

Tourism & Hospitality Emergency Response (THER) Project Final Report

Project Period: May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021

Prepared by: OTEC

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This report was produced as part of a project funded by the Future Skills Centre (FSC), with financial support from the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Future Skills Centre or the Government of Canada.















Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic that emerged in February 2020 brought a devastating downturn to the global and local Canadian economy, having a particularly devastating impact on the Tourism and Hospitality industry and its workforce.

There were numerous contextual challenges that impacted the execution of the project including a worsening health crisis, delays in the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine, precarious socioeconomic conditions, an uncertain labour market, as well as the protective measures including provincial stay at home orders and lockdowns imposed by the Ontario Provincial Government to contain the spread of the virus. Despite these difficulties, the project applied an agile project implementation approach which resulted in notable achievements over the past year which have set a solid foundation for recovery planning efforts and ongoing resilience building for a post-pandemic future within the industry.

Nineteen reports were generated through research activities with the displaced workers' community, analysis of Canadian Labour Force statistics and the foundational research on job transitions and social and emotional skills. The publications informed the creation of support mechanisms for the displaced workers as well as OTEC's industry partners and additionally, set the context for recovery planning efforts that will take place during the scaling activities of the Tourism & Hospitality Emergency Recovery project in partnership with the FSC.

The Project also successfully provided a wide range of support resources to workers through the THER microsite and outreach campaigns, by showcasing a strategically curated list of the most pertinent employment, financial, training opportunities and wellness resources, as well as conducting active and continuous engagement to demonstrate commitment and support to displaced workers.

An outreach campaign for free training garnered significant interest from displaced workers, resulting in uptake from 42 people. In total, 1111 respondents completed the survey for displaced workers, while 1588 people signed up to the Worker's Registry to access the varied range of support resources. The total number of project participants totals 2699 individuals, mainly drawn from Ontario (93%), with 5% residing in other Canadian provinces and territories.

The SkillsPath application is steadily approaching its launch date. A rigorous validation and usability testing process with job seekers and Employment Service Providers revealed high impact of the application with both groups. Work is ongoing to integrate the feedback in the application and user journey and simultaneously to complete a data privacy and sharing framework, which is a critical dependency required for launch. This work will continue within the activities of the scaling project with FSC.

Table 1 below lists the achievements and status on each of the Project's objectives.



Table 1. List of Project Achievements

No. of Objective	Objective	Status Green: Completed Yellow: Almost completed	Achievement
1	Understand impact on displaced workers		 19 Knowledge outputs, publications and tools produced, reflecting insights from displaced workers and the labour market, as well as related research that will equip OTEC to plan for the future of work with the Industry List of Research outputs: 10 Labour Force Surveys; 1 Job Transitions Report; 2 Reports on Social and Emotional Skills; 1 Research Panel Report on displaced workers; 1 Interim Baseline Report on displaced workers; 1 Baseline Report on displaced workers; 1 Follow-up Survey Report on displaced workers situation; 1 Validation and Usability Report (SkillsPath); 1 Data Summary Report
2	Provide immediate information, services, and supports to displaced workers		 42 Job seekers received free training 1588 Registrants signed up to access resources from the THER Microsite and outreach campaigns



No. of Objective	Objective	Status Green: Completed Yellow: Almost completed	Achievement
3	Launch the SkillsPath Platform		 Close to MVP launch High scores on the System Usability Scale¹ from participants of the SkillsPath Validation and Usability Study Job Transition dashboard SkillsPath Validation and Usability Study
4	Maximize early retraining and upskilling opportunities		 42 persons trained Referral process designed to route job seekers to Employment Service Providers Training courses curated and designed for SkillsPath application
5	Accelerate destination- based recovery plans		Data summary paper that will be used to inform recovery planning and outreach to partners

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¹ Participants of the SkillsPath Validation and Usability Study were asked to complete a standardized survey about their experience. The questionnaire is called a System Usability Scale (SUS), and it is used to measure perceived usability. The SUS survey contains 10 questions. Participants rank their answers on a scale of 1 to 5, according to how they agree with the statements regarding the product or feature on the test. A score of 1 means they strongly disagree with the statement while 5 means they strongly agree. There is a complex scoring methodology for the final score. The scoring is from 1 to 100 but is not based on percentages. The standard average score is a 68.



Section 1

Summarize the activities, outputs, outcomes, key learnings, and achievements of "COVID-19 Impact Mitigation and Recovery Plan". Please use concrete examples and refer to your project work plan, milestones, and overall impact.

Objective 1: Understand impact on displaced workers

The first objective aimed to understand the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on employment in the tourism and hospitality industry. To support this objective, project partners (i) developed, deployed, and disseminated a displaced workers' survey; and (ii) conducted analyses of several data sources to provide evidence on overall Labour Market Trends in the industry to inform next-stage activities.

Related to this objective, the displaced workers baseline and follow-up surveys were deployed and fourteen (14) Reports and Analysis Papers were produced, including an Interim Baseline Survey analysis report; a Final Baseline panel analysis report; a Strategic follow-up survey analysis report and a paid research Dynata Data Panel Report as well as ten (10) monthly analysis reports on Labour Force Statistics, enabling the Project Team to communicate more effectively with displaced workers, understand their needs and effectively plan strategies that met their needs.

A communications campaign and the THER Microsite were also launched to offer resources to the Workers' Registry.

Over 40 resources were added to the microsite, covering the most pertinent employment, financial, training opportunities and wellness resources for displaced workers. Enhancements post the initial launch also included updating the list of Federal & Provincial resources anticipating the end of the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and the introduction of new support programs.

The OTEC team further refined the user experience at the end of August adding an easier way to register for the THER workers' registry. Additionally, a partnership with Prosper Canada led to the addition of the Financial Relief Navigator tool, a valuable resource for workers trying to understand the varied financial support programs available across Canada. Traffic to the THER site was generated by a multi-faceted marketing and communications campaign.

Data analytics on the THER Microsite between July 2020 to April 30, 2021 recorded the following averages:

- Users²: 25,432 - Sessions: 32,166

- Clicks on buttons:

FREE TRAINING - 2971

• Take the Survey - 2154

Register now - 2014Find Resources - 980

 $^{^{2}}$ Users: Desktop/mobile users who initiated at least one session during the specified date range.

[•] Sessions: A 20-minute time period where a user is engaged with the website/app. This is the "unit" in which Google Analytics (GA) splits time. One user can have multiple sessions. E.g. a user visits the site, clicks on a button, goes idle for 20 mins; then returns, visits three other pages in the site and leaves: these would result in GA two web sessions.

[•] Bounce Rate: The percentage of single-page sessions in which a user had no interaction with the page. In other words, the user visited the website, interacted for 0 seconds and exited the page.



Objective 2: Provide immediate information, services and supports to displaced workers

This objective aimed to leverage the THER website as an information hub on employment, financial, social assistance, and wellness resources for displaced workers who signed up to the Registry, with the majority of the updates being made to the microsite over the second and third quarters of the Project.

The goal was also to develop and maintain a registry of displaced workers and to engage in ongoing communications to the registry. During Q2 and Q3, seven outreach emails were sent to registrants.

As of April 30th, 2021, the Registrant database housed a total of 1588 registrants, drawn from 3 data streams and campaigns including individuals residing in 11 provinces and territories across Canada. Seven newsletters were sent to registrants.

Although the regional focus of the Project was on Ontario, the Project Team also provided resources relevant to workers in all Provinces throughout Canada, recognizing the common need for support for displaced workers across the country amidst the challenging labour market precipitated by the sudden nature of the crisis.

Objective 3: Launch the SkillsPath Platform

Throughout the past year, OTEC has worked with a consortium of technology partners to design and test SkillsPath, a multi-audience enterprise application. SkillsPath intends on harnessing sophisticated technology to support job transitions and career development through the identification of transferable skills and their application to employment opportunities across the sector. The system will support participating Employment Service Providers in triaging affected workers into reemployment across the sector, navigating a rapidly changing labour market in real-time based on their objective attributes and interests.

The goals of this platform are to improve job seekers' experience in finding employment, contribute to system innovation, model future employment pathways and connect job seekers to resources that will enable them to find jobs and retrain or upskill in preparation for their job search.

The Project Team gathered feedback from prospective end users of SkillsPath during a rigorous testing exercise. The SkillsPath validation and usability study took place March 2-18, 2021, with seven job seekers and representatives from seven Employment Service Providers (ESPs). A separate scoping session to understand business recruitment processes and needs took place with an additional ESP.

A report on the Study, which was completed on March 31st, 2021 provides an analysis of the feedback and information gathered from the sample.

Participants' feedback³ was rated in accordance with the System Usability Scale (SUS) - an industry standard that measures perceived usability. The average SUS rating given by the job seeker sample was 70, which is rated as "Good" on the SUS scale, while the average SUS rating given by the ESP sample was 84 or "Excellent".

Following the study, the feedback obtained from the sample was shared with the technical developers who worked with the Product Management and UX Team to integrate the feedback into release versions of the application.

³ Participants of the SkillsPath Validation and Usability Study were asked to complete a standardized survey about their experience. The questionnaire is called a System Usability Scale (SUS), and it is used to measure perceived usability. The SUS survey contains 10 questions. Participants rank their answers on a scale of 1 to 5, according to how they agree with the statements regarding the product or feature on the test. A score of 1 means they strongly disagree with the statement while 5 means they strongly agree. There is a complex scoring methodology for the final score. The scoring is from 1 to 100 but is not based on percentages. The standard average score is a 68.



The lead research partner on the remaining publications on job transitions and social and emotional skills produced three papers entitled "Space to Grow: Job Transitions in Ontario's Tourism and Hospitality Industry"; and two others that assess Strengths and Gaps in Social and Emotional Skills, and, Identify and Assess Social and Emotional Skills in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry.

Objective 3.4, which addresses the deliverables related to social and emotional skills (SES), was re-scoped to eliminate the deliverable related to piloting of the credential tool due to the significant involvement from sector stakeholders at a time when they face considerable challenges and to prioritize the work on the deliverables related to the production of two SES research reports, which remained in the scope of work.

Objective 4: Maximize early retraining and upskilling opportunities

In Q4, forty-two (42) job seekers from Ontario registered for free training promoted through the email campaign disseminated by the Project Team in early February to the Registry.

The training was organized into four cohorts of 42 trainees, who completed a full-time, two-week online skills training certificate program that combined interactive, facilitator-led classes and independent e-learning courses to prepare the trainees for a career in a post pandemic workforce. The trainees also completed online self-assessments and the program culminated with receipt of a tourism and hospitality Career Accelerator certificate and a virtual graduation ceremony.

Objective 5: Accelerate destination-based recovery plans

Given the current labour and economic market conditions resulting from an ongoing provincial lockdown and stay-at-home orders, the initial deliverables for Objective 5 were reviewed and revised with Blueprint, the lead on this activity. The 're-scoped' deliverable for Phase 1 comprised the creation of a key summary document of the data and analysis obtained throughout the last year which will aid in knowledge-sharing, communication on and preparation for recovery planning with industry partners as the sector begins to plan for recovery in the coming months. Blueprint led the design and execution of the research portion of the project. As an evidence-informed initiative, the research sought to understand the effects of displacement on workers and identify their needs to deliver a response that better serves this population. The report provides a snapshot of key findings from the research and lessons to consider as the project moves into scaling activities and more focused recovery planning efforts.

The primary goals of the research were to understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on displaced workers in Ontario's tourism and hospitality industry and to identify their needs to be able to inform the development of a targeted response. Over the course of the year, Blueprint analyzed three data sets comprising:

- 1. The monthly Labour Force Surveys carried out by Statistics Canada
- 2. A panel survey of displaced workers within the tourism and hospitality industry
- 3. A longitudinal survey of displaced workers within OTEC's contact network



Section 2

For the following, please compare any objective metrics vs your proposal milestones: (Include only those applicable to your particular initiative)

2.1 Please indicate the total number and type of research activities implemented in your project. Table 2 below lists the total number and type of research activities implemented in THER

Table 2. Total number and Type of Research Activities implemented

Type of Research Activity implemented in THER	Notes on Type of Research Activity	Quarter planned for completion Planned	Quarter completed Actual	Objective listed in Project Charter/ Work plan
SkillsPath Validation & Usability Study Report (OTEC)	SkillsPath Platform	Q2	Q4	3.2
	Insights on the general and tourism & hospitality labour market			
June 2020	и	Q1	Q1	1.5
July 2020	и	Q2	Q2	1.5
August 2020	и	Q2	Q2	1.5
September 2020	и	Q2	Q2	1.5
October 2020	и	Q3	Q3	1.5
November 2020	и	Q3	Q3	1.5
December 2020	и	Q3	Q3	1.5
January 2021	и	Q4	Q4	1.5
February 2021	и	Q4	Q4	1.5
March 2021	и	Q4	May 2021	1.5



Type of Research Activity implemented in THER	Notes on Type of Research Activity	Quarter planned for completion Planned	Quarter completed Actual	Objective listed in Project Charter/ Work plan
THER Baseline Research Report - Interim (Blueprint)	Data and Insights-generation from displaced workers	Q2	Q2	1.6
THER Baseline Research Report - Final (Blueprint)	Data and Insights-generation from displaced workers	Q4	Q4	1.6
Follow up survey Report (Blueprint)	Data and Insights-generation from displaced workers	Q4	Q4	1.6
Dynata Panel Report (Blueprint)	Data and Insights-generation from displaced workers	Q4	Q4	1.6
Job Transition Report Briefing Paper (CBoC)	Research on Job Transitions	Q4	Q4	3.3
Social and Emotional Skills Gaps & Strengths Briefing paper (CBoC)	Research on Social and Emotional skills	Q4	May 2021	3.4
Social and Emotional Skills Assessment Paper ⁴ (CBoC)	Research on Social and Emotional skills	Q4	May 2021	3.4
Data summary Report ⁵ (Blueprint)	Consolidation of data gathered during Phase 1	Q4	May 2021	5
Total number of Reports delivered			19	

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⁴ The Social and Emotional Skills Paper on Gaps and Strengths is complete and is in the final stages of publication.

 $^{^{\,\,5}}$ The Data Summary Report is complete and is in the final stages of publication.



2.2 Please indicate the total number and type of dissemination and/or outreach activities completed throughout the project.

Table 3 below lists the total number and type of dissemination and/or outreach activities completed throughout the project.

Table 3. Total number and type of dissemination and/or outreach activities completed

Type of Dissemination Activity and/or outreach activity completed in THER	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total number
COVID-19 Sub-Committee of the Tourism SkillsNet Ontario (TSNO) Network Meetings (Total: 3) Meetings with Industry Partners (Total: 17) Tourism Skills Net Ontario (TSNO) Provincial Meeting (Tota1: 1)	1 1 COVID-19 Sub-Committee - TSNO Network Meeting: 1. August 24, 2020	2 COVID-19 Sub-Committee - TSNO Network Meetings: 1. October 8, 2020 2. December 2, 2020	18 Meetings with Industry Partners: • 17 meetings between January 6 - March 23, 2021 • 1 TSNO Provincial Meeting on April 27, 2021	21
Email newsletters & campaigns		3	4	7
Communications campaign		1		1



Type of Dissemination Activity and/or outreach activity completed in THER	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total number
Job Transition Dashboard		1		1
THER website	1	1		2
Reports	3	4	3	10
SkillsPath Platform (Engagement of ESPs and job seekers during the Usability and Validation Study)			1	1

2.3 Please describe any training and/or educational activities implemented in your project.

In Q4, forty-two (42) job seekers from Ontario accepted an offer for free training promoted through the email campaign disseminated by the Project Team in early February to the Registry.

The training, which was provided through OTEC's provincially funded skills development training program, was organised into four cohorts of 42 trainees. The recipients of training completed a full-time, two-week online skills training certificate program that combined interactive, facilitator-led classes and independent e-learning courses to prepare the trainees for a career in a post pandemic workforce. The trainees also completed online self-assessments and the program culminated with receipt of a tourism and hospitality Career Accelerator certificate and a virtual graduation ceremony.



2.4 Please indicate the total number of participants engaged in the project and share the region(s) where your project was implemented.

The total number of participants is 2699, comprising 1111 Baseline survey respondents, 1588 registrants and 42 trainees.

Although the main focus for service delivery and support targeted job seekers in Ontario, the Resources uploaded to the THER Microsite were gathered from information hubs in every province, which enabled the Project to respond in some way to the needs of job seekers throughout Canada.

The total number of participants is 2699⁶ comprising the following participant types:

- 1111 Baseline survey respondents
- 1588 registrants
- 44 trainees

The regional representation of THER participants (by percentage and number) is as follows:

- 93% (or 2517) of participants came from Ontario
- 5% (or 128) of participants are from 10 other Provinces in Canada
- 2% (or 54) of participants did not list their residence

Table 4 below lists the total number of participants by Region and Participant Type.

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⁶ Appendix A (pgs 14-19) lists the data collected on THER project participants.



Table 4. Total Number of Participants by Region and Participant Type

				٦	Total Num	ber of Particip	ants by Reg	ion and Part	ticipant Type	9			
	ON	АВ	NB	ВС	TN	SK	YK	QC	МВ	NS	PEI	Unknown	Total
TOTAL number of Registrants	1449	18	4	39	1	6	3	23	1	4	1	39	1588
TOTAL number of Survey Respondents	1068	3	2	13	0	5	0	4	0	1	0	15	1111
TOTAL number of Trainees	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	44
Q2 - Q4 TOTAL	2517	21	6	52	1	11	3	27	1	5	1	54	2699
	2517 128											54	



2.5 If you engaged equity seeking groups during the implementation of your project, please include numbers and demographic information that may be available (examples: 50 participants)

Of the data collected, data on 1133 of the total number of participants (2699), is disaggregated by gender identity.

This group includes the following participant types: survey Respondents from Blueprint, paid panel survey respondents, and persons who completed training.

The numbers of participants available by disaggregation by (gender) identity is listed as follows:

- **58%** or 658 of the participants were **female**
- 41.4% or 470 of the participants were male
- 0.44% or 5 participants were other (non binary or trans)

Next Steps & Conclusion

The first year of the THER Project (May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021) set a solid foundation for the scaling activities through the achievement of several major objectives listed below:

- I. Gaining and leveraging insights on displaced workers to develop comprehensive strategies that meet the needs of this community;
- II. Producing research publications that inform OTEC's next steps towards ongoing development and resilience-building of the workforce in preparation for a post-pandemic future within the Tourism & Hospitality Industry;
- III. Embarking on sustained engagement with both displaced workers and Employment Service Providers to disseminate outreach and collect user feedback on the support services that are being designed for iob seekers:
- IV. Providing training and designing referral support services for workers;
- V. Ensuring substantive technical development and stakeholder engagement on the SkillsPath enterprise application

OTEC is grateful to the continued support provided by the Future Skills Centre during the past year. The collaboration and contributions from both Blueprint and the Conference Board of Canada, whose Teams worked closely with OTEC to deliver key research outputs in fulfilment of the Project's objectives, is also greatly appreciated.



Appendix A

THER Project Participant Numbers

May 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021

Q1 \rightarrow April 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

 $Q2 \rightarrow July 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020$

Q3 → October 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020

Q4 → January 1, 2021 – April 30, 2021

THER End of Project Total by Participant Type

Participant type	Blueprint	Magnet	Dynata	Registrants	Training	Total
Baseline Survey respondents	489	-	622	-	-	1111
Registrants	246	336	-	1006	-	1588
Training *Not included in Total, as trainees are included in the Registry total	-	-	-	-	42	
TOTAL	735	336	622	1006	-	2699



	THER End of Project Totals by Province and Reporting Quarter													
	ON	AB	NB	ВС	TN	SK	YK	QC	МВ	NS	PEI	Unknown	Total	
Registrants														
Magnet Disaggregation by Gender not available														
Q2	135	2	1	7	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	10	159	
Q3	116	4	0	20	0	2	0	4	0	3	1	1	151	
Q4	20	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	26	
Total	271	9	1	27	0	3	0	10	0	3	1	11	336	
Blueprint														
Q2 Gender: Male Female	205 72 107	0 0	1 0 1	7 2 4	0	0 2	0	0 0	0	0	0	29 12 16	246 86 130	
Not listed	26	1	0	1		0		1				1	30	
SAO Disaggregation by Gender not available														
Q4 only	972	8	2	5	1	1	3	12	1	1	0	0	1006	
Q4 total SAO leads including those who opted not to register	1026	9	2	6	1	1	4	14	1	1	0	0	1065	



	THER End of Project Totals by Province and Reporting Quarter													
	ON	AB	NB	ВС	TN	SK	YK	QC	МВ	NS	PEI	Unknown	Total	
in the THER Database - DO NOT ADD TO TOTAL														
TOTAL number of Registrants	1449	18	4	39	1	6	3	23	1	4	1	39	1588	
Survey Respondents														
Blueprint														
												Total Unknowns 15		
Q2 Gender: M/ F/ Non-binary/ Two spirit/ Not listed Missing info/	330 126/ 197/ 3/ 0/ /2 2	0 0/ 0/ 0	2 1/ 1	3/ 7/ 0/ 0/ 0/ 1	0	3 0/ 3/ 0/ 0	0	1 0/ 1/ 0/ 0	0	0	0	Not listed: 2 Missing: 3	362 130/ 209/ 3/ 0/ 2/ 3	



	THER End of Project Totals by Province and Reporting Quarter													
	ON	АВ	NB	ВС	TN	SK	YK	QC	МВ	NS	PEI	Unknown	Total	
Q3 Gender: M/ F/ Other Gender/ Unknown		1/ 1/ 0/ 0	0	1/ 1/ 0/ 0	0	1/ 1/ 0/ 0	0	3 1/ 2/ 0/ 0	0	1 1/ 0/ 0/ 0/	0	0	48/ 65/ 1 0	
Q4 Gender: M/ F/ Other Gender/ Unknown	2/ 10/ 0/	1 1/ 0/ 0/ 0/ 0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3/ 10/ 0/ 0	
TOTAL Please note that the Final baseline report analyzed only the 446 participants in Ontario.	446	3	2	13	0	5	0	4	0	1	0	15	489	
Dynata Data Panel														
Q2 Gender: M/ F	622 274/ 348												622	
Total number of Survey Respondents	1068	3	2	13	0	5	0	4	0	1	0	15	1111	



	THER End of Project Totals by Province and Reporting Quarter													
	ON	AB	NB	ВС	TN	SK	YK	QC	МВ	NS	PEI	Unknown	Total	
Training														
Training *Not included in Total, as trainees are included in the Registry total														
Q4 Gender: Male/ Trans Male/ Female	15/ 1/ 26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15/ 1/ 26	
TOTAL number of Trainees *Not included in Total, as trainees are included in the Registry total	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	ON	AB	NB	ВС	TN	SK	YK	QC	МВ	NS	PEI	Unknown	Total	
Q2 - Q4 Total	2517	21	6	52	1	11	3	27	1	5	1	54	2699	
Q2 Total	1296	3	4	25	0	6	0	5	0	0	0	53	1392	
Q3 Total	220	6	0	22	0	4	0	7	0	4	1	1	265	
Q4 Total	1004	12	2	5	1	1	3	15	1	1	0	0	1045	

^{*}Data cleaning and migration activities conducted between December – April resulted in a change in the numbers reported in previous reports.

Data duplicates/multiples, persons residing outside of Canada and persons who did not opt in to the Registry constituted some of the types of data deleted from the individual databases.