



Evidence. For Everyone.

Strategic Plan | 2023 - 2026





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EVIDENCE. FOR EVERYONE.



Acknowledgements

As ICES moves into its 31st year, we are committed to maintaining our relevance by constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of the healthcare system. Our new 3-year strategic plan reflects this commitment and is the result of true engagement with the entire ICES community. This plan would not be possible without the dedication, engagement, passion and expertise of our stakeholders, scientists, partners, Board of Directors, the Public Advisory Council, the Scientific Advisory Committee, funders and staff. We thank you for your contributions. They have led to a plan that bears the imprints of many minds and hearts, and will result in evidence for everyone.

We would like to acknowledge the ICES Board of Directors for their leadership and vision to guide the organization's steady evolution and expansion:

Kevin Smith (Chair)
Helen Angus
Jane Badets
Dev Chopra
Mark Daley
Charmaine Dean
Donna Kline
Bella Martin
Roger Strasser
Sarita Verma

Lastly, to our ICES team, thank you! Fueling your endeavors is an insatiable hunger for knowledge and an unwavering commitment to pushing the boundaries of what's possible. Armed with cutting-edge tools, your dedication to leveraging big data, machine learning, and advanced research methods to unlock the potential hidden within vast information networks is the foundation of this plan. We hope to continue to enable your incredible work.



We will continue focusing on discovery, scientific excellence, and impact through world-leading research and analytics that improve health and healthcare for everyone.

A Message from the CEO

I am excited to launch ICES' new strategic plan for 2023/2024 to 2025/2026. The preceding three years - the period of our last strategic plan - were unlike any other. Though our plan did not contemplate a pandemic, it nonetheless positioned us to respond effectively. ICES enabled researchers to undertake important COVID-19 analytics and research and provided critical and timely analyses to healthcare stakeholders, communities, and the public.

Our teams demonstrated how ICES had become indispensable to Ontario's health data ecosystem. As we turn our attention to the future, our new plan builds off our success and achievements, demonstrates our commitment to improve and evolve our organization continuously, and sets an aspirational vision for the future. We developed this strategic plan with the input of our partners and funders, our provincial network of staff and scientists, our Public Advisory Council, and the guidance and direction of our Scientific Advisory Committee and Board of Directors. Throughout this process, we listened and carefully reflected on what makes ICES unique, where ICES is best positioned to contribute to Ontario's changing health system, and how ICES as an organization should evolve and adapt to deliver even greater value.

Much of what is required is already reflected in our current strategic framework: our mission, vision, and values continue to describe our role, our ambition, and the behaviours and principles that are foundational to how we work. We will continue prioritizing research and analytic impact, data leadership and services, strategic partnerships, public and community engagement, and organizational excellence. We recognize that high-value services are critical across our organization and have embedded exceptional service in our values and other success factors.

As we implement this refreshed strategy, we will continue focusing on discovery, scientific excellence, and impact through world-leading research and analytics that improve health and healthcare for everyone. We will achieve this by redesigning and simplifying our service model, strategically building data holdings and capabilities to support health equity, deepening partnerships, and building engagements with diverse communities to drive innovation. Lastly, we will continue to invest in our employees, providing training and development opportunities that enable them to grow and thrive in their roles. We will also continue to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and create a workplace culture that fosters collaboration, innovation, and excellence. I am excited and confident about the future of ICES.

I look forward to working together and reporting on our progress as we move this plan ahead.

Michael Schull, CEO



About ICES

Who we are

Committed to working with scientists, partners, and communities to help explore today's problems and inform solutions for better health and healthcare tomorrow.

ICES is an independent not-for-profit research and analytics institute and registered charity with seven sites across Ontario. Formed in 1992, ICES is governed by a Board of Directors and guided by a Scientific Advisory Committee and a Public Advisory Council, representing diverse regions and communities across Ontario. ICES is powered by a community of research, data, and clinical experts. Many are practicing clinicians who understand the everyday challenges of healthcare delivery. Together, we produce insightful research and analytics that informs thoughtful policy.

What we do

Founded on trusted evidence and informed by diverse expertise.

ICES leads cutting-edge studies and analyses evaluating healthcare policy, delivery, and population outcomes. As a trusted data steward, ICES holds a secure array of Ontario's demographic and health-related data, including population-based health surveys, clinical records, and administrative databases. In recent years, these holdings have grown to include data that enables a greater focus on health equity. The breadth of scientist and staff expertise in generating meaningful insights from linked data sets is the foundation of ICES's innovative and world-leading research and analytics.

We also foster an equitable environment that makes our data and analytic resources accessible to non-ICES researchers, scientists, students, and knowledge users, with dedicated and specialized staff and service models to respond to requests. These services are part of our commitment to improving health and healthcare in Ontario, guided by the principles of public benefit and transparency.

How we work

Innovative solutions call for collaboration, trust, and sound research.

ICES works closely with government, health system stakeholders, diverse communities, and members of the public to generate trusted evidence dedicated to improving policy and healthcare to make people healthier. The pursuit of better health for all Ontarians relies on collaborative research encompassing a wide range of disciplines and broad data that address social determinants of health and other factors outside the healthcare system.

ICES has formal agreements with First Nation and Metis organizations that govern the use of indigenous data at ICES. We also work directly with Indigenous communities and Inuit organizations to advance their research priorities and preserve data sovereignty.

ICES is a leader in ensuring a robust approach to data privacy and security. Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner regularly reviews ICES to ensure we follow all relevant legislation, regulations, and policies. We also support an active Public Advisory Council and engage with diverse community representatives to ensure that how we work with data aligns with public values.

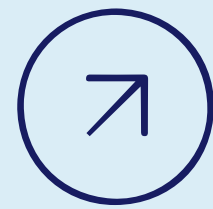
Our work

Responsive strategic priorities are driving discoveries for better health.

Our strategic plan supports our research priorities in health equity and the social determinants of health, policy and health system evaluation, data science, and enabling Indigenous-led health research. Underpinning these is the unique blend of ICES data, team capabilities, resources, and data management and analytics knowledge.

Our new strategic plan renews our mission to translate data into trusted evidence. The goal is evidence that empowers policymakers, practitioners, and communities to develop adaptable and relevant solutions for Ontario. By leveraging equity-informed evidence-based approaches, we will facilitate relevant and vital research and analytics, resulting in a positive health system, policy change, and better health for all.

Strategic Framework





Our mission is translating data into trusted evidence that makes policy and healthcare better, and people healthier.

Our vision is improved health and healthcare for everyone through world-leading research and analytics.

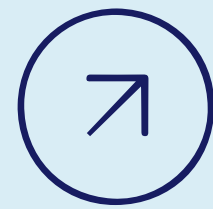
Our values

- We strive for excellence** demonstrated by the quality, value, innovation and rigour of our work and services
- We behave with integrity** expressed through independence, transparency and impartiality
- Our work is relevant** by providing actionable and timely analyses that lead to improved outcomes, higher value and greater equity and are responsive to health priorities
- We collaborate** through effective partnerships, accessible data, and a spirit of openness
- We are respectful** exemplified by inclusiveness and appreciation of each other, trusted data stewardship, alignment with public values, and accountability for our funding

To continue to make progress towards our long-term vision, we must prioritize activities that will have the largest impact. We will focus on our five Success Factors to support us achieving our vision for 2023/2024 to 2025/2026. These interrelated success factors provide the basis for our planned strategic initiatives.



Strategic Priorities



Research and Analytics Impact



Success Factor

Achieving impact will require ICES to focus our research and analytics on the health system, policy, and population-health questions relevant and timely for Ontarians and our stakeholders. Research and analytics focus areas will make use of ICES' key capabilities. They will be supported by knowledge transfer and exchange so that we ask the right questions and incorporate findings into policy and change the health system and clinical care.

For ICES this means:

Disseminate policy-relevant findings that respond to the needs of Ontario.

Enable independent investigator-led projects.

Align our unique value proposition to the evolving needs of key partner organizations.

Advance knowledge transfer and exchange activities to demonstrate impact.



Strategic Initiatives

- + Provide researchers with resources and targeted support on knowledge transfer and exchange (KTE) across the research lifecycle.
- + Build internal and external capacity to advance methodologies where ICES can play a leading role, including in observational research, data science and clinical trials.
- + Work with trusted partners to prioritize our services where we can uniquely provide the greatest value.

Data Leadership and Services



Success Factor

Providing access to timely, high-quality and relevant data is core to ICES' mission. We take our role as a trustworthy data steward seriously while also recognizing that simpler service models are needed to enable faster, efficient and responsible access to data. As the complexity of questions we look to answer increases (e.g., health equity), we must work with others to strategically expand our data holdings and related expertise to ensure the data can be used responsibly and effectively.

For ICES this means:

Be pro-active to advance security and privacy controls and continue to be a trustworthy data steward.

Improve the experience and value of our services for our clients.

Identify and communicate system-level gaps in data collection.

Strategically expand ICES data holdings for priority areas, including in health equity.

Continuously innovate new models for data integration and linkage.



Strategic Initiatives

- + Simplify ICES' service model to enhance the value and experience associated with accessing data.
- + Work with our partners to strategically invest in addressing gaps in data holdings.
- + Increase our internal and external capacity to use our expanded data holdings more effectively.

Strategic Partnerships



Success Factor

Partnerships are central to the success of ICES. We will strive to establish new and strengthened partnerships that align with our evolving priorities, achieve mutually beneficial outcomes and support better research and analytics in support of our mission and vision, which could not be achieved by either partner alone.

For ICES this means:

Ensure we have appropriate frameworks to operationalize strategic partnerships.

Enable independent investigator-led projects.

Strengthen collaborations that demonstrate and enhance the ICES value proposition.

Support Indigenous Data Sovereignty through formal collaborations and partnerships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations and communities.



Strategic Initiatives

- + Continue to foster trusted relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis organizations and communities through formal data governance agreements, policies, and practices that enable Indigenous led analytics and research.
- + Redefine our approach to partnership development and management to align on and advance shared priorities effectively and efficiently.

Public and Community Engagement



Success Factor

As a steward of personal information, it is critical that our work reflects the values and perspectives of Ontarians across its diverse communities. We will continue to engage the public and diverse communities in the design of our research and analytic activities, seek their input to guide our strategic decision making, and ensure we communicate effectively the results of our work to those diverse audiences.

For ICES this means:

Meaningfully engage the public and equity deserving communities to inform how we carry out our work.

Empower employees and scientists to engage the public and diverse communities as part of their research and analytics.

Communicate findings with the public in a way that is accessible, meaningful, and impactful.



Strategic Initiatives

- + Establish a public engagement framework for the public and equity-deserving communities to provide input on ICES' operations, research and analytics.
- + Create pathways for the public and equity-deserving communities to increase access to data and analytics.
- + Develop and implement tools to support researcher engagement with diverse communities, and ensure the responsible use of race, ethnicity and other health equity data at ICES.

Organizational Excellence



Success Factor

We recognize that our people are our strength. We will continue to invest in supporting our teams across the ICES network to achieve outstanding results. To ensure quality, efficiency and value for money, we will continue to improve our internal operations to simplify the project lifecycle. We need to focus on providing excellent client services to differentiate our value proposition in a competitive landscape.

For ICES this means:

Foster an inclusive environment that attracts and retains highly qualified, engaged and diverse talent.

Simplify our service model and adopt a more user-centric approach to drive value for our clients.

Support collaboration and learning across all ICES sites so that the entire network grows stronger and more resilient.



Strategic Initiatives

- + Improve processes and technology and empower our people to deliver a simplified service model.
- + Implement policies and practices to advance equity, diversity and inclusion across the ICES network.
- + Strengthen engagement and build a culture across ICES that empowers growth, recognizes achievement, and contributes to excellence.



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