

4.10 Information Management Policy

Policy Statement

Information is a strategic business resource that the Government of Nova Scotia must manage as a public trust on behalf of Nova Scotians. Effective information management makes program and service delivery more efficient; supports transparency; enables collaboration across organizations; supports informed decision-making in government operations; protects government's information assets; and preserves information of historic or enduring value for the benefit of present and future generations.

This policy provides direction on how government departments should manage information to fulfill their mandates; support program and service delivery; achieve strategic priorities; and meet accountability obligations prescribed by law. It is based on the recognition that:

- all employees are responsible for the management of information;
- information management requirements must be built into business planning and system development; and
- information management is most effective in a culture that values information and adopts supportive governance and accountability structures.

Definitions

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT (IM)

A discipline that promotes the coordinated and consistent application of legislation, strategies, policies, and practices throughout the life cycle of information. IM supports informed decision-making, which enables government to meet its corporate goals, and deliver its programs and services. The focus of IM is on information as a critical resource, regardless of its source or format. Although distinct from them, IM is a common thread that links disciplines such as information technology, records management, and the administration of access to information and privacy standards. IM means taking an effective, efficient, inclusive, and systematic approach to how government:

- determines its information needs;
- creates and collects information;
- distributes and exchanges information;
- analyzes, evaluates, and uses information;

- identifies, organizes, stores, accesses, and disposes of information;
- protects confidential information and personal privacy; and
- preserves information with long-term value to government and society.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS

A broad group of information specialists in subdisciplines including information technology; business analysis; records management; access to information and protection of privacy; library services; policy, planning, and research; publishing; and web content management. IM professionals work to maximize the value of information by taking a broader view and forging links among these groups in support of the business needs of government.

PROJECT

Refers to a defined course of endeavour such as a new or changing initiative, process, product, program, service, or system.

Policy Objective

This policy is designed to ensure information under the control of the Government of Nova Scotia is managed effectively and efficiently throughout its life-cycle in a manner that supports:

- a whole-of-government approach;
- government transparency;
- risk management;
- a collaborative environment;
- access to information;
- privacy and confidentiality;
- information security and protection;
- appropriate disposition of information;
- retention of corporate knowledge;
- quality information for decision-making; and
- responsive government through the delivery of quality programs, services, and information through a variety of channels.

Application

The policy applies to all government departments, agencies, boards, and commissions. In this policy, “department” and “departmental” are to be read to include agencies, boards, and commissions.

Policy Directives

- A. Information will be managed to facilitate and promote public benefit and trust through appropriate access, re-use, and sharing of information to the greatest extent possible, in accordance with legal and policy requirements, and in a manner that protects personal and confidential information and the privacy of individuals.
- B. The value of information as a corporate resource will be optimized by exploring and assessing opportunities for new information products and services.
- C. Information management requirements will be analyzed at an early stage in the development of new or modified government projects using a prescribed corporate information management assessment tool.
- D. Governance and accountability structures will be established and implemented to ensure the appropriate management of information, including during collaborative service delivery arrangements and when information is shared with other provincial government departments, other governments, or external entities.
- E. Business activities will be documented and any necessary audit trails will be built into systems and programs.
- F. The collection, use, and disclosure of personal information will be limited to the minimum required to deliver a program or service, unless otherwise authorized by legislation.
- G. The response burden on the public will be reduced by avoiding unnecessary or repetitive collection of information;
- H. Current and comprehensive classification structures, including metadata, will be developed.
- I. The quality of government information will be assured throughout its life-cycle, including its accuracy, relevance, accessibility, and usability.
- J. The quality of information will be maintained across all delivery channels.
- K. The integrity of information will be preserved, including when used in collaborative endeavors with other provincial government departments, other governments, or external entities.
- L. Appropriate protection will be applied to information including personal and confidential information, information of historic or enduring value, and information essential to the continuity of key services and business operations.

- M. Information will be safeguarded from improper disclosure, use, disposition, and destruction.
- N. Specific risks, vulnerabilities, and other significant information management issues will be identified, documented, reported on, and mitigated as required.
- O. The usability of information, including encrypted information, will be maintained for as long as it is required, over time and through technological change.
- P. Information no longer required will be disposed of in a timely fashion and, if applicable, in accordance with approved departmental records retention schedules.
- Q. IM programs will be assessed to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the management of information.

Accountability

A. Deputy heads will:

- ensure implementation of this policy and related standards and guidelines;
- champion information management by promoting a culture that values information and its effective management;
- foster supportive environments for information management;
- ensure that employees meet their responsibilities for managing information;
- allocate appropriate resources to support information management; and
- designate a Senior Management IM Representative to be responsible for departmental information management, operationalize this policy, and represent the department on the corporate IM Forum.

B. Senior Management will:

- ensure information management accountability frameworks are in place and appropriate responsibilities and accountabilities are negotiated and documented when information is shared with other departments, other governments or external entities; and
- ensure that information management requirements are identified and addressed during project planning and design.

C. Senior Management IM Representatives will:

- co-ordinate the strategic planning, resourcing, and implementation of information management activities, including training and development of staff; and
- periodically assess the effectiveness of the policy implementation.

D. The Corporate Information Management Program will:

- provide a framework for the management of information across government;
- set direction through corporate strategies and policies;
- help departments integrate information management requirements into corporate business and information technology strategies and plans;
- provide advice, tools, and support for departmental programs; and
- represent and promote the corporate IM program provincially, nationally, and abroad.

E. Departmental Information Management professionals will:

- conduct their work in a manner consistent with the direction provided by the Corporate IM Program; and
- provide advice and support on information management practices in their department.

F. All employees will:

- apply information management principles, standards, and practices in the performance of their duties;
- communicate information requirements and issues to their departmental information management professionals; and
- keep appropriate records about decisions and decision-making processes.

Monitoring

Departments are responsible for the consistent implementation and monitoring of the policy.

Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services will consult periodically with departments to receive feedback regarding the relevancy, usefulness, and effectiveness of the policy and materials provided to support the policy.

References

The following acts relate directly to the management of information:

Public Archives Act

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act

Government Records Act

Business Electronic Filing Act

Auditor General Act

Evidence Act

Statistics Act

Statutes that may provide direction to specific program areas

Related Documents

Corporate Information Management Assessment Tool

Corporate Information Management Framework

Audit Trail Framework

Implementing Audit Trail: Good Practice Guide

Electronic Mail Policy

Wide Area Network Security Policy

Privacy Policy

Records Management Policy

Information Sharing Policy

Open Data Policy

Citizen Online Identity Authentication Policy

Enquiries

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