consulting, an external consultant, to assess Mitacs’s programs, policies, and practices through an EDI lens from November 2021 to July 2022. The assessment identifies strengths and opportunities and 52 recommendations to address the EDI gaps in Mitacs’s current practices.



**National EDI survey:** Launched a voluntary self-identification survey for Mitacs interns in July 2022 and maintained an average weekly response rate of over 70%. The data collected from the national EDI survey conveyed the demographic representation of past and current participants across Mitacs’s core programming. The survey also identified demographic gaps and informed the support needed to increase the participation of specific communities in Mitacs’s innovation ecosystem.



**Environmental scan:** Conducted in August 2022 to review concepts, key actors, and trends relating to EDI and Indigenization in the research and innovation space across both national and international settings.



**Internal Mitacs EDI survey:** Distributed a diversity and inclusion survey, using Diversio’s AI-based platform, to Mitacs’s 350+ employees in November 2022. The survey was designed to collect insights along six inclusion dimensions, including organizational culture, management practices, career development, workplace flexibility, workplace safety, and recruitment and hiring practices. This survey also captured the demographic composition of our staff and Board of Directors.



**Internal consultations:** Undertaken with 48 individuals across Mitacs from January to March, 2023. Consultations were structured to collect feedback on the framework and feasibility of the IIAP, as well as insights on EDI strengths and barriers that Mitacs employees have experienced or observed both internally and externally.

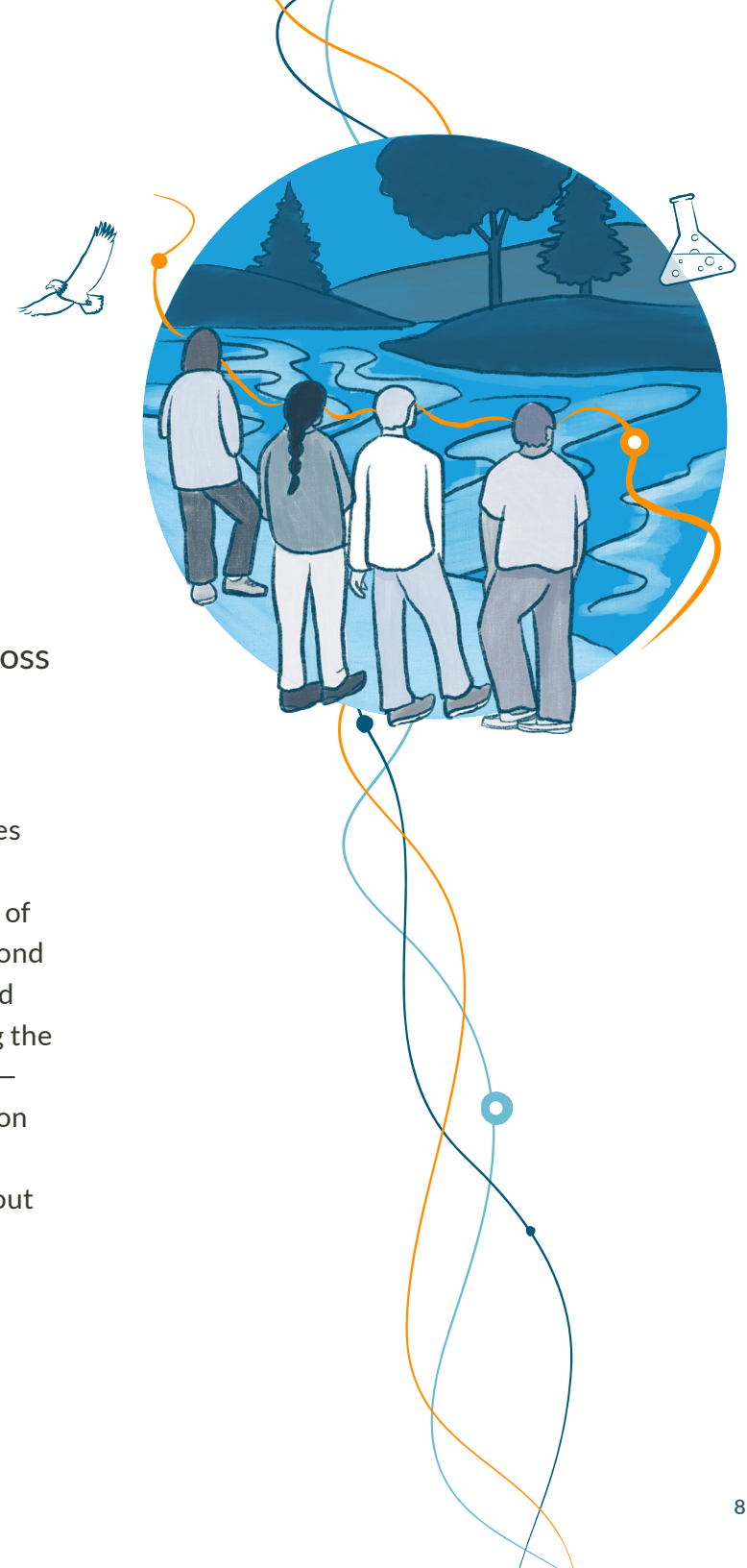


**Consultation with Full Partner Advisory Council (FPAC) members:** Consultation with FPAC in May 2023 to ensure the proposed IIAP accounts for unique aspects of Mitacs’s relationship with its post-secondary partners.

## The IIAP framework

Mitacs takes on a vital role by connecting top talent from academia with industry organizations to drive innovation, and to enhance the economic and social well-being of all in Canada. The complex structures of Mitacs's operations require a coordinated approach to foster systemic change across the organization. Several factors were taken into consideration in the development of the IIAP.

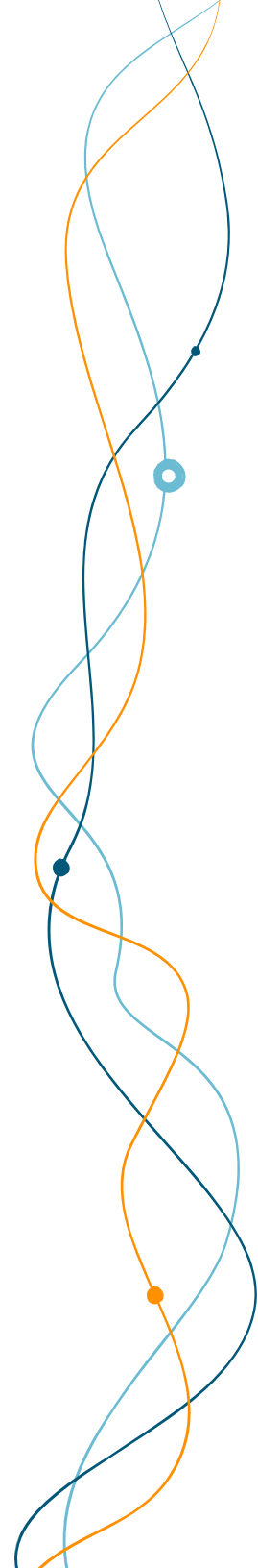
The IIAP was designed to holistically transform Mitacs's programs, processes, and practices through three streams of goals and actions. The first stream – **Equitable systems and processes** – focuses on Mitacs's internal systems to establish an advanced understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion and Indigenization principles across the workforce. The second stream – **Access and support for equity-deserving students** – identifies the programs and initiatives that will improve accessibility and address inequities, with the goal of increasing the participation of equity-deserving students in the innovation ecosystem. The third stream – **Networks and partnerships** – looks to drive inclusive innovation across Mitacs's innovation ecosystem, by strengthening collaborations between Mitacs and academic and industry partners, and expanding Mitacs's footprint nationally and internationally. More details about each stream are provided in later sections.





Another critical component of the IIAP is the concerted effort to Indigenize Mitacs's understanding and approach to innovation. Indigenous communities are sovereign rights holders and the original inhabitants of Turtle Island. Since the first contact with colonial settlers, Indigenous communities have faced historical marginalization, and in the modern day, face unique challenges and barriers in Canada. Thus, reconciliation in the research and innovation landscape for Indigenous Peoples demands a different set of efforts and initiatives compared to those for other equity-deserving groups. The IIAP includes goals and actions to specifically increase the participation rate of Indigenous researchers and innovators by empowering them to enter and thrive in the ecosystem. In addition, the IIAP drives Indigenous innovation by redefining Mitacs's understanding and approach towards innovation, and establishing safe spaces where Indigenous ways of knowing and being are valued, integrated, and actively engaged throughout the innovation process.

The IIAP recognizes the complexity of intersectionality, and the compounded barriers attached to intersectional identities. All data collected to inform the IIAP has been analyzed and reviewed through an intersectional lens. Furthermore, while the IIAP have placed emphasis on advancing inclusive innovation for the five priority groups (listed in page 6), many of the actions and initiatives developed under the plan have taken the intersectionality of identities into account. That is, the IIAP does not take on a "hard target" approach to increase specific representation across Mitacs's workforce, student populations, and partnerships. Rather, the IIAP aims to eliminate biases across Mitacs's systems and processes in order to build an inclusive ecosystem.



The IIAP leverages theories from change management practices to ensure Mitacs's commitment to inclusive innovation takes on a systemic approach. The IIAP also incorporates accountability measures to rally cross-functional efforts toward inclusive innovation. Each action within the IIAP is assigned to a specific department to ensure accountability and is accompanied by key performance indicators (KPIs), including specific targets, expected outputs, and clear timelines. All leadership bodies, including operational leaders (i.e., directors and managers), and many individual contributors have been consulted to foster both top-down buy-in and bottom-up commitment towards inclusive innovation.

The IIAP comprises short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals to cultivate sustainable change over three fiscal years. In the short term (i.e., 2023–24 fiscal year), actions are geared towards laying the foundational groundwork, such as collecting data to monitor workforce and internal demographics, and identifying working groups for carrying out various initiatives. In the intermediate term (i.e., 2024–25 fiscal year), the focus is on developing plans to operationalize more expansive initiatives. In the long term, we aim to implement diverse programs and initiatives, and formalize various processes to demonstrate commitment towards inclusive innovation as part of Mitacs's core strategic mandate. Assessments of each program and initiative will also be carried out and systematically maintained to evaluate short, intermediate, and long-term impact, and identify additional opportunities for continuous improvement towards inclusive innovation.





## Stream 1: Equitable systems and processes

### Core objective

Embed Indigenous and EDI principles across Mitacs's **internal systems, policies, and practices** to advance equitable outcomes

A strong internal foundation is critical to Mitacs's capacity to connect diverse talent with partner organizations. As an organization, Mitacs prioritizes and makes the conscious effort to promote a culture that incorporates Indigenous and EDI principles across all decisions and practices. The first year of the IIAP will prioritize building an inclusive innovation foundation internally, by identifying gaps and devising strategic solutions for its human resource processes, culture and career development opportunities, scope and approach to innovation, and reconciliation efforts with Indigenous communities.

## Human resource processes

Integrating EDI considerations across human resource processes is imperative to building a workforce that represents the diverse peoples Mitacs serves. Diversity leads to increased creative thinking and fosters innovative solutions to address the complex challenges in the current innovation ecosystem. The IIAP has formulated actions to monitor and improve Mitacs's recruitment, selection, policies, performance management, and staff support initiatives through an EDI lens. For example, one action focuses on ongoing data collection efforts to identify gaps and keep track of our progress on representation and workplace inclusion experiences for continuous improvement.

### Responsible:



EDI



Human Resources

### Y1 (2023-24)

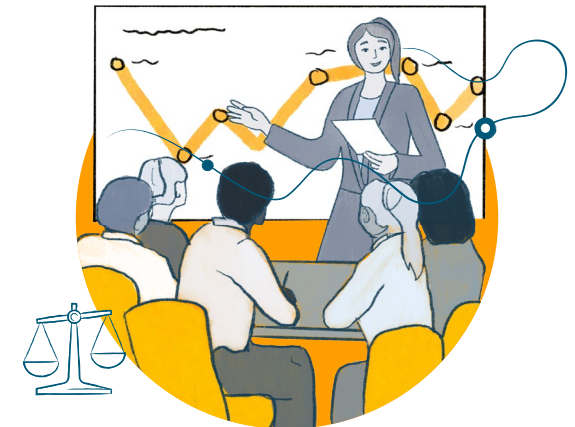
Identify gaps and improve internal processes and policies to recruit, retain, and grow a diverse workforce

### Y2 (2024-25)

Evaluate and expand Y1 strategies to further recruit, retain, and grow a diverse workforce

### Y3 (2025-26)




Maintain a diverse workforce through improved systems and processes across Mitacs



## Culture and career development

Diversity within Mitacs alone cannot drive sustainable transformation towards inclusive innovation. Change towards EDI starts from the top, but also requires commitment and buy-in from all levels to enable the full potential of a diverse workforce. One of the main goals of the IIAP is to cultivate an inclusive culture to retain Mitacs's talent and to develop equitable pathways for all staff to thrive and grow within Mitacs. Formal programs and initiatives – such as mentorship programs – will ensure continuous growth towards an inclusive culture. Currently, Mitacs offers EDI and Indigenous-related training to all staff. The IIAP will broaden current offerings of training topics and resources, and identify targeted training on EDI and Indigenous topics that are relevant to the activities of specific departments.

### Responsible:

-  EDI
-  Human Resources
-  Marketing and Communications

### Y1 (2023–24)

Enhance organizational commitment, and increase support to build Indigenous and EDI competencies for all employees at Mitacs

### Y2 (2024–25)

Develop plans (i.e., framework, budget, and resources, etc.) to operationalize various Indigenous and EDI initiatives

Expand Mitacs's scope of continuous learning to advance EDI knowledge

### Y3 (2025–26)

Implement internal initiatives to support the growth and success of equity-deserving groups working within Mitacs

## Redefining innovation

Despite the push towards inclusive innovation across Canada, the current climate and discourse surrounding innovation remains biased towards technology, and falls short in integrating Social Science and Humanities and Indigenous knowledge effectively. The IIAP aims to position Mitacs as a leader in supporting innovation that is inclusive of Social Science, Humanities, and Indigenous knowledge to foster the economic growth and social well-being of Indigenous Peoples and all Canadians. Part of these efforts are to broaden the types of innovation Mitacs enables, including efforts to foster social innovation (e.g., improving social services, promoting health equity) and Indigenous innovation at Mitacs and across Canada. The project to advance social innovation at Mitacs seeks to unify organizational understanding of social innovation, seek out new partners to deliver on social innovation, and position Mitacs to support innovation that addresses both economic and social challenges of our time. The IIAP also incorporates policies and practices to encourage Indigenous innovation, including pathways to support programs, products and services that are developed, designed, and/or led by Indigenous Peoples. An innovation ecosystem that enables Indigenous innovation will revitalize the resurgence of Indigenous cultures and systems, and empower the economic and cultural well-being of Indigenous communities.

### Responsible:



### Y1 (2023-24)

Expand the definition of innovation throughout Mitacs to include social innovation and Indigenous innovation

### Y2 (2024-25)

Redefine research impact and excellence throughout Mitacs to encourage social innovation and Indigenous innovation



### Y3 (2025-26)

Build in Indigenous and EDI principles across all Mitacs's funding proposals and agreements

## Reconciliation

Mitacs's ambition to advance inclusive innovation cannot be truly inclusive without Indigenizing its systems and processes with Indigenous communities. To embody the 'nothing about us, without us' teaching and encourage reconciliation, the IIAP sets to create more opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to participate in Mitacs's ecosystem – both internally and externally. The IIAP also aims to build a workforce that promotes meaningful allyship with Indigenous Peoples across Canada. In the immediate term, Mitacs will identify business development leads to actively engage with Indigenous communities alongside Mitacs's senior advisors of Indigenous relations and initiatives.

### Responsible:

-  Business Development
-  EDI
-  Human Resources

### Y1 (2023-24)

Increase internal capacity to support Indigenous engagement

### Y2 (2024-25)

Continuous learning opportunities to further advance reconciliation and decolonization knowledge within Mitacs

### Y3 (2025-26)

Maintain Indigenous representation across Mitacs's ecosystem



## Stream 2: Access and support for equity-deserving students

### Core objective

Enhance Mitacs's external **programming and barrier reduction initiatives for students** to drive inclusive innovation by design




Indigenous and other equity-deserving peoples have to navigate layers of systemic barriers, such as gaps in educational attainment, difficulty in accessing funding, lack of mentorship opportunities, unconscious bias, and discrimination (both subtle and direct) in order to participate in or benefit from innovation activities in Canada. An innovation ecosystem is inclusive when every individual – regardless of their identities and statuses – can access the necessary support and resources, and meaningfully engage in the innovation process from conceptualization to output of a product or solution. An inclusive process to innovation will positively impact marginalized communities, such as by creating improved products and solutions that respond to the needs of diverse communities. While Stream 1 focuses on building the structure to foster inclusive innovation, Stream 2 seeks to reduce barriers to access, develop accessible communications to increase opportunities, and empower equity-deserving students to enter and succeed in the innovation ecosystem.



## Wraparound support

The IIAP seeks to empower Indigenous and other equity-deserving students by increasing support and opportunities to engage in innovation through Mitacs. This includes actions that increase awareness of and access to Mitacs’s innovation platforms, support networks and resources, learning and professional development opportunities, and targeted programs to build the network and capacity of various equity-deserving students. For example, Mitacs has launched a pilot program designed to increase collaboration and mentorship opportunities, professional networks, access to academic expertise, and promote equitable access for Indigenous and Black engineering and technology students across Canada.

### Responsible:

-  Business Development
-  Client Success
-  Programs

Y1 (2023–24)

Y2 (2024–25)

Y3 (2025–26)

Increase support for Indigenous and other equity-deserving students to participate in the innovation ecosystem

Develop evidence-informed initiatives to empower Indigenous and other equity-deserving students








Establish wraparound support services to accompany Mitacs’s core programming\*

\* **Note:** The progress of developing and piloting various wraparound services is dependent on medium/long-term operational and financial feasibility.

## Barrier reduction

The IIAP outlines data collection efforts to identify and address specific barriers that hinder the participation of equity-deserving students in innovation. Barrier reduction initiatives include actions that protect students from being discriminated against, such as the development of a code of conduct to set expectations between students, faculty supervisor, and partner supervisor; capacity building among internal staff and training program facilitators to increase awareness and understanding of Indigenous and EDI knowledge; and streamlining the application process to encourage more students to enter the innovation talent stream. The IIAP looks to continue collecting and analyzing students' demographic data to inform data-driven decisions and improvements across all programs.

### Responsible:

-  Academic Partnerships
-  EDI
-  Evaluations
-  Technology
-  Marketing and Communications
-  National Partnerships
-  Programs

### Y1 (2023-24)

Review current offerings, and identify barriers for Indigenous and other equity-deserving students to access Mitacs programs

### Y2 (2024-25)

Reduce barriers for Indigenous and other equity-deserving students to access and participate in Mitacs's programs

### Y3 (2025-26)

Ensure representation of equity-deserving students across Mitacs's core programming is reflective of the broader student population

Increase number of Indigenous students across all Mitacs's core programming

## Communication

Programs and services offered by Mitacs can only be as impactful as the reach and resonance of its communication and marketing strategies. To increase awareness and recruit diverse talent into the innovation talent stream, the IIAP aims to deliver several actions to increase the accessibility of Mitacs's materials and ensure the images Mitacs uses for all communications and media represent diversity and are inclusive of all backgrounds. For instance, guidelines on inclusive and accessible language will be developed to improve all Mitacs communications.

### Responsible:

- ♥ EDI
- 📣 Marketing and Communications
- 💡 Programs

### Y1 (2023-24)

Develop guidelines to improve accessibility and incorporate EDI principles into current external-facing materials

### Y2 (2024-25)

Continuously review and update Mitacs's programs and materials to meet EDI and Indigenization and accessibility standards

### Y3 (2025-26)





## Stream 3:

### Inclusive innovation ecosystem through networks and partnerships

#### Core objective

Ensure EDI is integral to **external community engagement and partnership** efforts nationally and internationally to deploy bright minds for a better future



Mitacs cannot advance inclusive innovation alone. As an innovation and workforce intermediary<sup>[1]</sup>, Mitacs is well placed to stimulate inclusive innovation at the ecosystem level, through a coordinated strategy and active collaboration between its partners, in both academia and industry. Mitacs aims to expand its partnership portfolios to create more opportunities for equity-deserving innovators, and to diversify its procurement practices to empower businesses owned by equity-deserving groups to support innovation. Furthermore, Mitacs's wide-reaching networks enable it to play a convenor role in connecting academic institutions, industry organizations, and other key actors to work together to advance inclusive innovation best practices nationally.

1 Mitacs is an *innovation intermediary* because we serve our partners in academia, industry, and other sectors, while also being a *workforce intermediary* that supports talent development and retention for Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP) within Canada's post-secondary institutions.

## Academic engagement

For over 20 years, Mitacs has operated alongside post-secondary institutions to fuel innovation across Canada. Through the IIAP, Mitacs seeks to continue its long-standing collaboration with academic institutions, and expand its effort to engage with diverse rights holders and stakeholders across campuses. Specifically, Mitacs will explore opportunities to engage with diverse student bodies to increase awareness of the different programs and services offered through Mitacs; to improve the diversity of the innovation talent stream; and to empower diverse talent to envision their contributions to the innovation ecosystem. In the short term, Mitacs will develop strategies to engage with Indigenous Student Centres within campuses of post-secondary institutions across Canada to empower Indigenous students and advance Indigenous innovation. To complement the Tri-Agency (i.e., Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada [NSERC], Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR], and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada [SSHRC]) and its *Dimensions Program*<sup>[2]</sup>, Mitacs will also look to act as the innovation intermediary for post-secondary institutions, and support the advancement of inclusive innovation and Indigenization strategies through cross-network collaboration.

### Responsible:

-  Academic Partnerships
-  Business Development

Y1 (2023–24)

Y2 (2024–25)

Y3 (2025–26)

Collaborate with academic partners to increase opportunities for engagement and partnerships which support inclusive innovation

## Expanded outreach

Mitacs has traditionally worked with academic institutions, not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, hospitals, and municipalities to transform research into innovative products and solutions. Mitacs has the opportunity to broaden its network and work with organizations that advocate for the interests of equity-deserving communities. Partnership with advocacy organizations or associations can expand Mitacs's scope of support and further diversify collaboration opportunities to enable an inclusive innovation ecosystem where equity-deserving talent can thrive and succeed.

For this fiscal year (2023–24), Mitacs will focus on two areas of partnerships. Given the concerted effort to Indigenize the innovation ecosystem, Mitacs will seek partnership opportunities with organizations that advocate for Indigenous Peoples' interests in research and innovation. And recognizing the historical marginalization of Black communities in innovation, Mitacs will also look to build partnerships with organizations that empower and support Black individuals to thrive in innovation, especially in areas of science and technology.

### Responsible:

-  Business Development
-  EDI

**Y1 (2023–24)**

**Y2 (2024–25)**

**Y3 (2025–26)**

Expand Mitacs's network through partnerships with organizations that support and/or advocate for equity-deserving and Indigenous Peoples

## Diversify partnerships

Our data sources<sup>[3]</sup> suggest that a large proportion of our interns from equity-deserving groups are enrolled in Social Sciences and Humanities disciplines, and tend to be involved in projects that seek to address social and community well-being. Furthermore, not-for-profit organizations have a higher proportion of equity-deserving peoples in their workforce, as they tend to position themselves as key actors to develop and promote innovative solutions that address social and community needs. The IIAP will push for more partnerships with not-for-profit organizations to increase opportunities for equity-deserving groups to participate in innovation and to produce innovative solutions that address various social and community needs. Furthermore, the [Government of Canada](#) estimates that 75% of Canada's population growth are accounted for by immigration. The IIAP also plans to expand Mitacs's international footprint to drive innovation for Canada's highly diverse and globalized community.

### Responsible:

-  Business Development
-  EDI
-  International Partnerships
-  National Partnerships

### Y1 (2023-24)

Expand Mitacs's industry network to include more diverse partners

### Y2 (2024-25)

Expand Mitacs's international footprint, and expand Indigenous strategy at the international level

### Y3 (2025-26)




Increase the number of not-for-profit and international organizations in Mitacs's innovation space

3 Based on Mitacs's interns' representation and data from the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student survey (2019), the higher proportion of equity-deserving groups enroll in Social Sciences and Humanities include: women, Indigenous Peoples, Black peoples, persons living with disabilities, gender diverse individuals, and LGBTQ2S+ folks.

## Procurement

In addition to cultivating inclusivity within the innovation ecosystem, Mitacs also strives to create inclusive practices across its network and outreach. One way to ensure inclusion of diverse organizations is through procurement. As a national organization, Mitacs has the opportunity to expand its procurement practices to engage with equity-deserving and Indigenous-owned businesses for both local and organization-wide business needs. Guidelines to foster Indigenous procurement and supplier diversity practices will be developed to supplement the current Mitacs Corporate Financial Policy. In addition, Mitacs will make the effort to curate a list of Indigenous and other diverse suppliers for various organizational, business, and social needs.

### Responsible:

-  Administration
-  EDI
-  Marketing and Communications

### Y1 (2023-24)

Develop and implement an Indigenous Procurement program

Develop and implement a Supplier Diversity program

### Y2 (2024-25)

Increase Indigenous representation across Mitacs's procurement functions

Increase number of diverse suppliers across Mitacs's procurement functions




### Y3 (2025-26)



## Convenor

Mitacs is a unique organization that has wide range of networks including academic institutions across the globe that are closely connected with organizations in various sectors and industries. The IIAP leverages Mitacs's unique position to advance the innovation ecosystem, and convene and foster cross-institutional, cross-sector, and cross-industry collaborations. As the immediate term will focus on building the foundation of inclusive innovation, Mitacs aims to develop strategies to situate itself as a convenor in Year Two (2024-25) and Year Three (2025-26) of the IIAP.

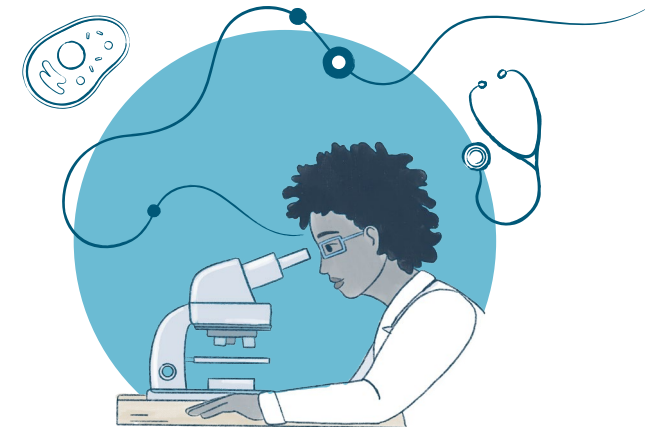
### Responsible:

-  Academic Partnerships
-  Business Development
-  EDI

### Y2 (2024-25)

### Y3 (2025-26)

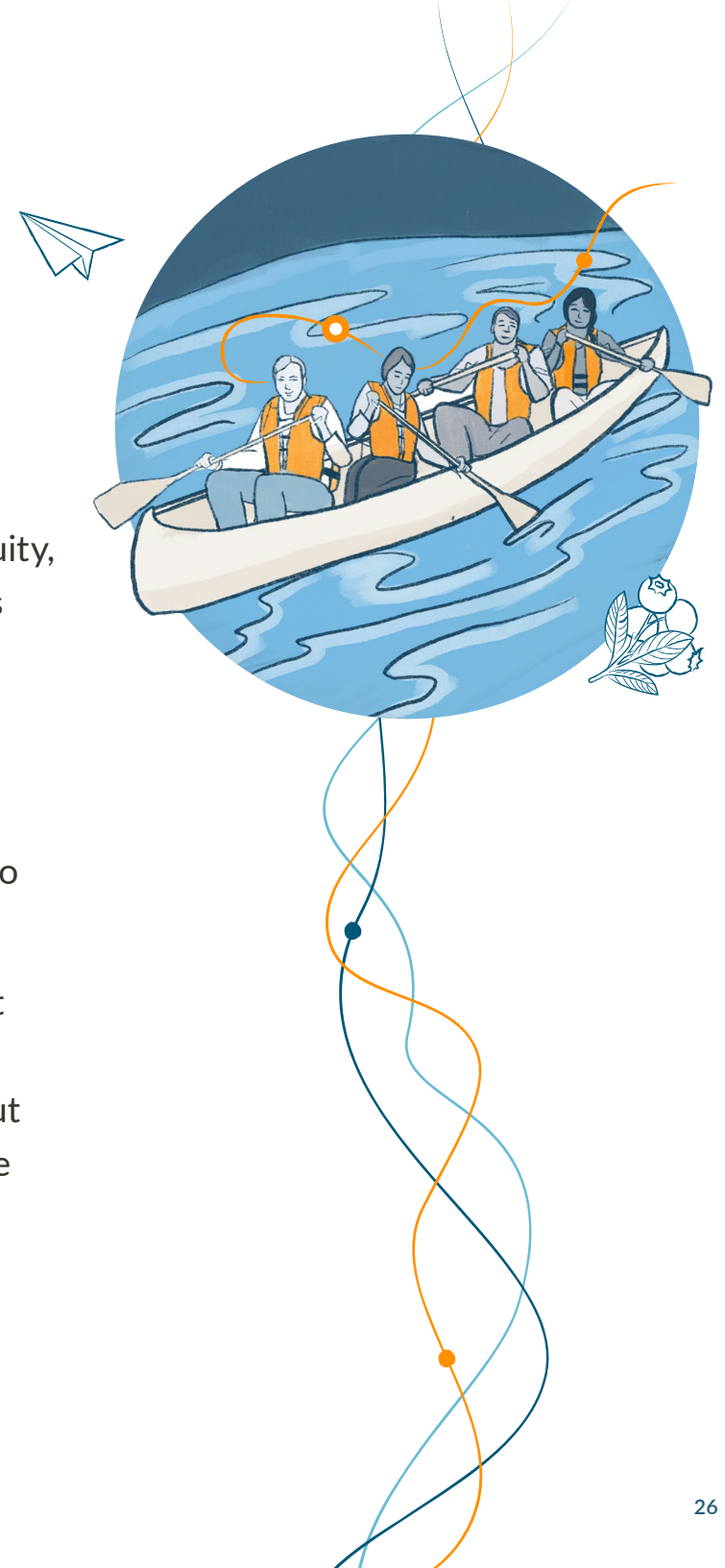
Develop a strategy to position Mitacs in a convenor role to advance inclusive innovation via cross-institution, cross-sector, and cross-industry collaborations



## The way forward

As outlined in [Mitacs's Strategic Plan](#), Mitacs is committed to building an equitable future with Indigenous Peoples, and committed to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion in all of Mitacs's actions and decisions. The IIAP was developed to catapult Mitacs as a leader in the Indigenous and inclusive innovation ecosystems. However, the IIAP is only the beginning of Mitacs's journey toward inclusive innovation. While the IIAP lays out the vision and actions towards inclusive innovation from 2023–2026, Mitacs remains committed to building its internal capacities to be adaptable and dynamic to the evolving needs of diverse communities and Canada as a whole.

Mitacs will release a progress report annually to demonstrate commitment and accountability during the implementation phase over the next three years. The progress report will include details on various actions carried out by specific teams or departments, along with outcomes and impact that are associated to the KPIs developed for the IIAP.



# Glossary of terms

## Diversity

Diversity is a relational concept and focuses on individual differences in a given setting. Differences are based on demographic grounds such as gender expression, gender identity, Indigeneity, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, marital status, family structure, and more.

## Equity

Equity is a practice that considers people's unique experiences and situations stemming from their demographic identities when enabling the opportunity, access, participation, performance, engagement, and other organizational actions. Equality, on the other hand, treats everyone the same regardless of individual needs.

## Equity-deserving groups

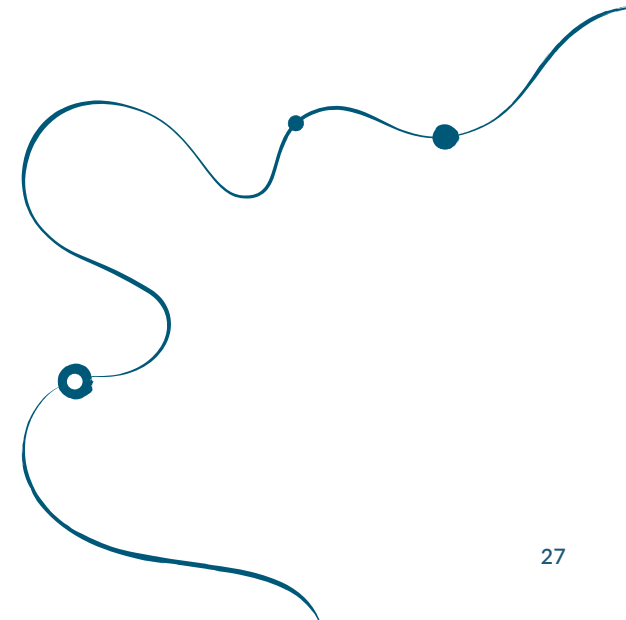
Equity-deserving groups are groups that have been facing marginalization as a collective, and experiencing barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources as a result of direct, subtle and systemic discrimination. At Mitacs, emphasis will be placed on five equity-deserving groups, including women and gender diverse individuals in STEM, Indigenous Peoples, racialized groups, persons living with disabilities, and LGBTQ2S+ communities.

## Inclusion

Inclusion denotes a space that fosters a sense of safety and belonging, where individuals are able to be their authentic selves. In organizations, it is driven by a culture that embraces and respects the inherent value of diversity. Diversity brings in different lenses and unique perspectives, and inclusion creates the space that embraces the differences and drives innovative solutions to address diverse needs.

## Inclusive innovation

Inclusive innovation incorporates Indigenization and equity, diversity and inclusion principles into the innovation process. It is the process that removes barriers for equity-deserving communities to not only enter, but also to thrive in the current innovation ecosystem. Inclusive innovation is critical to the economic and social well-being of all equity-deserving communities.



## **Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization**

Indigenization is a multi-staged process that transforms and incorporates Indigenous knowledge and ways of being into organizational systems, policies, and operations. The process starts with the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and ways of knowing into current practices. Inclusion is followed by reconciliation, which prioritizes on building meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities and establishing common grounds between Indigenous and settler worldviews.

Decolonization is a concept that goes hand-in-hand with Indigenization. Decolonization is a process to identify and dismantle processes that are rooted within Eurocentric/colonial structures, in order to make space for Indigenization to take place. Specifically, it is a safe space that empowers the resurgence of Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing, and embeds them into the current systems.

## **Indigenous innovation**

Indigenous innovation focuses on programs, products, services, or solutions where Indigenous Peoples lead or are meaningfully involved and engaged throughout the development and design process. It also focuses on providing Indigenous Peoples with the space, along with appropriate tools and resources, to cultivate full responsibility and sovereignty of innovation products and solutions. That is, Indigenous innovation enables the resurgence of Indigenous knowledge and ways of being in the current innovation ecosystem.

## **Innovation intermediary**

Innovation intermediaries play a critical role in supporting the collaboration between organizations and individuals. Specifically, innovation intermediaries are ‘knowledge brokers’ that accelerate the innovation process through network-based collaboration, and mediating the transfer of knowledge and resources between organizations and/or individuals.

## **Social innovation**

Social innovation is an outcome of innovative activities that meet current societal and community needs. This includes innovation outcomes that address environmental concerns, promote better health outcomes, empower diverse communities, advance social services, improve education and learning experiences, and more. Naturally, the inclusive innovation ecosystem that Mitacs aspires to build will lead to meaningful and positive impact to equity-deserving and other diverse communities, and at times, this impact will come in the form of social innovation.