

Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative Forum, November 2025

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Cooperation Canada co-hosted a virtual Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative (GCTI) Forum on November 25, 2025.

Participants

About 400 people from 169 different organizations took part in this event. Around 59% were from the nonprofit and NGO sectors. This includes global and Canadian groups.

There was also strong participation from:

- universities
- international organizations
- sector networks or funders

The private sector and consulting firms made up about 12% of the participants. A smaller but notable share. This group often worked in international development initiatives.

Goals

The purpose of this forum was to:

- engage organizations on GAC's grants and contributions modernization efforts
- share progress to date
- outline upcoming changes and impacts over the next six months

The session aimed to:

- build awareness of upcoming changes
- promote opportunities for co-creation through advisory and working groups
- align modernization with GAC's mandate for efficiency, transparency, and stronger collaboration

Opening remarks

The session started with a few words from the moderator David Le Blanc (GAC).

Brandon Lee (GAC) emphasized that the initiative aligns with current government policy.

He also stressed that it's designed to outlast political changes by:

- streamlining operations
- minimizing administrative burden
- driving long-term results

Christopher MacLennan (GAC) reinforced that transformation is a generational challenge for the public service. He noted that pilot projects and integrating ethical artificial intelligence (AI) will be key for modernization.

He stressed the need for:

- processes that can adapt
- processes that focus on results
- easier access to funding

Shannon Kindornay (Cooperation Canada) emphasized the importance of ongoing, transparent collaboration in the GCTI. She highlighted progress made through working groups. She also noted the need for clear feedback loops and regular communication.

They make sure that solutions are:

- realistic
- inclusive
- reduce administrative burden
- strengthen sector engagement

Key updates

Portal transformation

We introduced the new Collaboration@International (C@I) portal for organizations. It will gradually replace the Partners@International (P@I) portal by July 2026. It will offer a single access point for all funding opportunities across GAC.

The (C@I) portal will feature:

- an intuitive application process
- offline submission options
- real-time alerts on updates

A few organizations had the chance to use the portal early. Some of them have volunteered to create organization profiles in the new C@I portal. A tiered rollout will begin in early 2026. At that time, we will invite all organizations to create accounts before the full launch.

This year, organizations that took part in a pilot process preferred using the portal over email. They cited improved:

- accessibility
- fairness
- transparency

Financial management and agreements

GAC is shifting from a compliance-driven approach to a model where we share responsibility with organizations.

We plan to make changes that include:

- budgets that are driven by results
- budgets that are linked to activities rather than expense categories
- reduced administrative burden by:
 - streamlining budget reviews
 - simplifying contribution agreements

We are working on an indirect cost policy. It will initially apply to International Assistance and Foreign Affairs programs. More details to come.

AI integration

Our approach to AI integration must be ethical and modular. We must make sure to have human oversight for all business-critical decisions.

Current AI applications include:

- checking that proposals are complete
- pre-coding sector and policy markers
- improving data quality assurance

Future AI tools will help to:

- make faster assessments
- monitor compliance
- prepare disclosure packages

All data will remain within GAC's protected systems to ensure security and mitigate bias.

Results-Based Management (RBM)

We have updated RBM guidance, including the [International assistance results reporting guide for implementers](#).

The updated guide is:

- shorter
- easier to navigate
- harmonizes outlines for reports on GAC-funded international assistance projects
- includes checklists, hyperlinks, and clearer expectations

We will make further improvements to this guide based on feedback from implementing organizations.

Engagement and feedback

Participants engaged actively. Early responses showed moderate awareness of GCTI, which improved significantly by the end of the forum. Many participants wanted to take part in pilots and provide feedback.

Questions focused on:

- portal transition
- data migration
- multi-user access
- unsolicited proposals
- integration of monitoring tools

We also discussed:

- simplified contribution agreements
- timelines for new reporting templates

- accessibility for organizations with limited bandwidth
- ethical considerations in AI use
- indirect cost policy
- Development Assistance Committee (DAC) code alignment
- the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)

Questions and answers

This is a summary of the questions received from participants and responses from GAC's GCTI team:

1. Organizational structure and policy updates

Questions:

- Will Global Affairs Canada (GAC) release an updated organizational chart?
- Are there any anticipated changes to FIAP following recent government priorities?

Answers:

- Check out our [Ministers, Secretary of State and parliamentary secretaries: Global Affairs Canada](#). Organizational changes are ongoing and tied to budget reviews. Organizations can contact their Partner Lead with any questions about the department or changes to policies.
- Our approach to the FIAP is adapting to shifting global dynamics and fiscal realities. Canada remains committed to feminist principles and will continue supporting core priorities such as:
 - gender equality
 - global health
 - climate action

Advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls remain central to Canada's international development assistance. It helps with development outcomes and is a key driver of sustainable development.

2. Portal transition and digital tools

Questions:

- Why is GAC phasing out the old portal?
- How will data migration work?
- And questions about:
 - multi-user access

- unsolicited proposals
- lessons learned from pilot projects

Answers:

- a. GAC is changing its portal due to outdated technology. The new platform is more user-centric and modern.
- b. All organizations will need to re-register and upload their profile information. A phased rollout will start with some organizations in early 2026.

We want the transition to be fair and seamless. The GCTI team will migrate as much data as possible from the old system. We will ensure smooth operations for organizations.

We'll then proceed with small, frequent updates based on user feedback. We've learned from our 2025 pilots and have improved accessibility, fairness, and transparency. We'll continue to listen and improve.

- c. The new portal will include features such as:
 - multi-user access
 - unsolicited proposal submission
 - integration of monitoring and evaluation contracts

3. Financial management and agreements

Questions:

- a. Will GCTI simplify contribution agreements?
- b. Who can apply for grants?
- c. Will the cost-share requirements change?
- d. Who does indirect cost policies apply to?
- e. Are there opportunities for civil society input?

Answers:

- a. GAC is moving toward simplified contribution agreements for most projects.
- b. We will limit grants mainly to multilateral and humanitarian initiatives.
- c. Cost-share requirements remain unchanged.
- d. Indirect cost policies will apply equally to Canadian and non-Canadian organizations, informed by consultations.
- e. Civil society will have opportunities to provide input on which elements of agreements are necessary versus burdensome. The previous "umbrella" agreement model that has been piloted with a small number of organizations will

not continue. However, lessons learned will inform future templates and customization based on risk profiles.

4. Budgeting

Questions:

- a. What is activity-based budgeting, and how does it affect cost categories?
- b. Can my organization use your tools offline?

Answers:

- a. GAC is developing an activity-based budgeting. It's a hybrid budgeting model that links results and costs categories.
- b. Offline options for budgeting will remain for organizations with limited bandwidth.

5. Reporting changes

Questions:

- a. Why has the reporting template changed?
- b. What are the timelines to adopt these changes?

Answers:

- a. Changes in the reporting template come from lessons learned from pilot projects. They aim to improve clarity, reduce duplication, and integrate user feedback continuously. They simplify structure, harmonize templates, and clarify requirements without major changes in approach.
- b. The updated International assistance results reporting guide applies immediately to all projects.

6. Technology and AI integration

Questions:

- a. How will grants and contributions processes use AI?
- b. Can you give examples of AI tools?
- c. What does "business-critical" decisions mean?
- d. How will you ensure ethical safeguards and data protection?

Answers:

- a. AI will assist, not replace, human decision-making.

- b. AI will support tasks like:
 - validating submissions
 - automating completeness checks
 - pre-coding sector markers.
- c. Business-critical decisions (funding, compliance, organization selection) will always involve human oversight.
- d. Ethical safeguards include bias mitigation, mandatory human review, and strong data protection protocols. AI tools will remain modular and task-specific to avoid over-reliance. This will enable GAC to maintain nuanced understanding of proposals.

7. Results-Based Management (RBM) and guidance

Questions:

- a. When does the updated RBM tool come into effect?
- b. Has the RBM tool enhancements changed the requirements for use, indicator standardization and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) sector code tagging?
- c. What is the RBM Centre of Excellence (RBMce)?

Answers:

- a. The updated results reporting guide comes into effect immediately for all IA projects. It must be used in the next project reporting cycle.
- b. The new tool is clearer and easier to use, and the requirements have not changed significantly. Indicator standardization is not yet supported.
- c. The RBMce is a section of GAC that provides:
 - tools
 - training
 - guidance on managing for results
 - opportunities for external collaboration through consultations and feedback mechanisms

Closing note

The GCTI modernization makes the grants and contributions system more efficient, more transparent, and focused on organizations.

Success depends on ongoing:

- collaboration
- feedback
- shared commitment to:
 - reducing administrative burden
 - delivering global programs that have a positive impact

Next steps for organizations

Organizations are encouraged to:

Prepare for portal transition

- You must transition from GAC's P@I portal to the new C@I portal before the full rollout in the spring of 2026.
- Make sure you [stay informed](#).

Engage in co-creation opportunities

- When available, participate in user testing and pilot projects.

Review updated guidance

- Access the revised [International assistance results reporting guide for implementers](#).
- Align internal reporting practices with updated templates and checklists.
- Share feedback on updated tool with GAC, if any.

Stay informed

- Send us an email to get regular updates about GAC's Grants and contributions transformation: MobilisationITSC-GCTIEngagement@international.gc.ca.
- Attend our forums and webinars for progress updates. The next GCTI Forum is planned for May 2026 (to be confirmed).