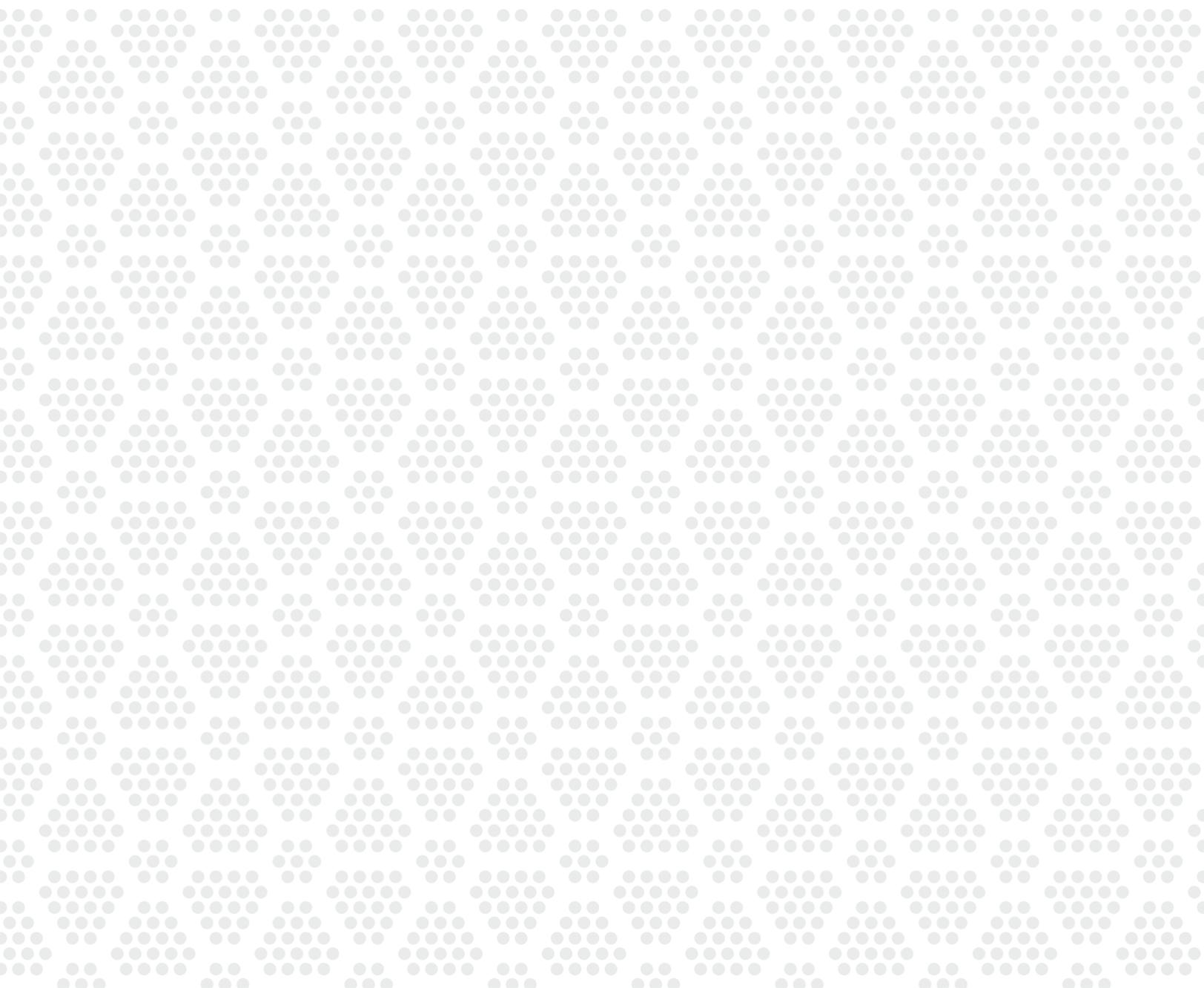# SNOLAB Multi-year Accessibility Plan

Revised on March 1, 2024

SNOLAB can arrange for accessible feedback and alternate formats upon request.

SNOLAB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The following multi-year accessibility plan ("Accessibility Plan") outlines SNOLAB's strategy to achieve optimal accessibility, remove barriers for individuals with disabilities and meet SNOLAB's obligations under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations ("IASR")* pursuant to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act ("AODA").*

Statement

SNOLAB is dedicated to treating all individuals in a manner that enables them to uphold their dignity and independence. SNOLAB strives for inclusion and equal opportunity and is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing any barriers to accessibility and meeting the requirements of the AODA. Through continuous innovation and thoughtful design, SNOLAB strives to create an inclusive environment that empowers and enriches the lives of all users.

SCOPE

The Accessibility Plan applies to all current employees of SNOLAB, including full and part-time, determinant, and indeterminate. This policy also applies to employees on approved leave, including short and long-term disability leave, job applicants, and users.

The accessibility plan outlines SNOLAB's strategy to achieve accessibility generally and meet IASR requirements in the following areas:

- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service;
- Integrated Accessibility Standards:
    1. General Requirements;
    2. Information and Communications Standards;
    3. Employment Standards.

Definitions

Disability
A disability is a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities. The AODA uses the same definition of disability as the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Barrier
A barrier is an obstacle, or anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. There are many different types of barriers. Barriers can be visible, invisible, physical, attitudinal, technological, information, and communication barriers.

Accessible
Accessible means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.

Accessibility Initiatives:

As part of our ongoing commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, SNOLAB has made significant strides in enhancing accessibility at our surface and underground facilities. In 2023 SNOLAB completed renovations to ensure a more accessible environment. This includes the creation of universally designed bathrooms on surface and the establishment of an accessible reception area. SNOLAB also added accessible sit/stand desks, individualized ergonomic seating and enclosed changing areas in the shower rooms.

1) **Accommodation Policy**

SNOLAB maintains an Accommodation Policy (2014), underscoring our commitment to cultivating an inclusive workplace. This policy serves as a foundation for fostering an environment where the unique needs of all individuals are recognized and accommodated.

2) **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy**

SNOLAB also established an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy and SNOLAB EDI Action Plan (2021) that actively engages in creating a community that not only values diversity but actively enables the full participation of all staff, students, and users.

3) **Workplace Emergency Response Information**

Where SNOLAB is aware that an employee has a disability and where due to the nature of that disability the application of SNOLAB's standard emergency response procedures would not adequately protect the health and safety of the employee, SNOLAB shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to the employee as required (2023).

The SNOLAB Surface Fire Safety Plan (2018) includes provisions for accessibility. Any occupant of the SNOLAB surface building with a permanent or temporary disability that may affect their ability to evacuate the building safely during an emergency must inform their site contact or supervisor before coming to site. Examples of such conditions include but are not limited to inability to descend stairs, inability to hear emergency alarms and/or see signs, emergency equipment and evacuation directions. Evacuation plans to cover these scenarios will be developed ahead of time with the site contact or supervisor.

SNOLAB shall update the emergency response information applicable to a specific person if: a) the employee is transferred to a new worksite; b) if the employee's accommodation needs change; and/or c) if the company amends its emergency response policies and procedures.

As outlined in the SNOLAB Accommodation Policy, where required and with the employee's or user's consent, SNOLAB shall aid an employee with a disability during workplace emergencies or disaster based on the individual's particular accommodation needs.

4) Training

SNOLAB will ensure that training is provided to employees, volunteers/visitors, users, students, and other staff regarding AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to individuals with disabilities as required by AODA. The content and delivery of such training will be determined based on SNOLAB's internal training resources and Vale's training requirements and the job duties of employees.

SNOLAB will maintain records of the training provided on an ongoing basis, including training dates and the number of individuals to whom training was provided; and ensure that training is provided on any amendments to SNOLAB's or Vale's accessibility policies on an ongoing basis.

5) Information and Communication

SNOLAB is committed to making its information and communication accessible to persons with disabilities.

a. **Collaborations and Partnerships:**
SNOLAB is dedicated to fostering collaborative partnerships with universities, academic and scientific institutes. Through these collaborations, SNOLAB will actively ensure its practices align with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards. This commitment reflects SNOLAB's ongoing efforts to maintain high standards of accessibility and inclusivity, creating an environment where all individuals can engage with initiatives seamlessly.

b. **User Feedback, Accessible Formats and Communication Supports:**
   i. In accordance with the IASR, and Vale, SNOLAB will remain committed to enhancing accessibility for both employees and users. Ongoing reviews of feedback on accessibility options will inform and drive necessary changes to SNOLAB policies and procedures. This iterative process ensures that SNOLAB's commitment to inclusivity is not just a static declaration, but a dynamic effort responding to the evolving needs and perspectives of its community.
   ii. SNOLAB implemented enhancements to its communication practices by introducing live captioning (voice-to-text) across our meetings, presentations, and video conferencing services. The integration of live captioning not only facilitates better understanding for those with hearing impairments but also contributes to a more inclusive and engaging experience for all individuals involved in our various communication channels.

c. **Accessible Website and Web Content:**
In 2020, SNOLAB undertook a comprehensive redesign of the SNOLAB website, aligning with the principles and guidelines set forth by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

6) Employment

    a. Recruitment

        i. SNOLAB is committed to providing equal treatment with respect to employment without unfair discrimination; and provides fair and accessible employment recruiting practices that include providing accessibility across all stages of the employment cycle.

        ii. All postings to the public facing career website include notices about the availability of accommodations for disabilities, where needed to support their participation in the recruitment processes. All postings include the statement:

> *"SNOLAB is committed to equity in employment and encourage applications from all qualified applicants, including women, Indigenous persons, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, priority will be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. SNOLAB will provide support in its recruitment processes to applicants with disabilities, including accommodation that takes into account an applicant's accessibility needs.*

        iii. When applicants are selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, SNOLAB will notify them that accommodations are available upon request in relationship to the materials or processes used in the assessment/selection process.

b. Individual Accommodation Plans and Return to Work Process

In accordance with IASR and the SNOLAB accommodation policy, SNOLAB incorporates accessibility requirements under the IASR to ensure that barriers to accommodation in return-to-work processes are eliminated.

SNOLAB's current Accommodation Policy (2014) is robust and includes comprehensive steps to accommodate employees with disabilities and mechanisms to facilitate a safe return to work after absences due to disability. SNOLAB endeavours to continually review its existing processes and procedures to ensure a mechanism for development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities, as required.

SNOLAB prioritizes the well-being of all employees, and as part of this commitment, has implemented a comprehensive Return to Work Policy (2016) for individuals who may be absent from work due to a disability. SNOLAB endeavours to make every reasonable effort to provide suitable employment opportunities to any employee facing challenges in performing their duties due to injury or illness.

c. Performance Management, Career Development and Redeployment

SNOLAB will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans:

- when using its performance management process in respect of employees with disabilities;
- when providing career development and advancement to employees with disabilities;
- when redeploying employees with disabilities;

SNOLAB will review, assess, and, as necessary, modify existing policies, procedures, and practices to ensure compliance with the IASR once every 2 years. These items will be reviewed by the Pan-Divisional Committee and approved by the Executive Director's Office.

Accessibility Compliance Initiatives

The Executive Directorate Office is responsible for developing SNOLAB's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, and to ensure the actions set out in the Plan are implemented, working in conjunction with the designated individuals or units responsible to lead each initiative.

On an ongoing basis, the Executive Directorate Office will monitor legislative changes to the Act and its regulations, and as required, will incorporate those changes into the SNOLAB's Accessibility Plan.

Accessibility Plan 2024-2029

ACCESIBILITY STANDARD	INITIATIVE	BUDGET	TARGET DATE	STATUS
General Requirements	**Accessibility Policy** Update the current Accessibility Policy to incorporate the Integrated Accessibility Standard requirements.		Jun-24	Under review by EDO
	Accessibility Plan Update and re-post the Accessibility Plan to reflect initiatives to be undertaken between 2016 to 2021.		Dec-24	In progress
Information and Communication Standards	Establish and then maintain standards for making information accessible for people with disabilities		Jan-25	In Progress
	Develop a new website that meets the WCAG 2.0 level AA guidelines.	$5000	Jan-25	On-Hold
	Receive feedback through the staff and user engagement surveys/		January-24	In progress
Procurement	Update purchasing policies with statements about our commitment to AODA.			

To request an accessible format or to provide feedback on our accessibility initiatives, please contact: communications@snolab.ca