

## Position: Advancing Digital Trust for Government Service Modernization

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### Current Landscape

Governments worldwide are accelerating their digital transformation efforts to meet the growing expectations of citizens and businesses. Canada is no exception, with public sector services increasingly moving online to improve efficiency, accessibility, and security. However, this shift brings significant challenges, including data privacy concerns, cybersecurity threats, and the need for seamless, interoperable services across jurisdictions.

When DIACC was established in 2012, its mission was to create a secure digital ecosystem. Today, this goal is even more critical for modernizing government services while ensuring security, privacy, and usability. DIACC has evolved from research to certifying real-world digital trust solutions, setting audit standards, shaping policies, and connecting businesses and government to strengthen Canada's digital economy.

Digital trust—which empowers individuals, businesses, and government agencies to engage online securely and transparently—is essential for delivering reliable public services. Without it, citizens may lack confidence in digital government initiatives, limiting their adoption and effectiveness.

By prioritizing digital trust, Canada can strengthen its public service infrastructure, enhance citizen confidence, and improve service delivery. Interoperable frameworks such as the DIACC Pan-Canadian Trust Framework™ (PCTF) ensure that digital services remain secure, adaptable, and trusted while protecting personal electronic information between government agencies and service providers.

### Advancing Digital Trust to Modernize Government Services

#### 1. Driving Efficiencies, Cost Savings, and Economic Growth

Governments can leverage DIACC, the PCTF, and PCTF certification along with technical standards to help streamline processes, reduce costs, and create economic opportunities through:

- **Reducing Implementation Costs:** Standardized digital trust solutions lower costs associated with developing, integrating, and maintaining digital trust capabilities.
- **Enhancing Service Efficiencies:** Digital credentials and interoperable frameworks minimize redundancies and enable faster, more secure service delivery.

- **Unlocking Interprovincial Trade:** A unified digital trust framework will enable seamless service delivery to Canadians across Canada, regardless of province of residence.
- **Facilitating Labour Mobility:** Efforts to reduce interprovincial trade across Canada mean the importance of secure and portable digital credentials has never been greater. Reducing bureaucratic licensing and certification verification barriers will ensure workers can move between provinces more efficiently.
- **Boosting Public-Private Collaboration:** By aligning digital trust standards with industry best practices, governments can foster innovation and attract investment in secure digital services.

## 2. Strengthening Public Confidence in Digital Services

For government digital services to succeed, citizens must trust them. Implementing robust digital trust solutions allows governments to:

- Ensure secure and seamless access to online services
- Protect citizens' data from fraud and misuse
- Increase adoption of digital services by providing verifiable trust measures
- Improve operational efficiency by reducing manual verification processes

## 3. Enhancing Trust Through the DIACC PCTF

The DIACC PCTF provides a framework for governments to:

- Strengthen identity verification in digital government services
- Improve efficiency in service delivery by reducing reliance on physical documents
- Enhance interoperability across departments and jurisdictions
- Ensure compliance with privacy and security standards through auditable criteria

## 4. Protecting Citizens from Fraud and Identity Theft

Fraud prevention is a top priority for digital government services. To mitigate risks, governments should:

- Implement secure identity verification measures for accessing digital services
- Use verifiable credentials for social benefits, permits, and tax filings
- Ensure public education initiatives on digital trust and security best practices

## 5. Enabling Seamless Intergovernmental Collaboration

All federal, provincial, and municipal governments must collaborate to support a trustworthy digital ecosystem. Digital trust frameworks like the PCTF facilitate:

- Secure data exchange across agencies while maintaining privacy
- Interoperable digital identity solutions for seamless citizen experiences
- Compliance with national and international regulatory requirements

### 3. Leveraging Digital Trust for Innovation in Public Services

Governments can harness digital trust to:

- Develop secure digital identities for all citizens and businesses
- Improve emergency response coordination through trusted data-sharing networks
- Support AI-driven public service applications with built-in trust safeguards

### Best Practices and the Way Forward

#### 1. Adopt Existing and Emerging Digital Trust Technologies to Address Pain Points

Government agencies should leverage trusted digital trust, verification, and credentialing solutions aligned with the PCTF. Implementing PCTF-certified solutions will enhance security, efficiency, and trust in digital service delivery. While whole-of-government modernization is needed, our stakeholders recommend rapidly unlocking digital driver's licences, passports, permanent resident cards and verified income to address the economic urgency.

#### 2. Collaborate for Consistency and Interoperability

DIACC fosters collaboration between governments, technology providers, and industry stakeholders to promote consistent digital trust practices, using standards and certifications to ensure security and privacy across public services.

#### 3. Educate and Empower Citizens and Public Sector Leaders

DIACC is committed to advancing digital trust in government through:

- Public awareness campaigns on the benefits and security of digital services
- Training and resources for government officials on digital trust implementation
- Policy recommendations to support the adoption of digital trust frameworks

### Conclusion

Modernizing government services requires a foundation of digital trust. By recognizing frameworks like the PCTF, governments can enhance service delivery, protect citizens' data, and foster trust in digital public services.

Together, we can build a future where government services are more efficient, secure, and accessible to all Canadians while reinforcing Canada's leadership in digital trust and innovation.