



CANADEM

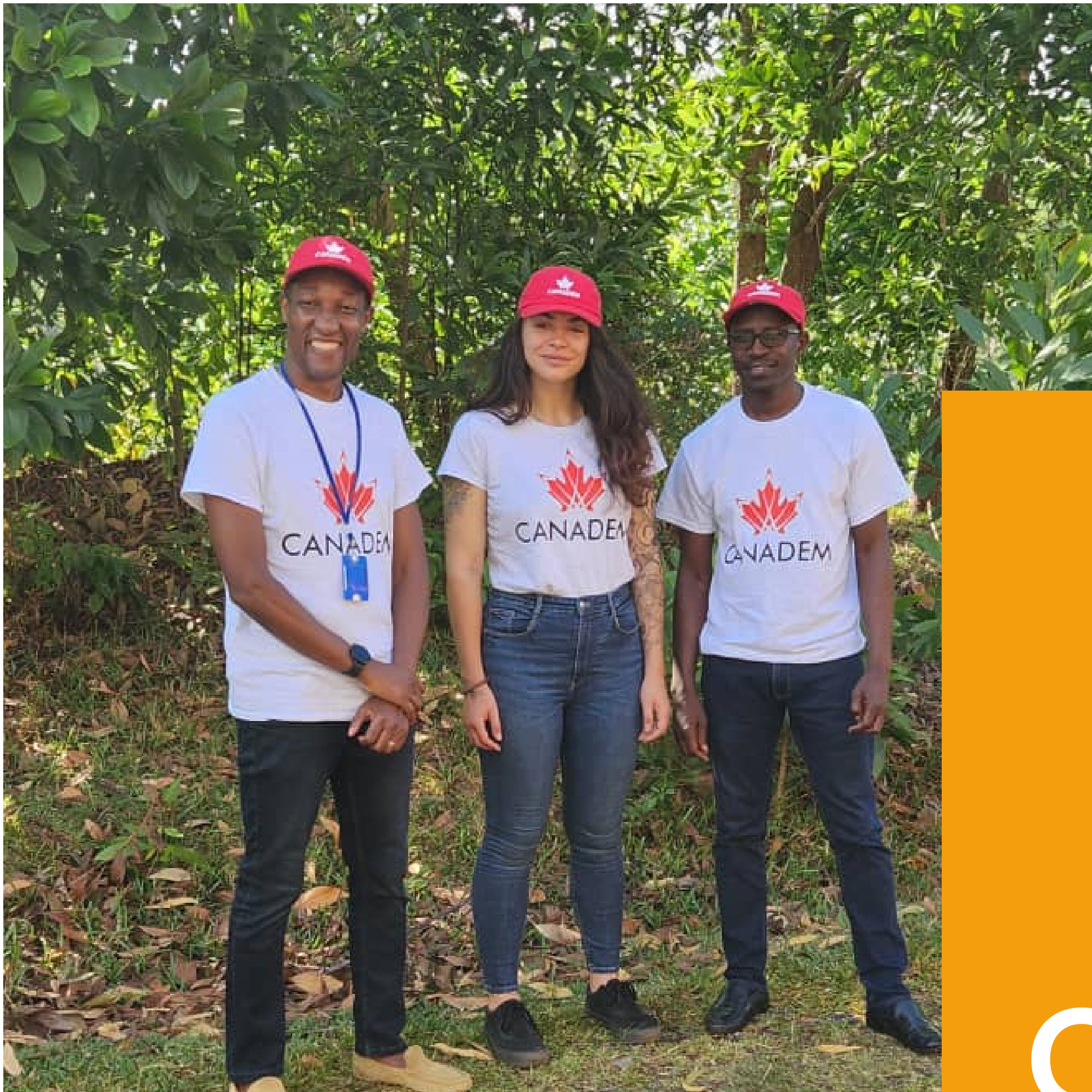
Strategic Plan

2025-2028

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Overview

In late 2024, CANADEM began a process of designing the conceptual framework and content for a Strategic Plan that would extend over a three-year period. This Strategic Plan for 2025 to 2028 was developed with the objectives of: 1) charting a common course for the short and medium term that would provide a framework for innovation and cohesion within the CANADEM team; 2) improving communications externally regarding the organization's overall philosophy and methodologies; and, 3) providing a consolidated monitoring, learning and evaluation framework for all of the organization's activities and outcomes, including benchmarking for the organization's performance. This plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the measurement of annual targets and discussions on a quarterly basis that are meant to promote learning.

The process of developing the plan led to the elaboration of a theory of change that is based on a framework of inputs, activities, outputs and outcomes. This theory of change is founded on three decades of experience deploying qualified experts to work in areas of need on election observation, governance, human rights, security and humanitarian operations. It may be summarized in the simple concept that "people can make a difference" and qualified, trained and experienced people can bring about *significant* change, even under difficult circumstances. These assumptions underpin the theory of change assertion that if qualified, trained and experienced people (essentially, the right people for the right job) are deployed where they are needed, this can make a notable difference in the world.



Introduction

CANADEM was initially established in 1996 as a non-profit organization that would advance international democracy, human rights and peace efforts through rostering, rapid mobilization, and management of experts committed to service internationally. While the focus was initially on deploying Canadians abroad, over time the list of international experts on CANADEM's roster has grown to include over 60,000 experts from 178 countries across 6 continents. A growing commitment to diversity and localization has led CANADEM to foster linkages with experts in diverse settings, who may share their own first-hand knowledge of the challenges that communities in-need are experiencing, and find appropriate solutions to those problems. The roster's diversity has allowed CANADEM to serve as a bridge for collaboration between populations of the same region, continent and hemisphere, where common language, ethnicity and culture can sometimes be essential to fostering collaboration.

Over time, CANADEM has built relationships with an increasing number of partners and donor governments, in an attempt to provide ever more efficient and cost-effective responses to beneficiaries around the world. In addition, a growing number of areas of expertise have been the subject of CANADEM deployments, as the organization seeks to replicate the very successful model it has developed, and thereby fulfill more unmet needs.

The enclosed **CANADEM Strategy 2025-2028** represents an effort to respond to even more needs in more locations. It is a plan that also takes into account the ever more challenging times in which we live and the increasing number of issue-areas that donor governments and implementing organizations must face.

Our Planning Context



The particular moment in which we are planning is an extremely challenging one from the global perspective. The context therefore matters a great deal for this particular strategy and has framed the expectations in terms of expanding existing partnerships and embarking on new areas of work. We understand that at both ends of the CANADEM Theory of Change there will be challenges: in terms of our donors and multilateral partners, budgets are shrinking across an expanding number of areas; at the same time, in terms of beneficiary communities, the needs will likely be even greater and desperation more serious.

Global economies are still reeling from the consequences of the post-Covid 19 shocks. Economic growth has been stymied in general among the major economic powers, and concerns about inflation and lack of future growth are generalized. According to the IMF (World Economic Outlook) at the end of 2024, “The latest forecast for global growth five years from now—at 3.1 percent—remains mediocre compared with the prepandemic average”.[1] At the same time, in its end of year forecasting, the World Bank has highlighted the risks facing the world economy, including: “escalating conflicts and geopolitical tensions, higher inflation, more extreme weather events related to climate change from the environmental effects of climate change.” [2] In addition, the destabilization of international trade regimes and an increased emphasis on defence spending in the face of global mistrust are placing very significant stresses on national budgets. These numerous challenges are set to place a burden on many OECD countries during our coming Strategic Period.

Our Planning Context

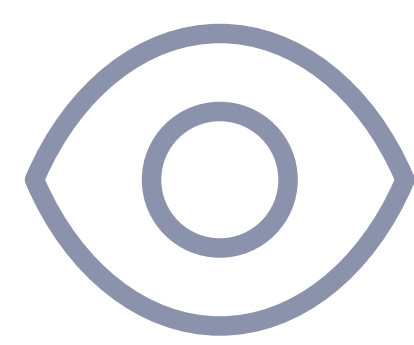


On the political front, there is a growing global trend towards looking inwards among wealthier states – bolstered by fears of outside forces such as more conflicts closer to home, migration from conflict and poverty in general, and climate-induced misery. Multilateral institutions face a significantly more challenging context in which to fundraise for global humanitarian and development efforts. This scenario has prompted a process of reorganization and reductions within the United Nations system. Donor governments will have greater difficulty or willingness to promote global assistance efforts if domestic needs are perceived as unmet. Those stalwart defenders of a global regime that helps to support those in-need may therefore be under intensified pressure as international norms fall by the wayside in favour of promoting national or regional interests.

As we add up the hurdles that will be faced in the coming strategic period, we must be ready for a significant tightening of resources from donors which could lead to increased challenges in financing our services. At the same time, the fact that CANADEM's delivery model can support large organisations, such as United Nations agencies, to cut budgets as they externalize the process of contracting temporary experts, may also favour a continued demand for CANADEM's services. Maintaining efficiencies and lower costs will therefore be key to being able to successfully support our partners in the future. Efficiency is therefore a major strategic objective of this Strategic Plan.



CANADEM's Vision & Mission



Our Vision

A future where qualified professionals deployed to global support operations strengthen democratic institutions, achieve peace and security, and promote sustainable development.



Our Mission

CANADEM is an NGO committed to rostering and mobilizing the right experts, and empowering them to enhance the impact of global assistance operations. Our well-established and flexible operational model supports this work by meeting the needs of partners rapidly and cost effectively.

Strategic Objectives & Outcomes

CANADEM's Strategic Objectives and Outcomes have been developed through a participative process among staff members and rest on the long-held goals and convictions upon which the organization was founded. The following desired Objectives and Outcomes form the basis of this Strategy and will direct CANADEM's efforts over the coming three years.



■ Strategic Objectives

The following Strategic Objectives present CANADEM's priorities for action. They are informed by our extensive experience in terms of what we can accomplish and rest on our core values outlined below. This series of Objectives has led us to develop desired Strategic Outcomes which describes the contribution that we hope to realize in support of our team, our partners and ultimately our beneficiaries. They are the following:

Get the right people in place, in the right setting

Provide support to staff and deployed experts through safeguarding measures to ensure their resilience and health to maximize their capacity

Ensure that professional codes of conduct are respected, and the rights and safety of beneficiary communities, deployed experts and staff are safeguarded during all deployments

Promote and uphold high standards of practice for personnel deployed to global support operations and those working in CANADEM's head office

Improve cost effectiveness and maximize productivity

Manage risks effectively to keep people safe, and reduce waste/harmful emissions and inefficiencies

■ Strategic Outcomes

CANADEM's Strategic Outcomes represent the areas where we feel that we can have an impact, based on the Objectives above and our Theory of Change. They also represent the priority areas for CANADEM to measure and monitor, in order to ensure that we are carrying out our work efficiently and effectively.

Global beneficiary needs are met in a timely manner

We believe that CANADEM is an efficient organization, and that the infusion of our specialized efforts to find and deliver experts where they are needed will help make the programs of the organizations we partner with more efficient. We feel that receiving the required expertise rapidly and usually at a lower cost than internal mechanisms will in turn increase the speed and lower the costs for projects and programs that receive the experts we deploy. More beneficiaries can thereby be assisted with the same resources, and more quickly. As we attempt to illustrate the value of this contribution, however, we must measure our success. We have established some key efficiency indicators to do just that.

Deployed experts make a positive impact on projects/programs

We are committed to the perspective that one person can make a difference. We are also confident that we can find the right people and place them in the right jobs, accompanying them through their work with the programs and projects they support. We make significant efforts to ensure that our talented professionals are given the tools they need and the psychological support required so that they can have the greatest impact possible. Measuring this impact is a collaborative effort, as we garner as much information as possible regarding how successful our experts were in meeting their objectives.

Assistance and resources available to communities are maximized

Despite the fact that our work is largely in support of other implementing organizations, we can still make a notable contribution to international assistance efforts by ensuring that all valuable resources we manage are used efficiently and cost effectively. Our commitment is to make our best efforts to oversee all aspects of our operations and measure the efficiency of our work against others in the sector and with respect to our own past performance. We owe this to our donors, our partners and perhaps most notably to the eventual beneficiaries of the work of our deployed experts. At its simplest, this task will be carried out by putting in place a number of key performance indicators. However, as we work together with our partners, we will make every effort to gather as much information as possible, not only to measure the efficiency of what we are doing now, but also how we can do things differently in the future to improve our performance.

Rights and well-being of beneficiaries, deployed experts and staff are safeguarded

The well-being and safety of all the people touched by the work we do is of primordial importance to us. For this reason, we have established mechanisms aimed at protecting them and finding out as quickly as possible if anything has gone wrong with their assignments, with their professional relationships, or with the contexts in which they are working that would make them feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or have caused them harm. Ongoing support through our Deployment and Duty of Care Teams is provided to our deployed experts on assignment and as we review our Risk Management Framework, we are making best efforts to ensure that no one is put in harm's way as a result of our decisions. Finally, complaints mechanisms, and our close relationships with our partners and their management structures, has provided us with a solid foundation for our safeguarding framework.

CANADEM staff and deployed experts are professionally fulfilled and motivated

Working in complex emergencies, post-conflict settings, or other settings where people are in precarity, is emotionally and sometimes physically taxing work. We know that our deployed experts must be suited to their tasks and feel that they can make a contribution to the organizations and communities where they have been deployed in order to feel comfortable with the work they do. Supporting those professionals on the front lines of assistance projects can also be a challenge, which calls for understanding, flexibility and communication. As a result, we need to ensure that at both ends of our work, our staff and experts are positive and motivated. This begins with good communication and engagement and requires that individuals are supported. Our Duty of Care Team is one of the ways we ensure that people always have someone to speak to if things are difficult. Open and regular communication with staff and deployed experts helps to guide our management of the talented professionals in our entire team.



International norms, values and rights are promoted

The international frameworks that bolster international humanitarian law, human rights and democracy are important pillars of our work. Although CANADEM is not an advocacy organization, we feel that it is our responsibility to work to reinforce those mechanisms that are the foundation of much of the work we do. We will endeavour to support those mechanisms in a deliberate manner, in part through enhancing our communications with our extensive global roster of experts and reinforcing training and messaging around key themes of importance to the sectors in which they work.

Environmental good practice is respected

We aim to foster a culture of sustainability and responsible environmental stewardship, not only in the communities served by our experts, but within CANADEM's operations in Canada. Central to this effort are the environmental experts on our roster, whose specialized knowledge and experience will provide guidance, best practices, and innovative solutions tailored to the unique needs of our partners, ensuring that sustainable practices are not only understood but effectively implemented. We aim to outline a new environmental policy for our work, and to partner with other organizations to offset as much of our impact as possible. In addition, we are also committed to exploring ways to support good environmental practice among our experts in the field.



The Values We Hold

CANADEM's work is carried out in partnership, where we often assist other organisations and individuals in providing their knowledge, skills and material support to beneficiaries. As such, our partners count on the fact that we maintain a strong commitment to our core values and beliefs, and that they can rely on us to deliver quality services, even in difficult contexts. As a not-for-profit entity, our main concern is the people we ultimately serve – those beneficiary communities in need of assistance.

The following are CANADEM's core values and commitments:

People-Centered:

Our work is about deploying *people* to help *people*. It is therefore of paramount importance to us that we are all relating to individuals in our chain of service delivery in a way that is respectful, understanding, considerate, and that brings out the best in us. Our internal working context is designed to foster humanity, fairness and support among our staff, which in turn aims to foster those same qualities among the experts we deploy. We have invested in a team of individuals (our Duty of Care Team), who provide a safety net for those experts we deploy. By taking care of our staff members and our deployed experts, we ensure that we have an effective flow of communication between all aspects of our operation. Our experienced and motivated staff feel supported, and are in turn able to support our experts in times of stress and prevent any potential problems from occurring.

Partnership:

The majority of our experts work within the assistance operations of our partners. Partnership is therefore of primary importance and value to us, and is key to the way we operate. Our many long-term relationships with other actors have been forged by promoting trust and understanding. The ability to work together with other actors, and not in competition, has allowed CANADEM to enhance the work of governments or organizations by injecting vital expertise, and targeting it where it is needed most. We believe that we can create a greater impact, when we work in partnership.

Diversity & Inclusion:

Ensuring an inclusive workplace that integrates diversity in terms of gender, language, culture, ethnicity and religion, is of prime importance for CANADEM both internally and with regards to our work with partners. We have made significant progress in attracting experts from 178 countries around the world – including from countries that are recipients of international assistance – so that a diversity of perspectives, understanding and expertise may be integrated into all operations that CANADEM supports. From our fair and transparent selection process, to our supportive Duty of Care Team (which ensures that individuals deployed have the resources they need to feel comfortable and confident in their work), we have invested significant energy in fostering diversity and inclusion within our roster system, in our election monitoring deployments, and in our own direct implementation of programming, at headquarters and in the field.

Accountability & Transparency:

From CANADEM's earliest beginnings as a Government of Canada project, and during its rapid evolution into an independent NGO with its roots in international service, the principles of accountability and transparency have been a component of CANADEM's DNA. Accountability for the use of public funds has been incorporated into procedures that needed to respond to the high standards of government. Transparency has been the vehicle to ensure the vital accountability that CANADEM maintains. CANADEM's headquarters team is a well-trained group of committed individuals who believe in the important work they do – including the conviction that providing the best value possible to the communities and donors we serve is a primary component of our job. CANADEM's rules and procedures are therefore established to ensure that every step of the way we are confident of our work, and can demonstrate its efficiency and effectiveness.

Efficiency:

The objective of CANADEM's leadership has always been to find the most innovative and cost-effective ways to contribute to communities in need, and not to place the growth of numbers and our budgets at the centre of our efforts. As a result, we have adopted a light footprint in terms of our human resources complement and infrastructure, making use of the latest technology, and empowering our small team to be as innovative and flexible in solving problems as our procedures allow. Our structures allow us to scale up and down as required, and for staff to work in different teams, according to the needs of the moment. Our 30 years of experience has taught us what our core capacities are and how to allocate precious resources.

Impact Driven:

CANADEM has always valued the positive impact we make in the world as a foundation of our work. It is this guiding principle that has led us to form lasting partnerships, in support of other entities, if we feel they can add greater value than we can at CANADEM. Searching for our comparative advantage, while avoiding falling into a simple race to find funding opportunities, is therefore essential to CANADEM. As we see an increasing number of individuals suffering from the consequences of conflict in the world, and prepare for even greater numbers of environmental disasters, the need to prioritise the areas where we can make a real difference and combine our efforts with like-minded entities, is vital to achieving success.

Respect for the environment:

An ever-increasing awareness that caring for the environment is the responsibility of us all, regardless of our area of expertise or profession, has propelled CANADEM to place more focus on our own global footprint as well as that of our sector. During this Strategic Period, we have embarked on a challenge to enhance our learning regarding the environment and how we interact with it – including efforts to create a baseline and targets for improving how we deal with our natural environment. We are therefore making a conscious and transparent effort to measure and manage the way we affect the natural world around us, hopefully becoming better caretakers along the way.



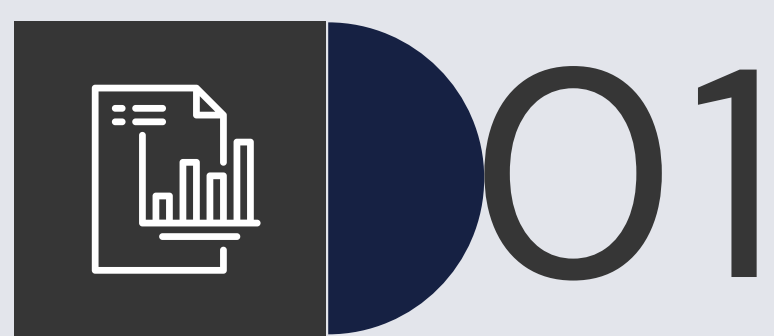
Assumptions & Risks



In order to develop its Theory of Change, CANADEM has made a number of assumptions that flow both from our projections regarding the working context we will face over the coming three-year period, as well as the knowledge that we have gained from operating over the past three decades. The following **key assumptions** have guided the development of our Theory of Change:

- International stability will be maintained and allow international cooperation to continue, albeit at a reduced magnitude.
- The international multilateral system, with the UN system at its foundation, will continue to function.
- Countries in a position to do so (in particular CANADEM's funders) will continue to finance international assistance.
- International travel will continue to be possible at a global level.
- Environmental concerns will continue to preoccupy global leaders.
- Organizations conducting international assistance operations will continue to require additional technical experts to supplement their regular complement of staff.
- CANADEM's flexible modality will continue to provide a lower-cost option to large entities – such as UN agencies – and will remain competitive with other organizations in the sector.
- CANADEM's Headquarters in Ottawa will continue to provide an advantageous base for our work and an appropriate legal framework.
- International and national experts will continue to find the work that CANADEM supports as an interesting option for their careers and continue to apply/remain on our roster.
- CANADEM's leadership and key staff will provide sound management and make informed decisions to guarantee a suitable internal financial and professional context.

As with every plan, there are risks that it will be impeded by actions or events that come to pass during the three-year period of the Strategic Plan’s delivery. These risks have been divided into key categories:



Financial Risks

This category of risks relates to the maintenance of sound financial management and continued funding for the organization’s business model.



Political Risks

Political change can engender risks to the organization if they imply new rules or principles of decision-making that might influence CANADEM’s operations or its personnel.



Reputational Risks

Actions on the part of CANADEM staff, experts or individuals and organizations working with CANADEM could potentially generate harm to the organization’s reputation that would damage the trust that our partners and the public have in the organization.



Legal Risks

This category includes all risks related to CANADEM’s observance of relevant laws and regulations that guide the organization through its registration as a not-for-profit organization. It includes the rules and regulations around human resources and contract management, as well as the management of information and privacy requirements



Safety of Personnel

Although risks to the safety of personnel are important for all organizations to address, the areas where CANADEM experts are operating – most of the time in proximity to conflicts, violence due to poverty, and environmental disasters – there is a particular need to examine the risks to staff and experts who are working or visiting assistance projects.



Informational Risks

CANADEM’s roster is the foundation of our organization’s operating modality. Any risk to this database in particular, or vital financial and personal information would be a huge barrier to the organization’s continued operations.

This new matrix will provide the basis for further work on updates to our Risk Management Strategy, which will be completed during the first year of the Plan. Its development is included in the list of targets for the first year of the Monitoring Matrix.

How CANADEM implements its work for change

CANADEM was founded on the firm belief that people can make a difference to the impact of international assistance if they have the right qualifications and are given the right tools to carry out their work. The efforts that saw the first democracy and human rights experts rostered by CANADEM were also carried out with the conviction that there were experts in countries such as Canada whose temporary deployment could provide much-needed knowledge and experience to international assistance projects. Furthermore, active efforts to find those experts would yield tangible results if we could match the brightest minds with some of the toughest jobs.

Building on our roots, CANADEM's Theory of Change rests on the fact that with almost three decades of experience, we are able to find and select the best experts and provide them with the tools to contribute their best work to international operations. By drawing on an extremely diverse and comprehensive list of experts from countries around the world, and using specialty technology to manage their information and keep it safe, we are leveraging the best possible expertise for organizations (such as those within the UN system or government entities). Those experts are then accompanied through their assignments by CANADEM staff so they are ready to respond to any difficulties that may arise.

As budgets tighten and short-term staff are increasingly used for UN and other operations, we feel the role that CANADEM can play is ever more important. Our work frees up multilateral institutions to focus on other issues by making use of cost-effective specialised services to find and administer shorter term experts.

Finally, we make use of on-going monitoring and learning, made possible through the close relationships with our partners. We strive to measure our work and ensure that we are reaching the impact that we intended to achieve.

Monitoring, Learning & Evaluation



As a means to ensure that our organization moves forward according to the strategic direction in our strategy, and that CANADEM's decision-makers will take advantage of all opportunities to learn during and upon completion of the strategic period, we have developed a Monitoring Framework that will accompany the Strategic Plan 2025–2028. This framework will facilitate the process of ongoing analysis at regular intervals, and allow any course corrections that are required, based on the results that we obtain.

The development of a Monitoring Framework has also allowed the organization to compile baseline information for the various elements of our work that we would like to measure and track as we analyse our performance. From now on, we will have a complete set of quantitative data to use in tracking our future progress, as well as qualitative indicators that we can use to take a closer, more complex view of our work and its impact. The Monitoring Framework is a separate document and includes our indicators for outputs and outcomes, as well as the sources of this information –including targets for the three years of the Strategic Plan. Baseline data that is currently unavailable will be provided by the first year of the Plan.

Where considered useful by CANADEM management and/or our funders, we will carry out evaluations. Given the time and resources that are consumed during an evaluation, we will use this methodology sparingly, focusing on areas where our monitoring data points to something of special importance or interest. This strategic period will allow us to determine if we should develop a specific policy for evaluations (for example, a policy focused on gathering information on regions, types of activities, size of budget, or based on regular time intervals between evaluations). At this point, the use of evaluations will be one of the tools available to managers as part of the assessment of learning from our monitoring data. Evaluations will therefore be carried out on a bespoke and contextualized basis during this strategic period.



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