

# Shaping a modern and responsive statistical agency for the next century

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Change in any organization can at times be met with resistance, both from within and without. Old paradigms tend to hang around, and routine can become one of our oldest and most trusted friends. For Statistics Canada, however, this past year has proved quite the opposite.

The age-old conflict between tradition and modernization is increasingly a thing of the past. Employees and partners are embracing change and progress.

"Through our modernization agenda, we continue to demonstrate how resilient, credible and important Statistics Canada is to our society and democracy. The foundation of what we do today is just as valid as it was a century ago, and we're ready to shape our future with 100 years of strength and experience behind us."

— Anil Arora, Chief Statistician of Canada

The agency's most significant modernization initiatives are not limited to its tools, processes, information technology infrastructure or modern workplace. Staff are eager to share their ideas, to experiment and to implement newer, better solutions.

## Pathfinder projects

In 2017/2018, the agency launched four [pathfinder projects](#) to lead its modernization initiative. These projects address information gaps tied to current issues of importance in Canadian society.

Lessons learned from these exploratory initiatives are helping the agency further define and refine its modernization plan. They are also bringing forward new techniques that can be shared across the agency, supporting innovation and culture change.

## Measuring cannabis

Statistics Canada is testing out new ways of collecting and producing data to capture the role of cannabis in Canadian society and economy, and the impact of its legalization. Over the year, the agency published many statistics on cannabis, with some coming from new methods such as [crowdsourcing](#), [wastewater analysis](#) and rapid surveys.



## Infographic 1 – StatsCannabis crowdsourcing platform



These statistics will ensure Canadians, governments and businesses are equipped to make informed decisions during the country's transition to legalized cannabis and beyond. An overview of [cannabis statistics](#) released by the agency was published on October 17, 2018.

### Low-carbon economy statistics

This project addresses the need for more information on clean technology in Canada as the country increases its use of low-carbon technologies. Statistics are needed to track the evolution of this sector and its social and economic impacts, including those on the energy sector and the environment.

As part of this project, the agency released the [Environmental and Clean Technology Products Economic Account](#), which for the first time provided estimates of the size of the clean technology sector. Statistics Canada is continuing to expand the program to include new variables related to the sector, such as health outcomes, urban densification and consumer spending.

### Canadian Housing Statistics Program

Statistics Canada partnered with multiple private and public organizations, notably the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, to build a single integrated, comprehensive source of information on housing that will help Canadians track housing prices and markets across the country. To build this new data source, the agency is using new methodologies to acquire and integrate administrative data from partners rather than conducting surveys. This, in turn, helps minimize the response burden placed on Canadians, while protecting their confidentiality and privacy.

In December, the agency released detailed information on the housing markets in Toronto and Vancouver, and in June, it released [information for the whole of British Columbia and Ontario](#), along with twin infographics to help users understand the data ([British Columbia](#) and [Ontario](#)). The agency is currently working with external partners to expand coverage to the other provinces and the territories.

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## Measuring growth in international visitors to Canada

Statistics Canada is enhancing its data collection tools and strategies and working closely with partners—such as the Canada Border Services Agency, Destination Canada and tourism organizations—to better gauge whether tourism initiatives are working.

The agency is also exploring the use of new technologies and methods, including artificial intelligence, to gather tourism data specific to regions. This will produce richer, and more timely and detailed data on this sector of Canada's economy. The agency has already expanded its coverage of tourism activities in Canada, releasing in data from its new [Visitor Travel Survey](#) and [National Travel Survey](#).

## Other modernization initiatives

Statistics Canada's modernization agenda is not limited to these four pathfinder projects, but is being integrated across the agency's statistical programs and in the way the agency presents its data products to Canadians and reaches out to Canadians. For more information on Statistics Canada's modernized dissemination approach, consult the article "[Presenting data in new, modern ways](#)," available in today's issue of *The Daily*.

The agency's modernization efforts are not going unnoticed. In its 2018 Spring Report on [Canada's Preparedness to Implement the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals](#), the Office of the Auditor General of Canada found that Statistics Canada had taken early action to develop a framework to collect Canadian data on the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Office also noted the agency's development of its [Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub](#).

This hub, designed to track Canada's progress on some of the world's most pressing issues, is just one in a series of other virtual portals on the StatCan website—all for the benefit of our data users, both at home and abroad.

## Modernization in motion

Statistics Canada's modernization work has just begun. The pathfinder projects show how sound collaborations with partners, the sharing of best practices and expertise, and new methods and technologies can help the agency develop and produce timely, high quality statistics that meet the evolving information needs of Canadians.

"With innovation on so many fronts and strong relationships with partners, the possibilities for Statistics Canada are exciting."

— Anil Arora, Chief Statistician of Canada

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).