

A Path Forward for the Canadian Register of Historic Places

Options Analysis on Functionality, Governance, and Technology

PREPARED FOR

National Trust for Canada

Claro Solutions Ltd

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Executive Summary

The Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP) is one of Canada's most important national heritage resources, providing a unified, publicly accessible record of over 13,500 historic places across federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions. The CRHP was developed as a collaboration between federal, provincial and territorial governments and has been managed by Parks Canada. Since its inauguration in 2004 under the Historic Places Initiative, the CRHP has played a critical role in supporting heritage conservation, planning, research, and public engagement.

The CRHP is now at a critical juncture. Its underlying technology is outdated and no longer supported, and Parks Canada has confirmed that the platform will be decommissioned in Spring 2026. Without immediate intervention, Canada risks losing a vital tool but also the cohesion, accessibility, and authority of its shared heritage data.

This study, commissioned by National Trust for Canada with support from Parks Canada, provides a comprehensive assessment of the CRHP's current state and outlines a clear, actionable path forward. It is structured in two phases: (1) preservation and migration of existing data, and (2) renewal and enhancement of a modernized, inclusive, and sustainable national register.

Key Findings

Extensive engagement—including 932 public survey responses, 34 consultations, federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) interviews, stakeholder workshops, and technical analysis—demonstrates that the CRHP remains widely used and deeply valued.

Three immediate risks were identified:

- **Risk of data loss:** While data exports exist, there is no comprehensive strategy to preserve the CRHP as a structured, authoritative, comprehensive resource.
- **Loss of public access:** Proposed static archiving would eliminate search, updates, and interactive functionality.
- **Erosion of trust and accuracy:** Unofficial, AI-generated replicas of CRHP data are emerging, highlighting demand but lacking authority and governance.

The research identified expectations for renewal. Users prioritize authoritative, up-to-date information, map-based navigation, open access, and an improved user interface. There is also strong demand to address longstanding gaps, missing records and under-represented communities including Indigenous peoples.

Strategic Opportunity

The planned decommissioning of the CRHP presents not only a risk, but a significant opportunity. Renewal enables Canada to re-imagine the CRHP as modern national infrastructure—one that supports economic activity around real estate and renovation and is inclusive, interoperable, and aligned with contemporary expectations around digital access, data governance, and reconciliation.

A renewed CRHP can:

- Support planning, conservation, and decision-making across sectors
- Integrate modern technologies, including mapping and AI-supported tools
- Strengthen public engagement with heritage through improved accessibility
- Expand representation to reflect the full diversity of Canada's heritage

Recommended Strategies

The report outlines options for phased approach to stabilize and rebuild the CRHP, beginning with immediate preservation actions and leading to long-term renewal. Key recommendations include:

1. Implement a new digital home, a complete and structured data export of the CRHP and website historicplaces.ca to maintain public access
2. Establish a CRHP committee comprised of FPT and other stakeholder representation within the National Trust for Canada
3. Secure initial investment funds for the preservation of data and project inception
4. Implement a formal data governance framework with all contributing jurisdictions and conduct a jurisdictional data audit
5. Select a modern, sustainable platform for renewal
6. Envision a future CRHP that is reflective of all Canadians, including community contribution, educational tools, AI integration features, Indigenous representation, and explore revenue generating options

Central to these recommendations is the creation of a committee within the National Trust for Canada which separates data ownership from platform stewardship while embedding multi-jurisdictional governance. This model balances independence, accountability, and collaboration, and is designed to endure beyond political and funding cycles. There is broad support with the National Trust identified as the preferred institutional steward.

The future of the CRHP is not solely a technical issue, but rather a national and cultural imperative. Without action, Canada faces fragmentation of heritage data, reduced public access, and long-term impacts on conservation and planning. With strategic investment and coordinated leadership, the CRHP can be transformed into a modern, resilient, and inclusive national register, reflecting Canada's heritage while serving as a foundation for stewardship, learning, and identity for generations to come.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Canadian Register of Historic Places

The CRHP and its digital platform, historicplaces.ca, are among Canada's most important public heritage resources. Conceived in 2001, the Historic Places Initiative (HPI) brought together federal, provincial, and territorial governments in a landmark inter-provincial collaboration to strengthen the protection of historic sites and to foster a culture of heritage conservation nationwide. Launched in 2004 as a cornerstone of this initiative, the CRHP was envisioned as a pan-Canadian instrument for identifying, documenting, and celebrating the historic places that shape Canada's collective memory and cultural identity. Together, the federal, provincial and territorial governments invested millions in creating the CRHP.

The CRHP lists approximately 13,500 recognized historic places across the country and has become an indispensable tool for a wide range of users. These records include construction and recognition dates, jurisdictional information, images, and Statements of Significance. Researchers, planners, architects, educators, and conservation professionals rely on the CRHP to identify and understand historic places, assess heritage value, and inform planning and stewardship decisions. As a definitive, illustrated source of information, the CRHP is used across all levels of government and by both private and public sectors to inform real estate proposals, investments, and decisions related to designation, modification, and demolition. It additionally allows cross-jurisdictional searching of historic places allowing for coordinated analysis and action in heritage conservation. For members of the public CRHP and the website serve as a gateway to the histories embedded in everyday landmarks, landscapes, and communities.

1.1.1 Controlled Vocabulary & Data Structure

The CRHP employs a structured, controlled vocabulary to ensure standardization, accuracy, and consistency across its records. This framework organizes headings, themes, and standardized terminology to support precise descriptions, including categories such as jurisdiction type, recognition authority, designation type and statute, property category, historic function, and owner response type. It also incorporates key national themes drawn from the Parks Canada *National Historic Sites of Canada System Plan*, which serves as an overarching guide¹.

By reducing ambiguity and supporting effective keyword searching, this controlled vocabulary upholds documentation standards and enhances database functionality and remains integral to heritage conservation language.

1.1.2 A System Under Strain

Despite its vital role, the CRHP has undergone minimal updates since its inauguration. Its technical infrastructure has aged significantly over the years, and mounting security vulnerabilities have rendered the current platform unsustainable. As a result, the Canadian Register of Historic Places is set to be decommissioned in Spring 2026.

The public response to the prospect of losing the CRHP was immediate and overwhelming, reflecting the depth of attachment that Canadians feel toward this resource and the heritage it documents. Heritage

¹ Parks Canada adopted a new system plan in about 2018, tracking and reporting on different themes - including Indigenous designations - <https://parks.canada.ca/agence-agency/bib-lib/rapports-reports/conservation/conservation-2023>

professionals, community organizations, researchers, and members of the public alike voiced concern about the potential loss of a platform that plays a vital and irreplaceable role in protecting and promoting historic places across the country. The depth and breadth of the public response left little doubt that the decommissioning of the CRHP extends well beyond technical considerations, touching on questions of national identity, cultural memory, and heritage stewardship.

1.1.3 Purpose of This Study

The National Trust for Canada commissioned this study to examine the functional, technical, and governance dimensions of the CRHP and the historicplaces.ca website, and to chart a course for its preservation and renewal. This study would not have been possible without the collaboration and support of Parks Canada, as well as the many jurisdictions, organizations and individuals who participated.

Recommendations are provided on how to preserve the existing CRHP and the steps required to migrate its data to a new digital home. Drawing on a comprehensive consultation process—including a public survey, facilitated stakeholder workshops, engagement sessions with provincial, territorial, and federal data holders, and targeted technical and stakeholder interviews—this report develops a thorough understanding of how the CRHP is currently used, where it falls short, and what the platform should deliver. Given the federal government’s assertion that it will no longer host or manage the system, the study also considers the options for governance models, drawing on comparable international and domestic models to identify best practices and inform a path forward.

Finally, there is consideration given to enhancements and broader capabilities for the CRHP, which can be scaled depending on funding availability. This phase additionally considers how artificial intelligence (AI) and modern technologies can make the CRHP easier to manage while providing greater accessibility to its users.

1.2 A collaborative effort

1.2.1 Parks Canada – Federal Government

Parks Canada is the federal agency responsible for protecting and presenting Canada’s natural and cultural heritage, and for fostering public understanding of heritage and conservation. As the federal government’s lead for historic places in Canada and programs primarily relating to built heritage, Parks Canada has played a foundational role in the establishment and operation of the CRHP since its inception and has been a key partner in the federal-provincial-territorial framework that has governed the CRHP since its launch in 2004.

Parks Canada’s involvement in this study reflects its interest in finding a new digital home for the CRHP. As the primary federal data holder and a custodian of *the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, Parks Canada still holds institutional authority and technical expertise relevant to the renewal process. Its participation ensures that the study’s recommendations are grounded in federal heritage policy and aligned with Canada’s broader commitments to cultural heritage preservation.

1.2.2 Provincial and Territorial Governments (PT)

The Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP) exists as a result of sustained collaboration among federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions. The 13 provinces and territories are not only key partners but also serve as data owners of their respective records. As such, they hold critical contextual, technic-

al, and administrative knowledge and authority related to these records. This expertise positions provincial and territorial partners as essential contributors to any future CRHP model.

1.2.3 The National Trust for Canada

The National Trust for Canada is the country's leading national heritage charity, dedicated to preserving and promoting historically and culturally significant places across Canada. With a mandate that spans advocacy, education, and direct conservation action, the National Trust has long championed the value of historic places as foundations for community identity, drivers of sustainable economic development, and irreplaceable expressions of Canada's diverse cultural heritage.

As the steward and proponent of this study, the National Trust for Canada occupies a vital role in the renewal of the CRHP. It was the National Trust that first sounded the alarm about the impending decommissioning of the CRHP and mobilized the broad public and professional response that made the case for preservation and renewal. In commissioning this study, the National Trust has taken on responsibility for leading the consultation process, engaging stakeholders across sectors and jurisdictions, and ensuring that the findings and recommendations that emerge from this work reflect the full breadth of perspectives that have a stake in the CRHP's future.

The National Trust is an independent charity, founded in 1973. The National Trust's position outside of government also brings an important and complementary perspective to the renewal process. As an independent, non-governmental organization with deep roots in Canada's heritage community, the National Trust is uniquely positioned to bridge the interests of government data holders, heritage professionals, Indigenous communities, and the broader public and to advocate for a renewed CRHP that serves all Canadians, not only those within the heritage sector.

1.2.4 A Plan for the Future

This study provides an analysis of options for the CRHP and historicplaces.ca by outlining the costs, timelines, and practical steps required to move forward. This provides an opportunity to first save the existing CRHP and second to modernize the CRHP in ways that support federal, provincial, and territorial mandates: improving public access to information, enabling collaboration and better data sharing across jurisdictions, advancing Indigenous partnership and representation, and enhancing evidence-based decision-making for planning and conservation.

This report also considers how a renewed platform can be inclusive, interoperable, and reflect the full breadth and diversity of Canada's historic places while supporting transparency, collaboration, and long-term heritage sustainability. Lastly, it considers opportunities for new features that can potentially drive revenue, engagement, and economic stimulus with a Pan-Canadian vision.

2. Methodology

This study employed a multi-stream, evidence-based methodology to assess the current state of the CRHP and to develop practical, forward-looking recommendations for its preservation and renewal. The approach was designed to integrate technical analysis, stakeholder perspectives, comparative governance models, to ensure that findings are both analytically robust and grounded in practical use.

2.1 Overall Approach

The study addresses three sets of considerations: technical, functional, and governance. Broadly, the study asked: ‘given the technology available in 2026, how could you build a modern Register?’; ‘what features are most important to include a renewed Register’; and ‘who should own and manage a renewed Register?’. These inquiries were supported by five core streams of work: engagement and consultation, technical analysis, governance review, comparative analysis, and synthesis.

The methodology was structured to address two interconnected requirements:

- **Phase One: Preservation and Migration** Focused on stabilizing the existing CRHP by identifying risks and defining the requirements for data preservation and migration to a new digital environment.
- **Phase Two: Renewal and Enhancement** Define the functional, technical, and governance requirements for a modernized CRHP, including future-facing capabilities, sustainability considerations, expanded scope, and operating costs and maintenance of running a program. Looking at a 20-year roadmap, Phase 2 has been broken into 2a and 2b to provide options for further development as budget and technology change over time.

2.2 Engagement and Consultation

A comprehensive, multi-layered engagement strategy was implemented to capture the perspectives of the full range of CRHP users and stakeholders. This ensured that the study reflects both expert insight and public expectations.

2.2.1 Public Survey

A national survey was conducted between February 27 and March 15, 2026, generating 932 responses. The survey explored usage patterns, user needs, interface preferences, data access expectations, and priorities for future development. Open-ended responses provided qualitative insight into user experiences and emerging issues, including under-representation and access barriers. (See Appendix C for survey questions)

2.2.2 Federal, Provincial, and Territorial (FPT) Engagement

Structured interviews were conducted with representatives from 13 of the 14 FPT² governments. They aimed to engage the Directors who participate on the FPT Culture and Heritage table. Many sessions included several representatives, from a Deputy Minister through staff actively working on current register databases. These sessions focused on data ownership, governance preferences, capacity constraints, funding considerations, and expectations for a renewed CRHP.

2.2.3 Stakeholder Workshops

Facilitated engagement sessions were held with key stakeholder groups in March 2026. The first workshop included a pan-Canadian network of leaders representing the Trust's National Council and other national provincial and territory-wide heritage organizations. Representation at this engagement included:

- Architectural Conservancy of Ontario
- Association of Heritage New Brunswick
- Federation Histoire Quebec
- Heritage British Columbia
- Heritage Foundation of NL
- Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia
- Heritage Saskatchewan
- Maisons anciennes du Quebec
- Manitoba Historical Society
- NL Historical Society
- Nova Scotia Lighthouse Preservation Society
- Ontario Heritage Trust
- Ontario Historical Society
- PEI Heritage Foundation

A second stakeholder engagement brought together municipal heritage groups and organizations including: Heritage Ottawa, City of Calgary, Edmonton Heritage Council, The Frontenac Heritage Foundation, Saskatoon Historical Society and Heritage Mississauga.

Finally, a third engagement was held with the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP). These workshops enabled deeper discussion, surfacing areas of consensus, concerns, and practical recommendations through collaborative dialogue.

2.2.4 Indigenous and Underrepresented Group Engagement³

Targeted engagement was undertaken with Indigenous practitioners, primarily through the Indigenous Heritage Circle, to explore data sovereignty, governance participation, and culturally appropriate approaches to heritage representation. This stream also considered barriers and opportunities for broader inclusion of underrepresented communities.

² N.W.T. was contacted on three occasions but has not responded to date.

³ Several groups were contacted but did not respond to engagement efforts

2.2.5 Technical and Industry Engagement

Interviews with system administrators, platform developers and industry experts provided insight into current infrastructure limitations, migration challenges, and potential technical solutions.

2.3 Technical Analysis and Infrastructure Review

A detailed review of the CRHP's existing technical architecture was conducted to assess system viability, risks, and requirements for transition. This analysis included:

- Evaluation of legacy infrastructure (i.e. database, hosting environment, and application framework)
- Identification of technical debt, security vulnerabilities, and system limitations
- Assessment of data structure, format, and completeness
- Review of current functionality, including search, data entry, and user interface capabilities

The technical analysis also informed the identification of functional and non-functional requirements for a future platform, including performance, scalability, interoperability, and accessibility standards. These were considerations when assessing existing and emerging platforms suitable for a renewed CRHP.

2.4 Governance Review

A governance review was undertaken to identify viable models for the long-term stewardship of the CRHP, given the decision by Parks Canada to step back from operational responsibility. This work included:

- Analysis of existing governance arrangements and their limitations
- Assessment of stakeholder expectations regarding independence, accountability, and data sovereignty
- Identification of key governance challenges, including multi-jurisdictional coordination, Indigenous participation, and sustainability

The review informed the development of governance options and the evaluation of potential institutional models, including arm's-length and statutory structures.

2.5 Comparative and Jurisdictional Analysis

To ensure that recommendations are grounded in best practices, the study examined comparable heritage registers and governance models across Canada and internationally. Jurisdictions were selected based on relevance to Canada's federal structure and strengths in specific areas such as:

- Federated governance and shared data models
- Arm's-length institutional structures
- Indigenous co-governance frameworks
- Advanced digital infrastructure and interoperability

- Tiered data access and permissions systems

Each model was assessed against a consistent analytical framework, including institutional structure, data governance, Indigenous participation, access controls, sustainability, and system utility. Insights from this analysis were synthesized into transferable principles applicable to the Canadian context.

2.6 Synthesis and Analytical Framework

Findings from all streams were integrated through a structured synthesis process. Evidence was analyzed and weighted across the following dimensions:

- User needs and system functionality
- Technical feasibility and risk
- Governance viability and stakeholder alignment
- Financial sustainability
- Alignment with public priorities, including reconciliation, accessibility, and open data

This synthesis enabled the development of recommendations that balance immediate preservation needs with long-term strategic objectives. Where trade-offs were required, priority was given to solutions that ensure data integrity, public access, and system sustainability.

2.7 Limitations

While the methodology was comprehensive, several limitations should be noted:

- Variability in data availability and documentation across jurisdictions
- Evolving governance and technology landscapes, which may affect long-term applicability. Technology costs can rapidly change; all costs are indicative.

Despite these limitations, the study provides a robust and evidence-based foundation for decision-making.

3. Findings & Analysis

This section synthesizes findings from all engagement and research streams including the public survey (932 responses), federal-provincial-territorial interviews (FPT), stakeholder workshops, Indigenous engagement, and technical consultations. While each consultation stream contributed unique perspectives a set of common themes emerged.

3.1 Enduring Value and National Importance

Echoed across all streams of engagement was a strong consensus that the CRHP remains an essential national resource. It is widely recognized as the only platform that aggregates historic place records across jurisdictions enabling research, planning, and decision-making.

The CRHP is utilized by a diverse audience which ranges from architects, heritage professionals, researchers, educators, real estate developers, and the public. This usage is despite limited updates over the past decade. The survey results shown in the table below confirm that most users access the CRHP for both professional and personal purposes including research, education, and tourism.

Interaction Type	Response Rate
Find information about heritage places	77.4%
Personal interest or trip planning	51.1%
Learn about designation process / conservation resources	37.1%
Inform renovation or construction projects	23.3%
Train architects, planners, or engineers	8.8%
Not currently familiar with the CRHP	11.7%
Other (write-in)	10.4%

3.2 Immediate Risks to Continuity

A decommissioning of the CRHP poses three critical and interrelated risks:

- **Data loss and fragmentation:** Although data exports exist, there is no strategy in place to preserve the full dataset as a structured, authoritative, and continuously maintained national resource. Heritage data risks becoming fragmented across jurisdictions or lost, without coordinated action.
- **Loss of Public Access and Functionality:** Proposed static archiving by Parks Canada would preserve content in limited form but eliminates critical functionality such as search, updates, and interactive use. Utility would be significantly reduced for both professional and public users. 57% of survey respondents are very concerned with loss of existing data, with many respondents requesting the site stay live during transition.
- **Erosion of Trust and Authority:** The absence of an authoritative maintained register is already contributing to an emergence of unofficial and AI-generated versions of CRHP data by concerned citizens. These efforts demonstrate demand but introduce risks related to accuracy, maintenance, and loss of credibility. They also suggest that some level of technical solution is possible with modest effort and investment.

These risks underpin the urgency of both preserving the existing CRHP and establishing a sustainable path forward based on a clear governance structure.

3.3 System Limitations and Technical Debt

Technical analysis and stakeholder feedback affirm that the CRHP has reached end of life. Key limitations include:

- Outdated infrastructure
- Inability to update, modify or add new records
- Limited and unreliable search functionality
- Lack of map-based navigation
- No mobile accessibility, user interface constraints, not supporting WCAG⁴ for people with disabilities

There is consensus that the system should be rebuilt on a modern, flexible platform capable of supporting long-term maintenance, scalability, and interoperability with other systems. The survey provided key feedback on accessibility requirements as outlined in the table below:

Accessibility Feature	Not Important	Neutral	Essential	Total	Avg (out of 3.0)
Open data access for researchers / developers	2.11%	18.44%	79.44%	900	2.77
Accessible to people with disabilities	2.81%	26.15%	71.04%	891	2.68
Available in both official languages	3.95%	28.10%	67.95%	911	2.64
Mobile-friendly interface	4.15%	31.09%	64.76%	891	2.61
Integration / interoperability with other databases	2.12%	35.49%	62.39%	896	2.60
Available in Indigenous languages	10.79%	56.73%	32.48%	899	2.22
Available in other languages	24.77%	63.74%	11.49%	888	1.87

3.4 User Expectations and Functional Requirements

Users articulated clear expectations for a renewed CRHP across all engagement streams. These expectations reflect deficiencies and evolving standards for digital platforms.

- **Authoritative and Up-to-date Information:** Accurate, verified information lies at the heart of the Register, and regular updates are required to achieve that. Users expressed interest in CRHP

⁴ <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/> - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

as a trusted comprehensive source of heritage information, with new records added on a regular basis.

- **Open and Accessible Data:** Public access to existing CRHP data is essential given public funding origins. There is openness to tiered access models that provide enhanced functionality for professional users.
- **Improved search and navigation:** Location-based and map-driven navigation is the expected standard. Users want traditional text-based search and spatial browsing and filtering.

The table below outlines how survey respondents search the CRHP:

Search Method	Response Rate
By location	91.3%
On a map	56.8%
By keyword	52.2%
By period	29.9%
By style or function	26.0%
By designating jurisdiction	25.3%
By glossary	6.7%

- **Modern User Experience (UX):** Users expect a mobile-friendly accessible and bilingual platform that aligns with contemporary digital standards.

3.5 Gaps in Representation and Inclusion

A consistent finding across survey responses, stakeholder engagement, and Indigenous consultations is that the CRHP does not currently reflect the full diversity of Canada's heritage.

Indigenous, Black, Asian Canadian, LGBTQIA2S+ and other underrepresented communities are notably absent or insufficiently represented within existing records. Structural limitations in the current designation-based model have contributed to these gaps, particularly where communities lack formal authority or resources to participate.

There is support for a renewed CRHP that:

- Expands representation to include diverse cultural perspectives
- Recognizes Indigenous heritage as foundational
- Incorporates community knowledge and lived experience
- Supports more inclusive pathways for recognition and contributions – 44% believe the CRHP does not represent the full range of Canadian heritage

The table below details what respondents believe to be the most underrepresented themes:

Community / Theme	Responses
Indigenous / First Nations communities and places	163
Black / African Canadian heritage	56
Asian Canadian heritage	35

Cultural landscapes, natural sites, and vistas	35
Ethnic / immigrant communities (non-British/French)	29
Rural and small-town heritage	27
Women and gender histories	24
Modern era / post-1945 heritage	17
Industrial and labour history	16
Vernacular and everyday architecture	13
Military heritage	10

3.6 Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance

Engagement with Indigenous partners emphasized that future participation in the CRHP should be aligned with respect for Indigenous data sovereignty and governance. Key insights from this engagement include:

- Alignment with OCAP® principles (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession)
- Recognition that not all heritage information is appropriate for public access
- Community control over how Indigenous knowledge is represented, shared, and protected
- Governance structures that move beyond consultation toward equitable decision-making

These findings highlight that Indigenous inclusion is not solely a content issue, but also governance and systems design consideration. Finally, 32% of survey respondents feel it is essential the CRHP be available in Indigenous languages.

3.7 Governance and Institutional Requirements

There is broad agreement that the current governance model is no longer viable. Parks Canada has indicated it will not continue operating the CRHP, and no existing intergovernmental body has the mandate or capacity to assume responsibility. Across engagement streams, several governance principles emerged:

- No government wants to operate the CRHP. It is recommended that the CRHP operate at arm's length from any single government.
- While the FPT Table was the "owner" of the original CRHP, it has no direct operational capability and limited resources. Jurisdictions were not aligned on a role for the Table.
- Jurisdictions continue to see the utility of a CHRP and would (with conditions) be willing to participate in a renewed register.
- Jurisdictions retain ownership and control of their data. In general, there is openness to sharing that data with a renewed register.
- As a reconciliation best practice, governance structures should include Indigenous representation at a structural level
- Clear accountability, standards, and decision-making processes are considered essential

The National Trust for Canada was consistently identified as a strong candidate to play a central stewardship role, given its national mandate, independence, and convening capacity. FPT engagements reflect a level of comfort with the CRHP managed at arm's length. 35% of survey respondents were somewhat concerned with governance models that do not reflect diverse community needs.

3.8 Financial Sustainability

The critical failure of the original CRHP was largely due to its funding source sun-setting. Any new CRHP should be designed to be financially sustainable over the next 20 years. 70% of survey respondents are very concerned about long-term funding.

A key constraint identified across FPT engagement is the limited financial and human resource capacity of many jurisdictions. As a result, there is strong consensus that:

- No single funding source is immediately available to support either redevelopment or for long-term sustainability
- Multiple streams of funding are recommended

The most widely supported approach includes:

- A one-time federal contribution or endowment to support transition
- Ongoing contributions from participating jurisdictions (where feasible)
- Philanthropic and charitable funding
- Cost-recovery mechanisms for professional or high-volume users
- Views were divided about ads on the website or corporate sponsorship
- This diversified approach is seen as essential to ensuring resilience and independence

3.9 Opportunities for Renewal and Innovation

Despite the risks, there is strong alignment that the renewal of the CRHP presents a significant strategic opportunity. Emerging opportunities include:

- **Modern Technology Integration:** Mapping, improved search, and AI-enabled tools for data management, translation, and analysis
- **Interoperability:** Integration with other Registers and ability to share data
- **Community Participation:** Structured pathways for community contributions, supported by moderation and validation frameworks
- **Expanded Use Cases:** Increased relevance for tourism, education, loss due to climate change (i.e. forest fires, flooding), and cultural storytelling

A renewed CRHP has the potential to function not only as a registry, but as national digital infrastructure supporting heritage conservation and public engagement. 57% of survey respondents support community-led nominations. However 94% of survey respondents felt that it was important that the Register be authoritative, so any future community nomination process would need to be carefully integrated in the tool.

3.10 Summary of Key Insights

Across all lines of evidence, several core conclusions emerge:

- The CRHP remains essential and widely used, despite system limitations
- Immediate action is required to prevent data loss, loss of access, and erosion of trust
- The current platform is no longer viable and replacement is required if the system is to continue to function beyond a 6-12 month window depending on system stability
- Governance and management should shift from government to an outside organization
- Any organization outside government with responsibility for the register should have a clear source of funds to manage it over the long-term
- Long-term funding is a concern for users
- Renewal presents an opportunity to build a more inclusive, interoperable, and future-ready national system

A summary of user needs gathered from the survey are detailed below:

User Need	Evidence
Location-first discovery	91.26% search by location; map-based navigation (56.78%) is a near-universal expectation. Search should be multi-modal and fast. 473 respondents flagged usability barriers with the existing search interface.
Open data, no paywall	79.44% rate open data access as essential. Q8 responses repeatedly warn against any paywall. Free public access is a near-universal expectation across all user segments.
Currency and authority	72.48% (up to date) and 72.18% (authoritative) are the two most highly rated register characteristics. Users depend on CRHP as a trusted reference — not a community wiki.
A better search and interface	137 of 519 Q8 responses (26%) cite interface and search as the top improvement need. This is the single most common theme in free-text feedback across all questions.
Inclusive, diverse content	Average diversity score is 56.2/100. Q3b identifies Indigenous (163 mentions), Black (56), Asian (35), rural (27), and women's (24) histories as the most underrepresented.
Clarity on community nominations	428 of 755 respondents (57%) support community-led nominations, but 36% add conditions around labelling, verification, and curation. A clear governance model for community contributions is essential.
Data continuity through transition	57.66% are 'very concerned' about data loss; 70.13% are very concerned about long-term funding. Q10 respondents repeatedly ask that the current site stay live through transition.
Richer records and visual content	Q4a weighted scores put historical significance (8.04) and architectural value (7.38) at the top. Q8 responses call for more photos, architectural drawings, links to scholarship, and contact information.

4. Technical & Technology Analysis

This technical report analyzes the current state of the existing website historicplaces.ca and the CRHP. While the CRHP itself is of primary importance, without a publicly accessible interface it is of limited utility to users. This section reviews options and provides technical recommendations to ensure both the CRHP, and the associated website will be preserved and/or renewed moving forward.

4.1 Current State of the CRHP Platform

As outlined in the introduction, no replacement platform has been announced. While we specify primarily the CRHP, the website historicplaces.ca is inextricably linked to it as it provides the public interface.

Originally the database ran on Microsoft ASP.NET, Oracle 12c, and Windows Server infrastructure, all of which are now beyond vendor support. The technology behind the CRHP and historicplaces.ca have effectively languished in the same state since 2010. The lack of a clear mandate and governance challenges pre-empted any system improvements. The decision to decommission was driven by technological risk at this time. The added technological risk of Artificial Intelligence (AI) bots potentially attacking an insecure technology platform presents real risk to the outdated and unsupported platform.

At its core, this system does not require significant changes to maintain its status as a useful resource in heritage conservation, tourism, or advocacy. It is widely known that the search is limited and regularly produces system errors. The Parks Canada IT department has indicated that the hardware and system is at imminent risk of failure and presents security vulnerabilities.

While a Phase 1 or Phase 2 option is being developed, this current state will continue to be available until its replacement is live limiting access risk, notwithstanding system failure.

A realistic assessment would inform that the hardware and software configuration are running on a 20+ year old system, is no longer supported by manufacturers, and versions have been deprecated or fall outside security update cycles. In this scenario, the system may potentially run for a few years without issue or may experience a hardware or security incident any day that renders it unrecoverable.

4.2 Parks Canada Assurances

Parks Canada has made several assurances prior to and while this study was being conducted. Parks Canada:

- Has exported, and regularly exports the underlying data to CSV (Comma Separated Value) files
- Will return the data to its originating PT jurisdiction
- Will retain the existing website and CRHP database until a replacement is in place or it suffers an unrecoverable system failure

This does reassure that the data will not be destroyed but without a central platform for access this information is of no utility to the community and professionals that rely on it. Several provinces or territories have no independent heritage register and rely on the CRHP as their sole data source for this information.

4.3 Technical Engagement Overview

Significant technical consultations were undertaken to inform the decisions and details of this report with representatives from:

FPT, Government and Other User Groups	Platform and Service Providers	Heritage Professionals
BC Heritage Branch	Getty Conservation Institute (Arches project leads)	Heritage Calgary
Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN)	ESRI Canada	Luxton Heritage
Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)	QED Systems	
HistoricPlacesLA (City of Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources)	Farallon Geographics	
Parks Canada	Carleton Immersive Media Studio (CIMS)	
San Francisco Cultural Heritage		
Québec Ministère de la Culture et des Communications		

These consultations discussed the primary options available, strengths and risks of the platforms, industry considerations, challenges encountered, and general project costing where available. The consultations, engagement sessions, survey results, and discussions have brought forward several key points.

4.4 Sentiment and Key Themes from Engagements

Stakeholder engagement sessions have informed the following primary goals that can be logically broken into at least two phases:

- Retain the CRHP data and website historicplaces.ca
- Renew the CRHP and website with current technology
- Include opportunities for feature enhancement
- The best options to consider in the heritage register space are Arches, ArcGIS, and the emerging platform Carleton Digital Twin

4.4.1 Immediate Technical Needs – Phase 1

This process has informed the recommendations with the following core technical requirements, based on the results of the consultation and priority items identified in the User Needs Table on page 19-20:

- Retain the existing CRHP data and associated website
- Improve the map search interface
- Address broken search issues
- Be available in both official languages

- Ensure data sovereignty — data residing and processing within Canada by Canadian companies

Also important in Phase 1, any renewed or interim system would ideally meet the following criteria:

- Mobile-friendly, easy to use on computers or smartphones
- Provide open-data⁵ access if reasonable based on agreement of the FPT partners and availability⁶ of the data in publicly accessible machine-readable format

It is worth noting what "open data" means and how it is used in this report. Open Data means the information is freely available to anyone, without general restrictions, without registration or authorization, usually in formats that are readily ingested by computers (JSON, XML, CSV, GeoJSON, etc.). While open data is freely available, technological limits may be put in place to prevent malicious or high-volume traffic, to prevent abuse, or other considerations to ensure system stability.

4.4.2 Opportunities for Renewal – Phase 2

While the immediate needs are of utmost urgency to provide access to the CRHP, there is a fantastic opportunity to renew interest, engage more user groups, inform tourism opportunities, and provide potential revenue-generating capabilities through fee-for-service or partnership models.

Phase 2 can be considered as steps "a" and "b" where renewal of the CRHP in a modern system is the initial goal as Phase 2a. Phase 2b considers development of new features and capabilities as technology changes over a 20-year timespan.

Input from the survey and from FPT data owners indicates that the underlying CRHP data should be accessible to the public through a general interface with no cost barrier. This would include core heritage register details, location, Statements of Significance, map view, and more. Technological processes or systems should be considered to prevent or limit automated crawling of the site beyond a reasonable threshold.

Bringing new capabilities and features to the CRHP does risk diluting what the original Register was meant to be; a straightforward and easy to use reference tool. It also adds inherent cost and can complicate maintenance. There was notable concern that renewing the CRHP would dilute from its intended purpose and that feature bloat would make this cost prohibitive.

To ensure that Phase 2 is financially viable, consideration is given to potential revenue models for access to specific capabilities. For example, professional groups such as architects, heritage consultants, property developers, or other groups could have a private area that includes additional capabilities: BIM, VR, 3D, videos, other file types, larger usage thresholds, etc. These features would be contingent on a funding model that supports feature development and ongoing maintenance. It is unlikely that this kind of enhanced-access revenue would create an upfront source of funds to begin Phase 2 development.

The recommendations in Phase 1 should be completed urgently. Phase 2a options can be assessed based on funding availability and a defined governance structure being in place. Phase 2b expansion can be explored after a few years or if the financial position allows for further development and features.

⁵ <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/our-data/where/open-data>

⁶ While most FPT partners have this data in their own systems, many of them do not have the data publicly accessible, nor in a manner that is available for automated processing.

4.5 Phase 1: Retention for the Data (Time frame : 6-18 months)

As a research and reference tool, the existing CRHP is invaluable to an active user base across the country. As outlined in previous sections, a wide user base relies on historicplaces.ca as a regular resource. Some provincial authorities do not have their own Register, so the CRHP is their sole technological reference for official records on historic places.

Retaining the existing data in a manner that is accessible to these groups is imperative. Parks Canada has stated they will retain the existing site and register until a suitable successor is in place or the existing system fails. Unfortunately, this presents its own inherent risk. The current technology behind the system is no longer supported which presents logistical, technological, cyber-security, and other risks. Further, since the system was already slated for decommissioning with little notice, their promise is not reassuring.

It is recommended that the existing Register be preserved for continued access to the records, the *Standards and Guidelines*, other reference material, and search capabilities. The options listed below are the primary choices for a minimal replacement on current technology and each present their own opportunities and risks. The best case would be to aim for a non-static record that can be maintained and updated through an administrative interface.

In addition to the preservation of the CRHP, some consideration should be taken to retain the website and its resources. Parks Canada has stated that they will move the *Standards and Guidelines* to their website along with a new Register of federally designated places. They are also likely to move the additional resources on the preservation of historic buildings in Canada. The remaining content pages on historicplaces.ca may not be included. The archived webpage content is not as critical as access to the CRHP data.

4.5.1 Option 1: Rebuild a Simple Register Using Official Data

Preserving the CRHP in a manner most accessible to users would inform that it should ideally replicate the primary capabilities: easy access, functional search, useful map interface, mobile-friendly, with the ability to update records. As such, it makes sense that it should be rebuilt as a database driven web application or a static system.

A static system would provide data in a read-only manner, meaning that updates and changes to the data cannot be made without software developer involvement. It is feasible to extend this by adding an administrative interface and improve the search process. Adding an admin interface and role-based access control (RBAC) would ensure that only authorized individuals are able to modify records pertaining to their jurisdictions.

Many software or IT service providers work with a web-based platform that they can readily extend to add new modules and already include RBAC and administrative interfaces. It is not a big task to import an existing data structure, add an admin interface, and present a functional search with a map interface. The cloned sites (see discussion below) already provide a much-improved public interface and using that to load data from a database is a minimal change. This is a viable option with a short implementation timeline, relatively low cost, and feasible administrative panel.

The main limitation of this option is that it does not provide full authoritative backing or governance to support it. Further, it is a minimal replacement for a failing system and does not provide opportunity to extend, expand, or improve the feature set into new capabilities.

4.5.2 Option 2: Scraped / Cloned Register and new Website

Some individuals have already scraped or extracted the CRHP data and set up replicated versions in a modern interface. In theory one of these could be adopted as a renewed register or the provision of a register could be entirely ceded to the open market. Some examples of cloned/scraped sites are:

- <https://heritageguide.ca>
- <https://shawngraham.github.io/historicplaces>
- <https://builthalifax.ca/HistoricPlaces>
- <https://historicplaces2.ca>

These sites are examples of citizen concern and engagement. Faced with potential loss of the CRHP, this demonstrates that there is will, means, and capability to quickly set up a replacement. This is not a technology problem. Creating replacement sites with similar or improved functionality can be done quickly. One of the above sites was set up within 24 hours of a CBC News article⁷ being published, highlighting that this can be done rapidly.

These sites already provide improved interfaces that are mobile responsive, have improved map searching, and do not result in regular system errors.

While this is technologically reasonable, this does not consider authoritativeness, governance, oversight, ownership, data sovereignty, or ensuring records are maintained and updated. To the best of our knowledge, the data owners were not consulted for any of these projects.

It has been reported that at least some of these cloned sites do not contain accurate data even from the original source. Images from one of the clones are hosted outside of Canada. It is unlikely that these records can be updated or informed by the appropriate jurisdiction.

The will is there. It is not a technical challenge. It is feasible and can fill a gap. However, this does not address the root of the issue. Can the CRHP continue in a manner that guarantees long-term success, accuracy, and authoritativeness? While challenging to answer in any circumstance, having a clearly defined governance structure is important.

The main limitations of this approach are the lack of authority and absence of governance. While feasible to set up a process, determine website structure and navigation, and harvest content, this should not be relied on as a long term strategy. Websites may change and the lack of consistent navigation between records presents limitations in the ability to use this consistently.

4.5.3 Option 3: Parks Canada to Retain Existing System During Transitional Period

Parks Canada has stated they will retain the existing website and CRHP database as needed while a replacement is developed. This is not intended to be a long-term solution. This alleviates the most immediate concern but does not improve its broken search capabilities.

The current hardware and software are beyond support periods and have been for many years. Security issues, software, and/or hardware failure cannot be ruled out. Software security updates have almost certainly not been conducted for an extended period.

On its own, having Parks Canada retain the current site or archive it is a stop-gap measure that does not alleviate this problem. The site as it stands cannot be relied upon in the medium term and a replacement outside of Parks Canada is urgently needed.

⁷ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/parks-canada-historic-places-shutting-down-9.7058161>

4.5.4 Option 4: Parks Canada Exports Data – Hand Off to FPT Partners

Parks Canada has also exported the existing data to ensure it remains available. The data is owned by the FPT contributors and will be (or has been) returned to them in CSV or Excel files. This puts the onus on the partners to house, maintain, oversee and make accessible the data for their own respective records.

Some provinces have stepped into this role while others continue to rely on the existing CRHP and historicplaces.ca as their sole on-line heritage resource. The provincial and territorial registers vary in terms of completeness and, unlike the Canadian Register, none provides a comprehensive listing of all designated heritage places in their jurisdiction (ie including federally-designated places). Some exclude municipal designations.

In discussions with provincial representatives, we heard that while they depend on their own registers as the source of information for their own designations, they used the Canadian Register to find more comprehensive information, comparative examples from other jurisdictions, or to look at Canada-wide phenomena. If only individual FPT registers existed, without a Canadian register, it could require up to 14 parallel searches to find the same results. It was also reported that Google searches regularly reports results from the Canadian Register before listings in provincial registers are found.

Some of these systems are operated by independent groups such as Heritage New Brunswick and Manitoba Historical Society while others are operated by a branch of the FPT government directly. While some of these are newer and are at least somewhat mobile-friendly, the majority of these registers are challenging to operate on mobile device and have not kept pace with current technology best practices.

Has their own on-line Register	Platform Used	Does not have their own on-line Register
Alberta	HeRMIS - custom system https://hermis.alberta.ca/ARHP/	Northwest Territories
British Columbia	Arches https://apps.nrs.gov.bc.ca/bcrhp/	Nova Scotia
Manitoba	Limited provincial system https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/prov/	Nunavut
New Brunswick	Provincial equivalent of current CRHP https://www.rhp-rlp.gnb.ca/	
Newfoundland and Labrador	https://heritagenl.ca/discover/heritage-property-search/	
Ontario	OHA Register – custom system https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/oha/oha-register	
Prince Edward Island	https://www.gov.pe.ca/hpo/app.php	
Saskatchewan	ArcGIS https://gis.saskatchewan.ca/portal/apps/dashboards/0e7ef3fbfba5451d-b4a952e3808cba83	
Quebec	Custom system – Arches in progress https://www.patrimoine-culturel.gouv.qc.ca/rpcq/accueil.do?meth-	

Has their own on-line Register	Platform Used	Does not have their own on-line Register
	ode=afficher	
Yukon Territory	https://register.yukonhistoricplaces.ca/Contact	
Federal – Directory of Federal Heritage Designations	Arches (about to launch) https://parks.canada.ca/culture/dfhd	

4.5.5 Use Online Search, or AI search

Would an online search be feasible to maintain functional access to the CRHP? Unfortunately, without a publicly accessible repository of data the search would not turn up any records as there is no online system to search. While some provinces and territories have their own heritage registers, having the ability to search across jurisdictions would not be consistent. Relying on Google to find historic places in Canada that were designed by Arthur Erickson would invariably turn up many irrelevant search results and may not provide reliable access to Statements of Significance.

It may be feasible for provincial and territorial partners to develop APIs to make their data available, however, this is limited by their own systems which may not be easily modified to support this. Providing an API to expose the data does not ensure an online or AI search will consistently or reliably present these records to users.

Similarly, relying on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to find historic place records would not necessarily produce reliable results. AI systems are known to produce hallucinations. They assert knowledge when they may have inferred or interpolated different pieces of information and the resulting output can be factually incorrect. While this may appear genuine, hallucinations are a known limitation of current artificial intelligence systems.

Both standard online search or AI search would be limited by the lack of a clear consistent source for the original data and a clear means of filtering these results. The capabilities and the AI landscape will change, but without consistent data to search, this cannot be considered a viable replacement for the CRHP.

4.5.6 CRHP Preservation Options Comparison

The options and features below list the possible state if this were under the control / ownership of a proposed governance structure, or at minimum, the National Trust of Canada while a governance structure is in process of being established.

Criterion	Option 1 Rebuild Basic Functional	Option 2 Clone CRHP	Option 3 Retain at Parks Canada	Option 4 Export and return to FPT
Retain CRHP data	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁸	Case-by-case at FPT level
Improve map search	Yes	Yes	No	Case-by-case at FPT level
Address broken search	Yes	Yes	No	Case-by-case at FPT level

⁸ It will retain the data but is subject to system stability, which is unsupported and at best a short-term option.

Criterion	Option 1 Rebuild Basic Functional	Option 2 Clone CRHP	Option 3 Retain at Parks Canada	Option 4 Export and re-turn to FPT
Ensure data sovereignty	Yes	Yes	Yes	Case-by-case at FPT level
Mobile-friendly	Yes	Yes	No	Case-by-case at FPT level
Provide open-data access	Yes	No	No	Case-by-case at FPT level
Authoritative	Partial	Partial	Yes	Yes
Governance	Partial	No	Yes	Yes
Stable	Partial	Partial	Partial	Yes
Cost	~\$15,000	~\$5,000	Internal (Parks Canada)	Internal (FPT)
Basic Search	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Advanced Search	Yes	No	No	No
Map Search	Yes	Yes	No	No
Multi-language	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Hosting Costs	\$100-\$150/month	\$80-\$100/month	n/a	n/a
Vendor retainer	\$200-\$500	\$200-\$300	n/a	n/a
Meets Desired Criteria	Yes	No	No	No
Can be extended into Phase 2	Yes	Yes	No	No

With an official export of the data from Parks Canada, agreement or attribution to the github author, permission from the FPT partners, and a clear mandate to do so, the top recommendations can be implemented by an authorized IT or software service provider in a short timeline with minimal cost.

4.5.7 Recommendation for Immediate Preservation

If funding, governance, and alignment challenges exist and do not satisfy an environment to move to a renewal phase, two primary options are recommended for immediate preservation of the CRHP, informing key recommendation #1. For either option to be authoritative, it is recommended to facilitate agreement to use exported data from Parks Canada and the respective PT bodies.

Recommended Choice: Option 1 – Rebuild a basic register using official data

Option 1 is the most appealing initial choice for CRHP preservation if initial funding is sufficient. Working from the cloned CRHP sites a database and administrative interface could be developed. An administrative interface would allow FPT partners to maintain their own records in

a minimum viable product (MVP)⁹ and provide access to the records in a more modern user interface.

This option may reasonably be completed for around \$15,000 in 2-4 weeks.

Note: See *Section 4.7.4* below for a more comprehensive and future-ready option.

Strength: This provides a fully-functional replacement for the CRHP at a low cost.

Risk: Without added investment this does not add any new capabilities.

This option requires ongoing hosting costs to maintain the system. A reasonable system with moderate resource capacity can be achieved through three recommended choices that maintain data sovereignty.

- Host with FullHost, ThinkOn, or similar Canadian owned and operated cloud hosting provider
- Host with a provincial or federal government data warehouse
- Host internally on a server managed by an IT provider, or by the National Trust for Canada

Hosting with a government data warehouse is contingent on agreement and support from the government to do so. Hosting costs with Canadian cloud providers can be sourced for \$100-\$150/month. This includes security, troubleshooting, and reliable system maintenance. A reasonable software vendor retainer contract can add \$200-\$500/month to this, so an expected monthly cost of \$300-\$650 is foreseeable. The total cost would be \$15,000 to build + \$3600-\$7800 per year.

4.6 Website Replacement and Build Costs

While the options above inform the immediate priority for the CRHP, they do not consider the website. Historicplaces.ca contains a considerable number of content pages that may be archived by Library and Archives Canada (LAC), though they have encountered issues with fully archiving the register data¹⁰.

It is not clear how much of the website content is worth being retained, though there are assuredly means to do so. Our research has indicated it is reasonable and feasible to scrape the entire content of the website using specific tools and technology.

Parks Canada may make page content available to the organization that takes on the CRHP. They may also archive the page content on their own site, or they may sunset the existing pages entirely. If LAC is unable to archive the site content as it stands, IT service providers can assist with this process.

Replacement of the existing website is an important part of this project, though may not be as high a priority when strictly considering preservation of the CRHP. As the existing content belongs to Parks Canada and the replacement will not be under their purview, current content may not be relevant moving forward.

The Arches platform – discussed below - does support basic web pages but is not a strong solution for regular content pages, news items, and multiple types of content.

⁹ <https://www.productplan.com/glossary/minimum-viable-product> - A minimum viable product, or MVP, is a product with enough features to attract early-adopter customers and validate a product idea early in the product development cycle.

¹⁰ Personal communication with LAC - March 24, 2026

If a full-featured website is required to support the new CRHP, some estimated costs are included here. Initially a small website with limited content pages and added features would be appropriate. Mid-tier and full-service options are included to understand how website costs increase as capabilities are added.

WordPress is the most low-investment platform recommended for a replacement website to house or integrate with a replacement CRHP. WordPress can be hosted on an internal self-hosted system or can be hosted with Canadian companies that offer full Canadian data-sovereignty.

4.6.1 Website Tier Overview

Tier	Who Builds It	Typical Scope	Cost Range (CAD)
Freelancer / small studio	Solo developer or 2-person studio; premium theme customized to brand	5–15 pages, basic bilingual, standard donation form	\$5,000 – \$15,000
Mid-tier Ontario agency	Dedicated design + dev team; UX design, AODA compliance, structured library	Full bilingual, reference library, donation + membership, register integration stub	\$15,000 – \$35,000
Full-service Toronto / Ottawa agency	Strategy, design, development, CRM integration, content migration, accessibility audit	CRM, member portal, advanced donation tooling, API integrations, multilingual editorial workflow	\$35,000 – \$75,000

4.6.2 One-Time Build Cost – Recommended Mid-tier Scope Itemized

Scope Item	Notes	Low	High
Custom theme and brand design	Not a stock theme — establishes credibility for a national heritage trust	\$5,000	\$10,000
Bilingual EN/FR (WPML or Polylang Pro)	Full content parity, translated navigation, per-language SEO	\$3,000	\$7,000
Reference library	Searchable PDFs and documents categorized by type; SearchWP or equivalent	\$2,000	\$4,000
Donation processing	GiveWP + Stripe Canada; CRA tax receipt generation	\$2,500	\$5,000
AODA / WCAG 2.1 AA compliance	Ontario legal requirement; audit and remediation; cheaper built-in than retrofitted	\$2,000	\$4,000
Register integration stub	Embedded map widget or iframe linking to Arches / AGOL / CDT on subdomain	\$1,500	\$3,000
Content migration and page build	Existing content structured into new CMS; 30–60 pages typical	\$3,000	\$6,000
Staff training and documentation	Heritage staff (non-technical) managing content day to day	\$1,000	\$2,000
One-time build total		\$20,000	\$41,000

4.6.3 Annual Ongoing Costs After Launch

Item	Notes	Low / yr	High / yr
Managed WordPress hosting	Canadian data centre; Kinsta, WP Engine, or Canadian managed host	\$600	\$1,800
Plugin licences	WPML or Polylang Pro (~\$99–\$199), SearchWP, GiveWP Pro annual renewals	\$200	\$500
Developer retainer	Security patches, WordPress core updates, minor enhancements, bug fixes	\$1,500	\$4,000
Domain renewal	.ca domain; annual renewal	\$15	\$50
SSL certificate	Included in most managed hosting plans; standalone ~\$0–\$100/yr	\$0	\$100
Annual recurring total		\$2,315	\$6,450

Recommendation: If an option beyond strictly preservation of the CRHP is considered, it is recommended to develop a mid-tier website to pair with the CRHP whether through direct integration, or indirect links such as a sub-domain. An initial website in the \$20,000 plus ongoing recurring costs of around \$4,400/year.

4.7 Phase 2: Renew or Update CRHP

As a subsequent phase in this project contingent on ongoing funding and governance, recommendations are given for re-imagining the CRHP to explore enhanced capabilities and features as the technology is modernized. Updating the hardware, software, integrations, and adding new features can provide exciting new educational and tourism opportunities. The sections below primarily inform key recommendation #6.

It is noted that adding new features and capabilities does add cost to a project. The current funding situation is tenuous, as discussed in other sections of this report. Feature enhancements and a robust reinvention of the CRHP is contingent on securing funding, will, and support behind the project for its initial development and continued maintenance over subsequent years.

There are several capabilities that can be explored with current technology. Some feasible platform options are considered below. Some requested features are not practical, while others may be contingent on continued financial support.

4.7.1 Feature Request List

The following is a feature request list resulting from stakeholder engagements and survey responses, grouped into immediate requirements as *Tier 1* with renewal phase options in *Tier 2*.

Tier 1

- List-style ability to view/access records
- General information about historical significance
- Basic Search

- Advanced Search
- Map Display / Search
- Data Sovereignty
- Link by style, architect, era, character-defining elements, thematic framework, etc.
- Images
- Specific information about architectural or physical value (heritage value and character-defining elements)
- Update from FPT or other online registries with minimal touch

Tier 2

- Additional file type support
- Indigenous cultural significance
- Indigenous language support
- Indigenous / oral history
- Enhanced educational components
- API read access (Open Data)
- Integrate data from FPT partners via API or automated process
- Integrate data from Municipal partners if interested and data is available
- Overlay different data layers
- Geospatial mapping and geographic data
- 3D or VR visualization
- Conservation status (endangered, lost)
- Community significance
- Photos and visual documentation
- Links to related sites or resources
- User generated contributions of stories or photos

The following primary choices are considered for the renewed register:

- ArcGIS Enterprise¹¹
- ArcGIS Online¹²
- Arches¹³
- CIMS Digital Twins¹⁴

Other options were included in initial research but were ruled out for different reasons or were used to establish a wider understanding of the heritage management platforms. See Appendix B for more information.

- HBSMR / Idox Geospatial — UK-centric with no North American provider or support

¹¹ <https://enterprise.arcgis.com>

¹² <https://www.arcgis.com>

¹³ <https://www.archesproject.org>

¹⁴ https://cims.carleton.ca/project/Digital_Twin_Prototype

- Proprietary or custom systems — vendor lock-in, maintenance/continuity risks, up-front cost
- Open civic platforms — Open data access layer, not register platform

A low-cost and minimal implementation and maintenance situation is favoured. Further, the limited funding availability from most of the FPT table does not provide ample budget for large-scale renewal early in this project. This leads to the most simplistic means of implementing an interim site and register, with funding considerations to determine the longer-term renewal.

4.7.2 API or Automated Interoperability

For a renewed CRHP to be most useful it should connect to existing FPT sources using an API or automated process for loading data into its own platform. To achieve this, each province or territory must have a viable endpoint from which to load data. This can be a full-featured API or as simple as an exported CSV (Comma Separated Value) file that the CRHP can access on a scheduled basis.

The CRHP should include a process to ingest each of these data sources and process their data into the local structure to store in its database. The CRHP system can access the endpoints monthly, bi-monthly, twice annually, or similar schedule. When the scheduled task runs, each source is loaded and processed, so new entries are added, and removed entries can be deleted or removed.

Effectively, both the CRHP and each partner would have an automated process that does not require manual intervention.

4.7.3 Esri ArcGIS (Enterprise and Online) – The Dominant Proprietary Platform

Architecture and Capabilities

Esri's ArcGIS is the dominant commercial GIS platform in government heritage management globally. It exists in two primary deployment modes relevant to heritage registers.

- **ArcGIS Enterprise (self-hosted):** A complete GIS platform installed on client-controlled servers or private cloud. Includes the ArcGIS Server (web services), Portal for ArcGIS (web mapping and app framework), ArcGIS Data Store, and optionally ArcGIS Web Adaptor. Requires Windows or Linux servers, SQL Server, or PostgreSQL as the database engine.
- **ArcGIS Online (SaaS, cloud-hosted):** Esri's cloud platform hosted on Esri servers (AWS infrastructure in Canada-Central or US-East regions). No server management required; ideal for smaller organizations or those without dedicated IT infrastructure.

Heritage-specific applications built on ArcGIS include:

- **ArcGIS Survey123:** Used for mobile field data collection (condition surveys, rapid documentation).
- **ArcGIS Web AppBuilder / Experience Builder:** Used to build public-facing heritage map portals (Historic England, NSW HeritageMaps, Texas Atlas).
- **ArcGIS StoryMaps:** Used for heritage interpretation and public engagement narratives.
- **ArcGIS Hub:** Esri's open data portal platform, used by Historic England for their open data downloads.

- **ArcGIS Pro:** Desktop GIS for editing, analysis, and data management; the primary tool for GIS staff at heritage agencies.

ArcGIS Deployment Examples

- **Historic England¹⁵:** Esri's most prominent heritage customer globally. Their full ArcGIS stack includes ArcGIS Enterprise, ArcGIS Pro, ArcGIS Web AppBuilder, ArcGIS Hub, and ArcGIS Online for lightweight project apps and StoryMaps for public engagement. The organization also pilots a comprehensive data management platform for UK Historic Environment Records (HERs) in the Arches for HERs¹⁶ configuration at the Greater London HER level, showing pragmatic willingness to use the best tool for each layer of the system.
- **NSW Heritage Maps (Australia)¹⁷:** An ArcGIS Enterprise deployment by the NSW Heritage Office that integrates the NSW State Heritage Register, Heritage Inventory, Heritage Overlay zones, and contextual cadastral data. Built on ArcGIS Server with the public portal delivered through ArcGIS Web AppBuilder.
- **Texas Historical Commission — Historic Sites Atlas¹⁸:** One of the most user-friendly state heritage portals in the US, built on ArcGIS Online. It demonstrates that the ArcGIS Online SaaS model can deliver highly functional, mobile-accessible heritage portals without requiring the organization to manage server infrastructure.

Esri Assessment

Esri Enterprise products would be reasonable if deployed into an environment with significant Esri product expertise. While this experience exists within Parks Canada and most government entities, it is not likely that an outside organization would contain the experience in-house. As such, Esri Canada recommended ArcGIS Online and strongly discouraged ArcGIS Enterprise. ArcGIS Online allows for significantly reduced licensing costs, particularly if non-profit rates are available.

ArcGIS Online does not satisfy data sovereignty concerns. Esri Canada is a subsidiary of Esri which is based in the USA and would be subject to US CLOUD Act compliance. Esri pricing is negotiated and not publicly listed in full, but the following are representative estimates in Canadian dollars for ArcGIS Online based on a reasonable assumption of 5–10 users.

ArcGIS Online Cost Estimates (CAD) – Standard Rate

Scenario	Creators	Hub	Credits Top-up	Annual Licence Total (CAD)
Minimum (5 users, Hub Basic only)	\$4,800	\$0	\$450	~\$5,250
Realistic (5 users + Hub Premium)	\$4,800	\$10,350	\$900	~\$16,050
Realistic (10 users + Hub Premium)	\$9,600	\$10,350	\$1,200	~\$21,150

¹⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search>

¹⁶ <https://www.archesproject.org/arches-for-hers>

¹⁷ https://www.hms.heritage.nsw.gov.au/App/Item/SearchHeritageItems?_ga=2.165972984.714120821.1658117920-344545924.1656901875

¹⁸ <https://atlas.thc.texas.gov>

Scenario	Creators	Hub	Credits Top-up	Annual Licence Total (CAD)
Maximum (10 users + Hub Premium + heavy credits)	\$11,000	\$20,700	\$1,500	~\$33,200

Non-Profit Rates at \$170 CAD/user¹⁹

Scenario	Creators	Unit Cost	Creator Total	Hub	Credits Top-up	Annual Licence Total (CAD)
Minimum (5 users, Hub Basic only)	5	\$170	\$850	\$0	\$450	~\$1,300
Minimum (10 users, Hub Basic only)	10	\$170	\$1,700	\$0	\$600	~\$2,300
Realistic (5 users + Hub Premium)	5	\$170	\$850	\$10,350	\$900	~\$12,100
Realistic (10 users + Hub Premium)	10	\$170	\$1,700	\$10,350	\$1,200	~\$13,250
Maximum (10 users + Hub Premium + heavy credits)	10	\$170	\$1,700	\$20,700	\$1,500	~\$23,900

Strengths and Risks

- **STRENGTHS:** Mature, feature-rich platform; excellent support ecosystem; wide adoption in government means large talent pool; strong mobile apps; ArcGIS Hub provides good open data capabilities; well-documented APIs.
- **RISKS:** Vendor lock-in is significant — data and workflows become tightly coupled to Esri formats and APIs; licensing costs escalate over time; Esri is a US company subject to US law; pricing is opaque and negotiated; not truly open source.
- **LOCK-IN MITIGATION:** Using open data standards (GeoJSON, WFS, OGC services) for data publication reduces some lock-in risk; ensuring data is regularly exported in open formats is essential.

4.7.4 The Arches Platform: Purpose-Built Heritage Software

Arches is a purpose-built open-source system developed for cultural heritage inventory and management. It was first released by the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and the World Monuments Fund (WMF) in 2013 and has since grown into a substantial international community project. The GCI and WMF continue to support the project financially and with direct project management and governance. The current version (8.x as of 2025) is released under the GNU Affero General Public License (AGPL)²⁰, meaning it is freely usable, modifiable, and distributable – but derivative products must also be open source under the same licence.

Arches is supported by an engaged worldwide developer community that regularly maintains and develops the platform. At over ten years old, it is a stable project, with a stable backing organization, a well-

¹⁹ Personal communication with Esri sales rep – March 6, 2026 – NFP pricing provided during technical engagement session

²⁰ <https://www.gnu.org/licenses/agpl-3.0.en.html#license-text>

defined governance structure, and numerous service providers in Canada, the USA, and internationally. Service providers are available that provide hosting in Canada for data sovereignty.

There is an endowment model in place for long-term funding of general software maintenance in addition to direct funding by the GCI to continue development in addition to regular community improvements.

Other jurisdictions in Canada have implemented Arches for their own purposes, including the BC Register of Historic Places²¹, Quebec (MCC), Parks Canada federal register, and BC Fossil Management System. Los Angeles²² and San Francisco²³ both use Arches for their cultural heritage resources. The state of California is also in the process of launching a state-wide cultural heritage implementation of Arches. Numerous other implementations of Arches are listed on the Arches project website²⁴.

For consideration as a replacement CRHP an implementation of Arches would be developed to support automated import of data from FPT sources where these are available.

Arches for HERs – specialized version for UK

Arches for HERs is a specialized version of the Arches platform, developed with Historic England's involvement, and fully released in September 2024. It is purpose-built for UK Historic Environment Records (HERs) and conforms to the MIDAS Heritage data standard and FISH controlled vocabularies.

Arches for HERs is a great example of the flexibility of the Arches project though the HERs branch is not necessary for Canada as the structure and customizations are not applicable here. The core Arches version or the customized version used by British Columbia or the federal government would be a better fit for a new CRHP.

Key characteristics of Arches:

- Free of licensing fees – unlimited users, no per-seat charges
- Comprehensive heritage information management system purpose-built for heritage conservation
- In use or being adopted for numerous heritage registers in Canada and internationally
- Hosted implementations are available through Arches service providers – some available in Canada, eliminating the need for organizations to manage their own servers

Arches Deployment Examples:

- **HistoricPlacesLA (Los Angeles):** Los Angeles's HistoricPlacesLA portal, derived from the SurveyLA field survey data (180,000+ resources), is one of the most significant Arches deployments in North America. It serves as the public access interface for heritage resource data, with resources browsable by address, neighbourhood, architect, style, and theme.
- **Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER):** Historic England implemented the GLHER on Arches for HERs, making it one of the highest-profile Arches for HERs deployments. It covers archaeological sites, historic buildings, parks and landscapes, and heritage features across Greater London.
- **Nepal DANAM²⁵:** The Digital Archive of Nepalese Arts and Monuments (DANAM) documents historical monuments and objects in the Kathmandu Valley using Arches, illustrating the plat-

²¹ <https://apps.nrs.gov.bc.ca/bcrhp>

²² <http://historicplacesla.org>

²³ <https://sfculturalheritage.org>

²⁴ <https://www.archesproject.org/implementations-of-arches>

form's international applicability beyond western heritage contexts.

Arches Cost Structure (CAD)

Estimated costs are compiled from a web search of similar implementations of Arches and should be informative but not necessarily indicative. Costs from a rough order of magnitude (ROM) quote are included in the next table. It is noted that the ROM quote is more costly than the costs in this table.

Cost Component	Estimate (CAD)	Notes
Platform licensing	\$0	AGPL – free
Initial implementation (small system, 10-14k records)	\$140,000 – \$280,000	Configuration, data migration, custom resource models, UI development
Hosting (cloud, small to medium)* (or Managed Hosting below)	\$12,000 – \$40,000/yr	2–4 VMs: web, DB, search, cache; cloud storage
Managed hosting* (Arches service provider)	\$20,000 – \$60,000/yr	Fully managed; includes updates, backups, monitoring
Annual platform updates & maintenance	\$30,000 – \$80,000/yr	Development time to stay current with Arches releases
Annual content/data stewardship	\$60,000 – \$120,000/yr	Staff time for data quality, new records, help-desk
Elasticsearch licence	\$0	Open source – free for on-premises deployment
PostgreSQL licence	\$0	Open source – free
20-yr technical TCO (mid-range)	\$8,260,000	Technical costs only; second lowest of three

* One of Hosting or Managed Hosting is required, but not both

As part of the exploratory costing on this project, a rough quote was requested from QED Systems, a service provider in British Columbia. QED is the Arches service provider for the BC Register of Historic Places and the BC Fossil Management System.

Cost Component	Estimate (CAD)
Core Arches deployment and configuration	\$120,000 – \$250,000
Initial data import (~13,500 records)	\$40,000 – \$120,000
Project management, QA, oversight	\$40,000 – \$90,000
Customization and enhancements	\$30,000 – \$250,000
Per-source data integration (API or ETL)	\$10,000 – \$40,000 per source
CI/CD pipeline development (build, test, deploy)	\$25,000 – \$60,000
GCP infrastructure setup (networking, security, environments)	\$30,000 – \$70,000
Total Initial Costs (year 1 – implementation estimated in 6-9)	\$295,000 – \$880,000

²⁵ <https://danam.cats.uni-heidelberg.de/search?paging-filter=1&tiles=true&format=tilecsv&reportlink=false&precision=6&sort-results=asc&resource-type-filter=%5B%7B%22graphid%22%3A%22f35cc1ca-9322-11e9-a5cc-0242ac120006%22%2C%22name%22%3A%22Monument%22%2C%22inverted%22%3Afalse%7D%5D>

Cost Component	Estimate (CAD)
<i>months*)</i>	
Ongoing hosting within GCP Canada / year	\$30,000 – \$250,000

* plus integration of data via API/ETL from external sources

Strengths and Risks

- **STRENGTHS:** Purpose-built for cultural heritage inventory and management; released and maintained by the Getty Conservation Institute and World Monuments Fund since 2013; AGPL open-source with zero licensing cost; active international community with multiple Canadian implementations including the BC Register of Historic Places, Quebec (MCC), and Parks Canada; CIDOC CRM alignment enables semantic interoperability with international heritage datasets; native REST API, OGC WFS/WMS, and JSON-LD endpoints.
- **RISKS:** Significant upfront implementation cost; requires skilled Django/Python developers for configuration and ongoing maintenance; implementation complexity is high relative to CIMS quoted costs.
- **LOCK-IN MITIGATION:** AGPL licence ensures the platform code is always publicly available and modifiable; data is stored in open standards (GeoJSON, JSON-LD, OGC) and fully exportable; multiple commercial service providers globally and in Canada reduce dependency on any single implementer; large international community ensures platform continuity independent of any one institution.

4.7.5 CIMS Digital Twins (CDT) – An Emerging Canadian Platform

Carleton Immersive Media Studio (CIMS) has developed a Digital Twin system as a web-based, browser-accessible platform that federates geospatial data, Building Information Models (BIM), and multimedia into a single interactive environment, built entirely on open, non-proprietary standards. The platform has been developed in partnership with the National Research Council Canada (NRC) and the Department of National Defence (DND)²⁶, and in 2025 CIMS Professor Mario Santana Quintero was appointed UNESCO Chair in Digital Twins for World Heritage Conservation. The platform won the Professional Research Award at the buildingSMART International Summit in Berlin in September 2025, competing against 129 projects internationally.

While the platform’s use-case does not necessarily align with the core purpose of the CRHP, CIMS has proposed to reproduce the core capabilities required as an extension within their platform. Long-term platform stewardship is intended to transfer to Collab Digital Twins, a not-for-profit organization currently in early establishment phase. The platform is in early release and has been demonstrated with compelling features that would readily adapt to the long-term vision for a new CRHP.

Technical Architecture

The CIMS platform is philosophically distinct from Arches. Where Arches is a heritage database management system with visualization capabilities, CIMS is a visualization and data federation environment with proposed heritage record management. Its defining strengths are its 3D/BIM integration—which significantly exceeds what Arches or ArcGIS currently provide for building-level documentation—and its open-standards design that rejects proprietary format dependency. Data from multiple provincial sources could be ingested via a scheduled pull model, requiring no re-entry by provincial staff.

²⁶ <https://building.ca/carleton-researchers-win-buildingsmart-international-award-for-digital-twin-project>

The most significant technical gap relative to Arches is the absence of CIDOC CRM alignment. Arches models heritage data according to the ISO-standardized CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model, enabling semantic richness and international interoperability. The CIMS platform is aligned to openBIM and ISO 19650 standards instead, which are appropriate for asset management but do not carry the heritage-specific semantic structure that a national register requires. This gap would need to be addressed in the design of the proposed heritage register module.

The Proposed Heritage Register Module

The \$20,000 quoted build cost covers the heritage register module built on top of existing CIMS platform infrastructure and includes: the full CRHP Excel export load (13,500 records), search and mapping functionality, bilingual interface, and a fallback ingestion model for provinces without public APIs. Scope definition and feature requests are likely to double this figure – a 2× contingency (~\$40,000 total) is recommended for planning purposes. Hosting is quoted separately at approximately \$350/month. CIMS estimates a timeline of 8-10 weeks to develop the heritage register module.

Provincial data sources are inconsistent. British Columbia (Arches REST API) and Quebec (open data GeoJSON/CSV via Données Québec, immediately available; Arches API expected 2027) support live pull connections. Several other provinces publish partial data via ArcGIS Hub or static open data files. Most jurisdictions have no public heritage API and rely on the Parks Canada CRHP as their publicly accessible dataset, with manual uploads as the near-term update mechanism.

The BC Data Catalogue²⁷ and Quebec (Répertoire du patrimoine culturel)²⁸ offer limited API access to release their data. Alberta and Quebec offer flat-file exports in standard formats but it is more common that the data are not publicly available for automated importing.

Strengths, Risks, and Canadian Context

- **Canadian-origin and governed:** unlike Arches (US-origin) or ArcGIS (US proprietary), CDT is developed at a Canadian university with active federal partnerships, making it politically and institutionally well-positioned for a national heritage register role.
- **Superior 3D/BIM visualization:** building-level documentation capabilities exceed any current heritage register platform, positioning CDT well for the longer-term direction of heritage documentation.
- **Lowest 20-year technical TCO:** at ~\$2.5M mid-range, significantly lower than Arches (~\$7.6M) or ArcGIS (~\$9.0M), driven by the low module build cost and minimal hosting overhead.
- **Module does not yet exist:** the heritage register capability is yet to be designed and built; this is a commitment to develop, not a deployable product. Estimated timeline of 8-10 weeks to build.
- **Research-grade governance:** CDT is newly established with no production platform record of accomplishment; long-term operational sustainability depends on governance and funding continuity not yet demonstrated.
- **No independent service provider ecosystem:** unlike Arches, which has multiple global service providers (including in BC), CIMS maintenance depends on direct engagement with the CIMS/CDT team.

²⁷ <https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca>

²⁸ <https://www.patrimoine-culturel.gouv.qc.ca/rpcq/redirection.do?go=about>

CDT Cost Structure (CAD)

Cost Component	Estimate (CAD)	Notes
Platform licensing	\$0 (planned open source)	Not yet released; currently proprietary to Carleton University
Heritage register module build	\$20,000 (quoted)	Includes CRHP data load, search, mapping, fall-back ingestion; 2× scope contingency (~\$40,000) recommended
Hosting (Canadian cloud)	~\$4,200/yr (~\$350/month)	Quoted rate for heritage register deployment on CIMS infrastructure
Annual content updates	\$25,000 – \$60,000/yr	Higher in near term while most provinces rely on manual uploads; reduces post-2027 as provincial APIs mature
Annual platform maintenance	\$18,000 – \$45,000/yr	Patching and development; single-source dependency on CIMS/CDT team
20-yr technical TCO (mid-range)	~\$2,476,000	Technical costs only; lowest of three evaluated

- **STRENGTHS:** Fully Canadian owned/operated; local to Ottawa; backed by a renowned university; opportunities for novel features (BIM, 3D, educational, revenue generating); highly responsive and nimble team excited for the project; open-source platform; Carleton University Researcher is also UNESCO chair in Digital Twins for World Heritage Conservation²⁹.
- **RISKS:** Single source vendor; young unproven platform at scale; not heritage domain-specific; does not include a website; small team (3 key personnel); unknown governance framework and funding model for Collab Digital Twins nonprofit.
- **LOCK-IN MITIGATION:** Data is owned by FPT partners — not CIMS; open-source platform so anyone can modify; standardized data formats facilitate export options.

4.8 Background Information & Technology Landscape for Heritage

The following sub-sections detail the landscape of systems and technology environments utilized worldwide or comparable initiatives in other countries.

4.8.1 HBSMR / Idox Geospatial: The UK Proprietary Heritage Database Standard

HBSMR (Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record system) is the dominant heritage database product in the United Kingdom, used by over 75 Historic Environment Records (HERs) across England, Scotland, Wales, and internationally. It is proprietary, closed-source, and very UK-centric. As such, in depth analysis here is not included as it is not appropriate for a Canadian Register.

4.8.2 Open Civic Data Infrastructure for Heritage

Many of the most effective heritage information systems do not just serve a proprietary database to the public — they publish their data as open, machine-readable datasets through open data infrastructure.

²⁹ <https://carleton.ca/news/story/unesco-chair-digital-twins-heritage/>

This open data layer is often built on different technology from the heritage database itself, acting as a publication and distribution layer. Open data is a strong recommendation for the new Register and is available in one form or another in the platforms considered.

Open Data does not mean that all data is freely available but rather provides a means to enable automated or computer to computer communication for reading the data in the register. API communication can be configured to allow full access, or as with Role-Based Access Control, can also be restricted to a subset of data fields, records, or usage thresholds.

At a minimum, best practices for using public data inform that the core data of the Register be available for general use.

Several open data platforms and technologies provide means of publishing Register data through automated and API access. The options below are all open source or built entirely on open-source packages:

- CKAN Open Data Portal: data catalogue used by governments, strong support
- GeoServer + PostGIS: geospatial data support, used in Arches, supports open mapping libraries
- France's POP Platform: sophisticated, powerful heritage data platform, not ideal for editing

4.8.3 Notable Bespoke and Hybrid Systems

Custom and hybrid systems can be considered but bring higher risk than working with a known entity such as ArcGIS, Arches, or CIMS Digital Twins. These are included for reference but would bring the added risk of requiring direct knowledge of the platform and technology. This was a notable factor in the existing CRHP.

- **New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission³⁰**: NYC LPC's digital infrastructure is a mix of internal custom development and commercial platforms. NYC LPC's open data publication via Socrata is particularly notable. The Socrata platform is widely used by US cities and provides excellent API documentation, regular data updates, and developer-friendly access.
- **Texas Historical Commission — Historic Sites Atlas**: Demonstrates what is achievable with the ArcGIS Online SaaS model. The Atlas covers over 16,000 historical markers, NRHP-listed properties, state antiquities landmarks, and archaeological sites in a single, mobile-accessible interface.
- **Scotland's Canmore — RCAHMS/HES**: Historic Environment Scotland's Canmore database is one of the most comprehensive national heritage inventories in the world, with over 320,000 records. HES is a case study in the challenges of maintaining legacy bespoke systems.

4.8.4 Tourism app – Driftscape³¹

Driftscape was mentioned as a consideration for this project. Driftscape is a software as a service (SaaS) with an app aimed at promoting tourism opportunities, primarily for local and community discovery. Data entered into the platform is owned or partially owned by the platform and is not accessible via API. Driftscape is not a suitable platform for a nation-wide heritage register but could be considered as a presentation or public engagement tool. The Ontario Heritage Trust has explored the use of Driftscape to bring stories from partner organizations to the public but is not a register in itself.³²

³⁰ <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/fa1bcaad31374a88839da3f0166e640a/>

³¹ <https://www.driftscape.com>

³² <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/heritagematters/articles/driftscape-a-critical-exploration>

4.9 Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Heritage Documentation

4.9.1 The Current State of AI in Heritage

Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications in heritage documentation have grown rapidly since 2020, moving from research curiosity to practical implementation. However, the field is at an early-to-intermediate maturity level: many applications are experimental or in limited pilot deployment, and few have been integrated into production heritage register systems at scale. The gap between academic research and operational deployment remains substantial but is narrowing.

While it is feasible to use AI for aspects of a Register, currently it is not reasonable to replace the entire system using AI. Some applications are listed below.

4.9.2 Applications in Active Use or Advanced Development

- **Image Recognition and Classification:** Computer vision models can classify building architectural styles, building types, and recognize heritage features from photographs. Some models have achieved over 96% accuracy on heritage building recognition tasks (ResNet³³, VGG16³⁴, hybrid architectures, ArcGIS Pro's machine learning tools, HistoNet³⁵ — a hybrid CNN-Transformer model published in 2025).
- **Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR):** HTR tools, such as the Transkribus³⁶ platform, are being widely adopted for digitizing and transcribing historical handwritten documents. This can aid in processing historical documents but is not directly applicable as a heritage register.
- **Natural Language Processing (NLP) for Heritage Data:** NLP techniques are increasingly applicable to heritage record management including identifying people, places, dates, themes across large collections of records, semantic search, auto-tagging, and Statement of Significance assistance.
- **3D Documentation and Digital Twins:** AI-assisted 3D documentation is transforming heritage recording. Photogrammetry + ML: Automated point cloud segmentation using deep learning can classify surfaces, structural elements, and damage types in 3D models. HBIM: AI-assisted workflows reduce manual effort to convert laser scan point clouds into structured 3D building information models.

4.9.3 AI Integration in Heritage Register Software

There are current, planned, or prototype implementations for using AI in existing platforms for heritage registers and systems. The table below itemizes some of these scenarios.

Platform	Current AI Capabilities	Planned / Emerging
Arches (open source)	Elasticsearch semantic search; supports ML model integration via API	LLM-powered record assistance; image tagging planned in roadmap
ArcGIS (Esri)	ArcGIS Image Analyst (aerial photo classification); ArcGIS Pro ML tools; ArcGIS Insights	Microsoft Copilot integration; AI-generated map narratives

³³ <https://viso.ai/deep-learning/resnet-residual-neural-network>

³⁴ <https://viso.ai/deep-learning/vgg-very-deep-convolutional-networks>

³⁵ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0169260722003066>

³⁶ <https://www.transkribus.org/>

Platform	Current AI Capabilities	Planned / Emerging
HBSMR (Idox)	Limited — basic text search; GIS analysis via ArcGIS	Proximity analysis tool launched 2025; limited AI roadmap
Socrata / Tyler	Built-in anomaly detection for data quality	AI-powered data quality flagging
Custom platforms	Depends entirely on development investment	Integration of open-source LLMs (Llama, Mistral) feasible

4.9.4 Key Cautions for AI in Heritage Data Management

AI tools are powerful but introduce risks in heritage contexts:

- **(1) Hallucination risk:** LLMs can generate plausible but inaccurate historical assertions, which is particularly damaging in authoritative registers. All AI-assisted content must be human-reviewed.
- **(2) Bias:** Training data reflects historical documentation patterns that often under-represent certain communities, building types, or regions.
- **(3) Sensitivity:** Archaeological site location data must never be processed by third-party AI services.
- **(4) Data sovereignty:** Sending heritage data to cloud AI APIs (OpenAI, Anthropic, Google) may raise data residency concerns.

4.10 Mobile App vs Website or Web Application for a Heritage Register

Since smartphones have become almost ubiquitous, mobile apps are an excellent means of disseminating information or tools. It is feasible to develop a mobile app as a part of a renewed CRHP but this should not be the primary choice, nor could it stand alone to replace the CRHP.

A mobile app requires a connection to a central data source where records can be updated by authorized users. The app would access the data via API according to each individual user's searches. As such, this does not eliminate the need for a central platform to hold and maintain the data.

Further, mobile apps must be developed to target each platform (iOS, Android) and deploy them to their respective app stores. Development environments exist that allow developers to create a single code-base but to build packages targeted for their respective iOS or Android platform. Each of the apps must then be kept in line with platform requirements and updated within their app stores to address deficiencies, software issues, or version requirements.

While not a feasible replacement, a mobile app can be explored as an addition to a CRHP, developed independently, or as a potential commercial option (strategic partnerships, subscription) to generate revenue. An app would still require an application of some sort to access.

4.11 Canadian-Based Hosting: Infrastructure Options and Sovereignty

4.11.1 The Data Sovereignty Imperative

The Canadian federal government and provinces are increasingly focused on data sovereignty — the principle that government data, particularly data about Canadian cultural heritage, should be stored and processed under Canadian law and control. This concern has intensified following disclosures about the US CLOUD Act (2018), which allows US authorities to compel American-owned cloud providers to produce data stored anywhere in the world, regardless of the host country's laws.

For heritage registers, which may include sensitive archaeological site locations, Indigenous cultural heritage data, and government administrative records, data sovereignty is not merely a technical preference — it may be a legal and ethical obligation.

4.11.2 Hosting Options for Canadian Government Heritage Registers

Option	Provider Examples	Sovereignty Level	Annual Cost Est. (CAD)*	Key Considerations
US hyperscaler (Canadian region)	AWS Canada Central, Azure Canada Central, Google Cloud Montreal	Medium — US CLOUD Act applies	\$20,000 – \$120,000/yr	Technically in Canada; legally exposed to US subpoena
Canadian-owned cloud (Claro recommends)	ThinkOn, Aptum, ICCM, FullHost	High — Canadian law applies	\$30,000 – \$150,000/yr	Smaller scale; growing capacity; fewer AI/ML services
Provincial government cloud	BC Gov Cloud, Ontario Government Cloud, SSC (federal)	Highest – government-controlled	\$15,000 – \$80,000/yr	Best for provincial systems; limited capacity; bureaucratic procurement
Shared Services Canada (SSC) federal cloud	SSC Cloud Brokering Service	Highest (federal)	Variable – negotiated	Required for federal systems; uses approved cloud vendors
Co-location (private rack)	Cologix, Rogers, Shaw data centres	High – organization-controlled	\$30,000 – \$90,000/yr	Capital investment in hardware; operational complexity
Hybrid (Canadian primary, US DR)	AWS + ThinkOn	Medium-High	\$40,000 – \$130,000/yr	Data at rest in Canada; disaster recovery flexibility

* Cost estimates vary widely depending on capabilities expected, data volumes, size and quantity of images, network speed, and more.

4.11.3 Recommended Hosting Architecture for a Canadian Heritage Register

For CRHP, the recommended architecture balances sovereignty, cost, availability, and scalability:

- **Primary hosting:** Canadian-owned or provincial government cloud infrastructure for primary application and database servers. ThinkOn is currently the only Canadian-owned cloud provider

on the federal government’s approved vendor list. FullHost is competitive and is also wholly Canadian owned and operated.

- **Content delivery:** Canadian CDN (BunnyCDN has Canadian Points of Presence (PoPs);³⁷ Cloudflare has Canadian PoPs but is a US company) for static assets and public map tiles.
- **AI/ML services:** If using cloud AI APIs, select providers with explicit Canadian data processing guarantees, or self-host open-source models (Llama 3.x, Mistral) on Canadian infrastructure.
- **Backup and Disaster Recovery:** Geo-redundant backup within Canada (e.g., two Canadian data centres in different provinces).

4.12 20-Year Planning Framework and Cost Estimates

4.12.1 Scope Assumptions

The following cost estimates are for a notional CRHP, defined by:

- 15,000–50,000 heritage place records
- 5–20 internal staff editors; up to 200 vetted professional contributors; unlimited public viewers
- Text descriptions, Statements of Significance (PDFs and structured text), photographs, GIS geometry, address linkage
- English and French (bilingual compliance where applicable)
- Mobile-responsive public portal
- Downloadable datasets + REST API
- Provincial land title / parcel data; planning permit system

Three scenarios are costed: Scenario A (Arches — open-source stack, PostGIS/Elasticsearch), Scenario B (ArcGIS Enterprise — proprietary), and Scenario C (CIMS Digital Twins Platform). All tables reflect technical costs only; staff, FTE, and project management costs are addressed separately. Costs are in 2026 Canadian dollars and should be validated through a formal procurement process.

4.12.2 Foundation – Years 1–3 (Technical Costs Only)

Item	Scenario A: Arches (Open Source)	Scenario B: ArcGIS Enterprise	Scenario C: CIMS Digital Twins
Platform licensing	\$0	\$120,000 – \$200,000 (3 yr)	\$0 (planned open source)
Analysis & architecture	\$80,000 – \$120,000	\$80,000 – \$120,000	\$5,000 – \$10,000
Platform config / module build, search & map UI	\$200,000 – \$400,000	\$150,000 – \$300,000	\$20,000 (quoted) ¹
Data migration / federation	\$60,000 – \$150,000	\$60,000 – \$150,000	\$40,000 – \$80,000

³⁷ A Point of Presence is a geographically located replicated system to provide faster network access capabilities.

Item	Scenario A: Arches (Open Source)	Scenario B: ArcGIS Enterprise	Scenario C: CIMS Digital Twins
Bilingual (EN/FR) interface	\$40,000 – \$80,000	\$40,000 – \$80,000	Included
Integration with parcel / planning data	\$50,000 – \$100,000	\$50,000 – \$100,000	\$20,000 – \$40,000
Testing, security audit, accessibility	\$30,000 – \$60,000	\$30,000 – \$60,000	\$10,000 – \$20,000
Infrastructure setup (cloud, CDN, monitoring)	\$30,000 – \$60,000	\$30,000 – \$60,000	\$8,000 – \$15,000
TOTAL PHASE 1 (technical, 3 years)	~\$490,000 – \$970,000	~\$530,000 – \$970,000	~\$103,000 – \$165,000 (2× contingency: ~\$123,000 – \$185,000)

4.12.3 Mature Operations — Annual Costs, Years 4–10

Annual Technical Cost Item	Scenario A: Arches (per year)	Scenario B: ArcGIS (per year)	Scenario C: CDT (per year)
Platform licensing	\$0	\$80,000 – \$130,000/yr	\$0
Hosting infrastructure (Canadian cloud)	\$25,000 – \$50,000/yr	\$25,000 – \$50,000/yr	\$4,200-\$8,400/yr (quoted ~\$350/mo, est. up to 2x cost over time) ³⁸
Platform maintenance & updates	\$40,000 – \$80,000/yr	\$20,000 – \$50,000/yr	\$10,000 – \$20,000/yr ³⁹
Application development (features, improvements)	\$60,000 – \$120,000/yr	\$50,000 – \$100,000/yr	\$10,000 – \$30,000/yr
Security, monitoring, backups	\$10,000 – \$20,000/yr	\$10,000 – \$20,000/yr	\$3,000 – \$6,000/yr
Platform/software updates & security patching	\$15,000 – \$30,000/yr	\$10,000 – \$20,000/yr	\$8,000 – \$15,000/yr
Content updates — new records, corrections, schema updates	\$20,000 – \$50,000/yr	\$20,000 – \$50,000/yr	\$25,000 – \$60,000/yr
ESTIMATED ANNUAL TOTAL (technical)	~\$170,000 – \$350,000/yr	~\$220,000 – \$430,000/yr	~\$60,000 – \$135,000/yr
Phase 2 cumulative (7 years)	~\$1,190,000 – \$2,450,000	~\$1,540,000 – \$3,010,000	~\$420,000 – \$945,000

³⁸ CDT hosting costs are as quoted directly by the CIMS team, adjusted for system expansion and accounting for inflation over time.

³⁹ CDT platform maintenance depends on continued engagement with the CIMS team or CDT; a single-source dependency not present in Arches (multiple global service providers available).

4.12.4 Modernization and AI Integration – Years 11–20

Technology platforms have typical refresh cycles of 8–12 years. By years 11–15, the system will require significant reinvestment – either a full platform migration, a major version upgrade, or substantial architectural changes. AI and ML features will also require investment during this phase as the technology matures.

Technical Investment Item	Estimate (CAD) Arches	Estimate (CAD) ArcGIS	Estimate (CAD) CIMS
Platform refresh / migration (yr 10–12)	\$400,000 – \$900,000	\$400,000 – \$900,000	\$50,000 – \$150,000 ⁴⁰
AI: image tagging, semantic search	\$100,000 – \$250,000	\$100,000 – \$250,000	\$60,000 – \$120,000
AI: damage detection pipeline (field surveys)	\$80,000 – \$200,000	\$80,000 – \$200,000	\$50,000 – \$120,000
HTR integration for archival digitization	\$40,000 – \$100,000	\$40,000 – \$100,000	\$25,000 – \$50,000
3D / HBIM integration layer	\$100,000 – \$300,000	\$100,000 – \$300,000	\$60,000 – \$200,000 ⁴¹
Annual AI operations (from yr 8 onward)	\$10,000 – \$30,000/yr	\$10,000 – \$30,000/yr	\$6,000 – \$15,000/yr
Annual platform & hosting (yrs 11–20)	\$250,000 – \$500,000/yr	\$330,000 – \$630,000/yr	\$35,000 – \$70,000/yr
Platform/software updates & security patching (annual, yrs 11–20)	\$15,000 – \$30,000/yr	\$10,000 – \$20,000/yr	\$8,000 – \$15,000/yr
Content updates (annual, yrs 11–20)	\$20,000 – \$50,000/yr	\$20,000 – \$50,000/yr	\$20,000 – \$45,000/yr
Phase 3 cumulative (10 years, incl. refresh)	~\$3,880,000 – \$7,600,000	~\$4,080,000 – \$7,900,000	~\$995,000 – \$2,280,000

4.12.5 20-Year Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)

Scenario	Phase 1 (Yrs 1–3)	Phase 2 (Yrs 4–10)	Phase 3 (Yrs 11–20)	20-Year Technical TCO
A: Arches / Open Source (Low)	\$490,000	\$945,000	\$3,400,000	~\$4,835,000
A: Arches / Open Source (High)	\$970,000	\$1,890,000	\$6,500,000	~\$9,360,000
B: ArcGIS Enterprise (Low)	\$530,000	\$1,295,000	\$3,600,000	~\$5,425,000
B: ArcGIS Enterprise (High)	\$970,000	\$2,450,000	\$6,800,000	~\$10,220,000
C: CIMS Digital Twin (Low)±	\$118,000	\$189,000	\$595,000	~\$902,000
C: CIMS Digital Twin (High)±	\$195,000	\$420,000	\$1,370,000	~\$1,985,000

⁴⁰ CIMS platform refresh costs are estimated lower due to smaller custom codebase; however, if CDT governance is not fully established by year 10, migration costs could approach Arches levels.

⁴¹ 3D/HBIM integration is a particular strength of the CIMS platform and may require less custom development effort than equivalent work on Arches or ArcGIS.

Scenario	Phase 1 (Yrs 1–3)	Phase 2 (Yrs 4–10)	Phase 3 (Yrs 11–20)	20-Year Technical TCO
C: CIMS with 2× build contingency (High)±	\$215,000	\$420,000	\$1,370,000	~\$2,005,000
Website maintenance subtotal – Low	\$27,000	\$56,000	\$80,000	~\$163,000
Website maintenance subtotal – High	\$60,500	\$84,000	\$120,000	~\$264,500
Realistic mid-range: Arches	~\$700,000	~\$1,820,000	~\$5,740,000	~\$8,260,000
Realistic mid-range: ArcGIS	~\$750,000	~\$2,275,000	~\$5,990,000	~\$9,015,000
Realistic mid-range: CIMS±	~\$155,000	~\$683,000	~\$1,638,000	~\$2,476,000

± CIMS module build reflects the quoted \$20,000 CAD figure taken at face value, plus estimated surrounding technical costs. Hosting is quoted at approximately \$350/month (\$4,200/yr). CIMS TCO figures are significantly lower than Arches and ArcGIS because they assume the core Digital Twin platform infrastructure already exists and is maintained by CIMS/CDT. Cost Caveat: All estimates are order-of-magnitude planning figures, not procurement quotes. Costs should be validated through a formal Request for Information (RFI) process before budgeting.

4.13 Technology Risk, Sustainability, and Governance

4.13.1 Technology Obsolescence Risk

The CRHP's retirement in 2026 is a textbook example of what happens when technology investment is deferred too long. Heritage information systems typically have much longer operational lifespans than their technology platforms were designed for, creating a persistent tension between institutional continuity and technical currency.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Platform vendor discontinues product (proprietary)	Medium (10-yr horizon)	Very high – forced migration	Choose platforms with large user bases; maintain open data exports; read vendor roadmaps
Open-source project loses community support	Low-Medium	High – security risk; no updates	Choose well-funded projects (Getty/WMF backing for Arches); maintain internal capacity
Staff turnover erodes institutional knowledge	High	Medium-High	Documentation; knowledge transfer protocols; external support contracts
Cloud provider policy/price change	Medium	Medium	Multi-cloud or on-prem DR; avoid deep proprietary service dependencies

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Data format obsolescence	Low	Medium	Use open standards (GeoJSON, CSV, CIDOC CRM); regular export cycles
Security vulnerability in aging system	High (after year 8+)	Very high	Regular security audits; prompt patching; platform refresh before end-of-life
Funding discontinuity	High (government context)	Very high – abandonment	Embed funding in departmental base budgets; avoid project-only funding

4.13.2 The Open-Source vs. Proprietary Decision

Dimension	Open Source (Arches / CKAN / PostGIS / CDT)	Proprietary (ArcGIS / HBSMR)
Licensing cost	Free (software only)	Significant ongoing annual fee
Vendor lock-in	Low — code owned by community	High — dependent on vendor roadmap and pricing
Implementation cost	Higher (more customization needed)	Lower (more out-of-box configuration)
Feature maturity	Varies; Arches very mature for heritage	Very mature; large investment in R&D
Support availability	Community forums + commercial service providers	Formal vendor support + SLA options
Data sovereignty	Full control — no data sent to vendor	Partial — Esri Online sends data to Esri
Customizability	Unlimited — full source access	Constrained by vendor API/extension model
Talent pool	Python/Django developers (large pool)	Esri-certified specialists (smaller, more expensive)
Long-term risk	Community abandonment; fork divergence	Vendor acquisition; price escalation; discontinuation

4.13.3 Recommended Technology Governance Principles

- **Principle 1 – Open Data by Default:** Regardless of what platform manages the data, all non-sensitive heritage data must be published in open, machine-readable and standard formats under an open licence. This ensures the public value of the register is not trapped in any vendor’s format and creates a data layer that outlasts any individual platform.
- **Principle 2 – Standards-Based Data Modelling:** Adopt recognized international data standards (CIDOC CRM for semantic modelling; OGC standards for geospatial services; Dublin Core or schema.org for metadata). Standards-based data is more portable, more interoperable, and has a longer functional life than proprietary data models.
- **Principle 3 – Technology Refresh Planning from Day One:** Any new system should be designed with its eventual replacement in mind. This means open data exports built in; documented APIs; data stored in standard formats; and a technology refresh cycle (8–12 years) explicitly budgeted from the start.

- **Principle 4 – Federated Architecture:** Each jurisdiction owns its data; the national layer aggregates and publishes. This distributes cost, reduces single points of failure, and respects provincial authority.
- **Principle 5 – Dedicated Technical Stewardship:** A dedicated technical stewardship role — whether in-house or contracted — with deep familiarity with both the heritage domain and the technical platform is essential for long-term success.
- **Principle 6 – Community of Practice:** Canadian heritage jurisdictions should establish a formal community of practice around their shared technology infrastructure — regular meetings, a shared development reserve, joint procurement, and collaborative decision-making on platform evolution.

4.13.4 Organizational Requirements

Technology alone will not sustain a heritage register. The organizational and staffing recommendations are itemized in section 5 on Governance.

4.14 Technical Recommendations

4.14.1 Option 1: Renewal with substantial budget: Arches + Canadian Cloud

Develop a fully renewed CRHP using Arches platform (v8.x+) as Phase 2a. Host on Canadian-owned or provincial government cloud infrastructure. Implement the federated model: jurisdictions manage their own heritage data; Arches consolidates and acts as the central system for partners without their own digital system; Arches provides standardized CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model, enabling semantic rich searching, international interoperability, and a feature rich heritage information platform. This aligns with momentum from heritage agencies around the world and can benefit from BC and federal government Arches instances.

Rationale:

- Arches is the only purpose-built, open-source heritage information platform with active institutional backing, active version development, and a growing community of Canadian implementations — including the BCRHP, which provides a directly reusable configuration template, the federal heritage register, and a Quebec version currently in progress.
- Growing body of Canadian service providers experienced with Arches — QED Systems, Systematix (Quebec MCC) — and many worldwide
- Zero licensing costs — (AGPL) — frees budget for the data stewardship, content governance, and improvements that have historically been casualties of underfunded government heritage information systems.
- Backing by the Getty Conservation Institute, endowment fund for long-term maintenance, and an active international governance committee provide sustainability signals not present in other options.
- Canadian cloud hosting on ThinkOn, FullHost, BC Gov Cloud, or Ontario Government Cloud addresses data sovereignty requirements without sacrificing modern infrastructure capability.

4.14.2 Option 2: Renewal with moderate budget: CDT (CIMS) + Canadian Cloud

Build the new CRHP on the open-source Digital Twin platform with the CIMS team building the heritage register module; estimated build time is 8-10 weeks. Host on Canadian-owned or provincial government cloud infrastructure. Implement the federated model: jurisdictions manage their own heritage data; CDT consolidates and acts as the central system for partners without their own digital system; CDT displays and visualizes published datasets and provides option for revenue-generating features.

Rationale:

- The decommissioning of the CRHP creates an immediate gap that no fully configured, production-ready heritage register platform can close overnight. The CIMS Digital Twin platform – with its quoted \$20,000 heritage register module, \$350/month hosting, and existing federal government relationships – represents the most viable near-term option to preserve public access to the records while a more permanent solution is designed and procured.
- Substantially lower initial investment and total overall cost than Arches.
- Feature-rich capabilities of CDT platform provide opportunities for education and exciting visualization options.
- Zero licensing costs – AGPL – frees budget for the data stewardship, content governance, and improvements that have historically been casualties of underfunded government heritage information systems.
- Canadian cloud hosting on ThinkOn, FullHost, BC Gov Cloud, or Ontario Government Cloud addresses data sovereignty requirements without sacrificing modern infrastructure capability.

4.14.3 Option 3: Preservation with limited budget; Use a cloned / scraped site

As a last resort for basic preservation of the CRHP, use one of the cloned sites and scraped data to provide a quick replacement for the Parks Canada CRHP before it is shut down or fails. Depending on agreement with FPT partners, it may be feasible to obtain official data from each FPT source and integrate this into a static site with limited search capabilities. This would ideally be set up with a database and admin area with role-based access control to facilitate editing of records without need of an IT specialist.

Rationale:

- Private citizens have taken it upon themselves to create cloned versions of the CRHP to preserve the existing data. Using the code available for these clones on github would enable a very quick replacement to be implemented within days.
- This would allow for a very low budget option to achieve nearly immediate CRHP replacement.

- Cloned versions are more mobile-friendly than the current CRHP.
- Small-scale Canadian cloud hosting on ThinkOn or FullHost has low ongoing costs.

4.15 Opportunities for Future Revenue

Beyond the stabilization phase of the CRHP there are opportunities to introduce revenue streams. This can alleviate some of the pressure from fundraising and or endowments which can be vulnerable. There are a multitude of ways to implement revenue; however, these should be discussed with the CRHP Advisory Council (see Governance section 5) before implementing. The survey responses and engagement highlighted potential avenues for generating revenue. Several options are listed below. This is not exhaustive.

4.15.1 Members Area

Further survey feedback indicates a desire for richer records and visual content such as archival photos, architectural drawings, or other material. This suggests the potential to create a member's area that can be accessed with a monthly or annual subscription.

4.15.2 API Licensing

The CRHP would ideally provide open data access that would allow access to the data via API. This does not rule out a restriction to support high-volume usage of the API via a revenue model. The revenue model must not restrict general access but would be intended to ensure stability of the platform for general use while allowing high-volume usage as a paid option.

4.15.3 Records Management

For provinces that lack a register, the Trust could charge an administrative fee to add, modify and update records. This would support staffing costs by subsidizing day to day administrative tasks.

4.15.4 Strategic Partnerships & Advertising

There is potential to form strategic partnerships or sponsorship opportunities to support the operation and maintenance of the CRHP. Examples such as sponsorships to display ads on the CRHP, sponsoring new features, partnerships with realtors specializing in heritage homes, businesses that operate in heritage buildings, tourist sites or similar.

4.15.5 Mobile Apps

CRHP data can be used in a mobile app whether developed internally, or via a strategic partnership by an external agency. This can potentially include ads or sponsor logo placement or be available at a low-cost subscription model (i.e. \$15/yr).

5. Governance

Given the decision that the federal government will no longer maintain a multi-sourced CRHP, a review was carried out of best practices from programs worldwide with the intent to identify a path forward for a future state of the CRHP. This options analysis draws on a combination of primary legislative frameworks, official institutional documentation, and international governance standards to assess comparative models for heritage registries and inform recommendations for this future state of the CRHP.

5.1 Primary Legislative and Policy Frameworks

The review prioritized enabling legislation and formal governance instruments that define roles, responsibilities, and authority within each jurisdiction, including:

- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Australia)
- National Heritage Act 1983 (United Kingdom)
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (United States)
- Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014
- World Heritage Convention (UNESCO)

These sources provide the legal foundation for governance structures, including the distribution of authority, the role of advisory bodies, and mechanisms for accountability.

5.2 Institutional and Operational Sources

To understand how governance frameworks function in practice, the analysis draws on official publications, program documentation, and data governance approaches from key heritage institutions, including:

- Parks Canada
- Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water and the Australian Heritage Council
- The Monuments Historiques System (France)
- Historic England, Historic Environment Scotland, and Cadw
- United States National Park Service (National Register of Historic Places program)
- Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga
- Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands
- Directorate for Cultural Heritage (Askeladden system) (Norway)
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the World Heritage Committee

These sources inform the analysis of operational models and institutional roles, data management, access practices, and relationships between national, sub-national, and Indigenous governance structures.

5.3 Technical and Standards-Based Guidance

The analysis also incorporates technical and procedural guidance documents that define how heritage systems operate at a practical level, including:

- UNESCO Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention
- National Register Bulletins (United States)
- UK Historic Environment Record (HER) guidance
- European interoperability frameworks (e.g., INSPIRE Directive)

These materials provide insight into data standards and classification systems, nomination and evaluation processes, and access controls and information management practices.

5.4 Indigenous Governance Frameworks

The analysis supports and is informed by established Indigenous governance principles and legal frameworks, including:

- Treaty of Waitangi
- First Nations data sovereignty principles, including OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession)

These sources support the assessment of Indigenous participation models, data sovereignty and cultural authority, and governance structures that move beyond consultation toward co-decision-making.

5.5 Methodology

This analysis employs a comparative governance approach, examining leading international heritage registry models to identify structural, operational, and policy features that could inform the future of the CRHP.

5.5.1 Jurisdictional Selection

Jurisdictions were selected based on their relevance to Canada's context and their demonstrated strengths in one or more of the following areas:

- Federated governance structures (e.g., Australia, United States)
- Arm's-length or independent institutional models (e.g., United Kingdom)
- Indigenous co-governance and data sovereignty (e.g., New Zealand)
- Advanced digital infrastructure and interoperability (e.g., France, Netherlands)
- Tiered data access and permissions architecture (e.g., Norway)
- Standards-based, multi-level governance (e.g., UNESCO)

This targeted selection enables a thematic comparison, rather than a purely geographic one.

5.5.2 Analytical Framework

Each jurisdiction was assessed against a consistent set of governance dimensions:

- **Institutional Structure** – Where authority sits and how responsibilities are distributed
- **Degree of Independence** – Relationship between government and operating bodies
- **Data Governance** – Ownership, control, and stewardship of heritage data
- **Indigenous Participation** – Level and form of Indigenous involvement in governance
- **Access and Permissions** – Public access versus restricted or sensitive data controls
- **Standards and Consistency** – Use of formal criteria, frameworks, and guidance
- **Sustainability** – Funding models and resilience to political or institutional change
- **System Utility** – Integration with broader planning, regulatory, or professional systems

This framework ensured that comparisons were structured, consistent, and directly relevant to CRHP design considerations.

5.5.3 Synthesis Approach

Rather than identifying a single “best” model, the analysis focused on extracting transferable governance principles from each jurisdiction. These principles were then synthesized into a hybrid governance model that:

- Reflects Canadian constitutional realities
- Addresses risks identified through stakeholder engagement
- Supports long-term sustainability and system relevance
- Aligns with reconciliation

This approach recognizes that no single international model is directly replicable, but that each offers valuable components that can be adapted and integrated.

5.5.4 Integration with Stakeholder Insights

The comparative analysis of best-in-class heritage register management from around the world was interpreted alongside stakeholder input, including:

- Federal, provincial, and territorial perspectives
- Indigenous leadership and governance considerations
- Non-governmental organization abilities and limitations
- End-user needs (i.e. planners, researchers, heritage professionals)

This ensured that recommendations are not only theoretically sound, but also grounded and responsive to Canadian needs.

5.5.5 Limitations

While this analysis draws on authoritative sources, it is subject to several limitations:

- Governance models continue to evolve, and documentation may not fully reflect current practice
- Publicly available information varies across jurisdictions
- Some operational details (particularly around data governance and permissions) are not fully documented in public sources

Despite these limitations, the analysis provides a robust and evidence-based foundation for future CRHP governance design.

5.6 International Heritage Governance Body Reviews

Oversight and management of a future state CRHP creates a rich governance design challenge. The data is owned by FPTs and there are risk and privacy concerns with the data at a granular level, so a public registry should have some role-based access control ensuring contributors can only modify their own records. Additionally, any CRHP governance model should be designed to manage this registry successfully in perpetuity because heritage conservation is intended to preserve data about heritage forever.

5.6.1 France – The Monuments Historiques System

France's system for the protection of heritage is among the world's most mature and institutionally coherent governance frameworks. Originating with the first classification list established by Prosper Mérimée in 1840 and codified through the Historic Monuments Act of 1913, the Monuments Historiques system has evolved into an integrated model in which legal designation, financial incentives, administrative infrastructure, and public access are purposefully designed to reinforce one another. Governance stems from the Ministry of Culture through a layered regional structure. The National Commission of Historic Monuments (CNMH) provides expert advisory oversight at the national level, maintaining a clear separation between technical evaluation and political decision-making, while the Directions Régionales des Affaires Culturelles (DRACs) administer the designation process regionally in consultation with property owners and local authorities. The Minister of Culture retains authority to impose emergency classification for twelve months, providing an enforcement backstop with no equivalent in the Canadian system.

Private ownership is also treated differently, and the French model actively recruits private owners as conservation partners through an interconnected set of financial instruments, with maintenance and restoration costs deductible from taxable income without ceiling, inheritance taxes waivable subject to permanent public access agreements⁴². State-owned monuments are managed by the Centre des Monuments Nationaux (CMN), whose most significant governance innovation is a principle of total financial equalization. All revenue generated across its network of over one hundred monuments is pooled and redistributed according to conservation need rather than individual earning capacity, meaning high-traffic sites effectively fund the maintenance of lesser-visited monuments. The administrative backbone of the entire system is the Mérimée database, maintained not simply as a public-facing information tool but rather as an operational register integrated into designation, authorization, planning, and tax administration decisions depend. Therefore, it is this legal and regulatory consequence that sustains long-term investment in maintenance.

⁴² The Monuments Historiques Tax System, <https://www.prospercollection.fr/en/2025/02/07/investir-monument-historique-avantages-fiscaux/> (March 2026).

Strengths of the French model include its systemic coherence, durability of legal protections, and the resilience that comes from embedding core mechanisms in legislation and tax law rather than discretionary program funding. Limitations include its dependence on a single state structure and a level of sustained public investment in regional heritage administration that has no direct equivalent in Canada's federal system.

Implication for the CRHP: the French model's central governance lesson is that a heritage register achieves durability due to consequential administrative processes. The Mérimée database endures because designation, tax administration, and planning decisions all depend on it. A Canadian adaptation need not replicate France's centralized structure, but it could adopt its underlying logic: that every governance element must carry real consequence, and that consequence is what makes the system last.

5.6.2 Australia – Australian Heritage Database

(Managed by the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water)

Australia's federated model⁴³ offers a clear structural separation between governance functions, which offers instructive parallels for Canada. The Commonwealth maintains the national register, but states and territories retain control over their own data systems and designations, reinforcing jurisdictional autonomy while still contributing to a national dataset. While not directly administering the records, a key strength of the Australian Heritage Council is as an independent statutory body that provides expert, arm's-length advice on heritage significance and register nominations⁴⁴. This creates a deliberate buffer between political priorities and technical decision-making, reducing the risk of politicization and ensuring that inclusion on the register is grounded in consistent, expert-led criteria.

From a governance perspective, this model demonstrates the value of separating “assessment of significance” from “system administration” within a shared national framework. However, the Australian model also highlights risks with inconsistent data quality and standards across jurisdictions, and coordination fatigue.

Implication for CRHP: The strength lies in the explicit separation of assessment and administration, just as Canada has with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, reducing the risk of any single government's priorities dominating the CRHP. The weakness is that federated models can produce inconsistency across jurisdictions and coordination fatigue. This is viable if paired with strong national standards, shared data schemas, and ongoing coordination mechanisms.

5.6.3 United Kingdom – Historic England / Historic Environment Scotland / Cadw

The UK⁴⁵ devolves heritage registration to national bodies within each constituent country, each operating as arm's-length agencies of their respective governments. They are publicly funded but operate with considerable independence, while maintaining robust tiered access systems. For example, public-facing information is carefully curated while more sensitive data is restricted to authorized professionals.

⁴³ See detailed source listing in references. Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Australia). Australian Government, Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

⁴⁴ The *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003* established the council. It replaced the former Australian Heritage Commission when the Commonwealth Heritage system was introduced in 2004 under amendments to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

⁴⁵ National Heritage Act 1983 (UK). An Act to establish Boards of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Science Museum, the Armouries and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, to transfer property to them and confer functions on them, to make provision in relation to government grants to, and employment by, armed forces museums, to establish a Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, to confer functions on the Commission, to dissolve the Historic Buildings Council for England and the Ancient Monuments Board for England, to amend certain enactments relating to the heritage and for connected purposes.

What is relevant is their mature approach to data governance and access control as public-facing data is curated, authoritative, and accessible, sensitive information (i.e. archaeological site locations) is restricted through permission-based systems, and access is differentiated by user type. This reflects a governance philosophy where data is treated as a managed asset, not just a public repository.

This provides a clear precedent for tiered access systems, protecting sensitive information, and ensuring the register maintains credibility and trust. However, the main limitation is financial as these systems rely on stable, long-term public funding.

Implication for CRHP: The UK model is a strong example of devolved governance combined with operational independence. Each nation manages its own register through arm's-length public agencies, which are publicly funded but operate with professional autonomy and clear mandates. This is one of the best-developed models for permission-based access and is directly relevant to privacy concerns expressed by stakeholders. This is how the Ontario Heritage Trust manages their register on behalf of the government of Ontario. The challenge is that this requires stable, dedicated government funding. Governance design must include sustainable funding mechanisms, or the system risks gradual degradation.

5.6.4 United States – National Register of Historic Places

(National Park Service)

The U.S. model is defined by a centralized federal framework with decentralized delivery, creating a clear accountability chain which includes the National Park Service (NPS) that sets standards and maintains the register, the state Historic Preservation Offices that acts as the primary interface for nominations and data, and tribal Historic Preservation Offices that operate in parallel, recognizing Indigenous sovereignty⁴⁶ by including culturally significant Indigenous sites on the registry. This structure ensures there is consistency in standards and processes, clear roles, and responsibilities across levels of government, and formalized pathways for both state and Indigenous participation. However, it also introduces tension as federal standards can be perceived as top-down control, and states may feel constrained in how they manage or present their data.

What may be valuable for Canada is the parallel governance structure for Indigenous participation, the robust protections for sensitive cultural sites, and the clarity of roles, responsibilities, and escalation pathways.

Implication for CRHP: Canada can draw from this model by defining clear governance roles between federal, provincial, and Indigenous partners, creating parallel governance pathways for Indigenous data stewardship, and establishing national standards without undermining jurisdictional autonomy. The US model is centrally administered through the NPS but relies heavily on State Historic Preservation Offices as the primary interface between the federal register and local data contributors. Tribes have a parallel structure through Tribal Historic Preservation Offices. This creates accountability where the federal body sets standards that states must follow, which may create tension between provinces and territories.

5.6.5 New Zealand – New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangī Kōrero

(Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga)

New Zealand offers one of the most advanced examples of Indigenous governance embedded directly into heritage systems. Heritage New Zealand is a Crown entity, independent from government but publicly funded, and operates under legislation that explicitly requires adherence to the principles of the

⁴⁶ National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (U.S.). National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places.

Treaty of Waitangi⁴⁷. This is not symbolic; it is structurally embedded, meaning the governance board includes Māori representation as a structural requirement, not an afterthought. The List distinguishes between various categories of significance including Māori heritage, and there are specific provisions for restricting public access to the location and details of Wāhi Tapu (sacred sites).

Key governance features include mandatory Māori representation at the governance level, recognition of distinct categories of heritage, including Māori heritage, legal mechanisms to restrict access to sensitive sites (i.e. Wāhi Tapu), and a framework that treats Indigenous knowledge as governing, not just consulted. This model shifts Indigenous involvement from consultation to co-governance.

For Canada this is highly instructive, particularly given reconciliation commitments and the potential involvement of the Indigenous Heritage Circle, this model offers the most developed framework for building Indigenous governance into the structure itself rather than treating it as consultation.

Implication for CRHP: This is the clearest model for moving beyond inclusion toward shared authority; however, the Indigenous reality in Canada is far more nuanced and complex, so it will require enhanced stakeholder engagement to get it right. The takeaways that will help drive good governance include the idea that Indigenous governance must be structural, not advisory, systems must reflect Indigenous data sovereignty principles (e.g., OCAP), and sensitive cultural information must be controlled by the communities to whom it belongs.

5.6.6 Netherlands – Cultural Heritage Agency (Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed)

The Netherlands demonstrates how a registry can function as critical infrastructure, not simply a reference tool⁴⁸. The Netherlands operates a highly digitized, openly accessible registry for most heritage data while maintaining strict controls on sensitive archaeological site information. What is distinctive here is their investment in interoperability, the registry is designed to connect with municipal planning databases, environmental assessments, and land use systems, making it even more useful to professionals like developers, architects, and planners.

In this example, governance is not just about stewardship, but rather about utility and integration as evidenced by data standards that are designed for cross-system compatibility. The registry supports real-time decision-making, not just archival access, and sensitive data (especially archaeological) is protected through controlled access.

Implication for CRHP: In considering how a future state CRHP could be beneficial for all Canadians, the Register could be positioned as national infrastructure within broader planning ecosystems. To achieve this level of functionality, governance includes data standards that enable interoperability, which in turn adds value in the form of usefulness across sectors, not just heritage professionals, making potential funding sources broader based.

5.6.7 Norway – Askeladden

(Directorate for Cultural Heritage)

Norway provides one of the clearest examples of granular, role-based data governance; its model is worth noting specifically for its permission architecture. Askeladden operates on a tiered access system with four distinct levels, each with accesses⁴⁹. The system also distinguishes between what is publicly vis-

⁴⁷ Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga. Treaty of Waitangi (1840).

⁴⁸ The INSPIRE Directive 2007/2/EC established an infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community.

⁴⁹ [Askeladden](#) is a Norwegian database system for managing cultural heritage monuments and sites. This system uses both data-base and GIS functionality, and it aims to integrate all data relating to immovable sites and monuments that are in some way protected by the Cultural Heritage Act. Askeladden is owned and managed by Riksantikvaren. The Directorate for Cultural Herit-

ible on the map interface versus what is accessible in the underlying database. This is one of the most sophisticated examples of exactly the kind of permission-based access platforms utilized in the heritage field.

Askeladden operates with a multi-tiered permission architecture, including:

- Public users
- Registered professionals
- Municipal administrators
- Federal administrators

Each level has distinct read permissions, write/edit permissions, and access to sensitive data layers. Additionally, the system distinguishes between what is visible on public interfaces and what exists in the full database meaning sensitive data is protected without compromising system usability. This is a highly mature model of data governance in practice, not just policy.

Implication for CRHP: Canada could implement a tiered access model from the outset, as this creates an opportunity to drive revenue from enhanced user groups. Governance of a multi-tiered system must clearly define who can see what, who can edit what, and who approves changes. This directly supports privacy, security, and data integrity, which are all critical in this technological age.

5.6.8 UNESCO – World Heritage List Governance Model

While UNESCO operates at a scale beyond what the CRHP requires, its governance structure offers valuable insight into multi-jurisdictional operations and shared sovereignty.

The World Heritage Convention establishes a treaty-based system where nation states retain full sovereignty over heritage sites, an international body provides recognition and standards, and inclusion is based on globally consistent criteria; it is a model of shared but non-intrusive governance⁵⁰.

The World Heritage Committee, composed of 21 elected states parties on a rotating basis, serves as the central decision-making authority. It approves new inscriptions, reviews conservation status, designates sites "in Danger," and oversees Convention implementation. Rotating membership ensures geographic representation and prevents long-term dominance by any single actor.

An independent expert layer is embedded directly into the governance structure, providing clear separation between technical assessment and political decision-making. ICOMOS (cultural heritage) and IUCN (natural heritage) evaluate nominations against strict criteria and provide non-binding recommendations.

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre functions as the neutral administrative hub, managing the database, coordinating heritage site nominations, and supporting States Parties. Inclusion requires demonstrating Outstanding Universal Value against globally standardized criteria, creating a transparent, consistent, and credible pathway.

Countries retain full ownership of listed sites but commit to protection, reporting, and alignment with UNESCO standards. Accountability is maintained through periodic reporting, reactive monitoring, and

age (Riksantikvaren) was established in 1912. They are responsible for the management of cultural heritage, cultural environments and cultural landscape of historic importance. The Directorate for Cultural Heritage is also part of Norwegian environmental management.

⁵⁰ The most significant feature of the 1972 World Heritage Convention is that it links together in a single document the concepts of nature conservation and the preservation of cultural properties. The Convention recognizes the way in which people interact with nature, and the fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two.

the ability to de-list sites, mechanisms that all rely on reputational pressure rather than direct control. Funding comes from mandatory and voluntary contributions, though levels can be uneven and politically influenced.

Strengths include global credibility, clear separation of advisory, decision-making, and administrative roles, and structured criteria that resist political discretion. Limitations include geopolitical influence on final decisions, complex and time-consuming nomination processes, and uneven participation across jurisdictions.

Implication for CRHP: This model reinforces the value of separating technical evaluation from administration, retaining jurisdictional authority over data, and building legitimacy through consistency and independence. Adopting the principles of distinct authority layers, transparent criteria, and soft accountability mechanisms would support the development of a trusted, resilient, and nationally coordinated heritage register with institutionally coherent governance frameworks.

At a national level we have developed an option that is similar to this with the data owners (FPT) using a secretariat to manage the platform vendor.

5.6.9 Governance Design Considerations for Canada

Effective oversight aims to set a clear direction, protect the organization's long-term interests, separate governance from day-to-day management, monitor performance, manage risk, and plan for leadership succession. Factoring in these values and looking across the above international models, several consistent design principles emerge:

- **1. Separate Powers:** Administration and governance should be distinct functions. The governance body should be arm's-length from any single government. A multi-jurisdictional governing body, structured as an independent non-profit or statutory body with representation from FPT and Indigenous governments would be more durable.
- **2. Protect Data Sovereignty:** The FPT and Indigenous partners retain control over their data. As the authorized owners of the data, they can maintain responsibility for their respective listings and be held accountable for the accuracy of the information enclosed.
- **3. Embed Indigenous Governance:** Consider moving from consultation to co-governance structures. The New Zealand model is the clearest demonstration that meaningful Indigenous participation requires a seat at the governance table with real decision-making authority, not just consultation rights.
- **4. Design for Tiered Access:** Permission architecture needs to be designed prior to the technical build. The Norwegian and UK models both demonstrate that tiered access works best when the governance decisions define that access controls are made as policy decisions first.
- **5. Ensure Long-Term Sustainability:** For this system to remain viable, governance models must outlast political and funding cycles. The most durable models combine core public funding with cost-recovery mechanisms, potential foundation or endowment support, and in some cases fee structures for high-volume data access. It is important to note that most governments contribute funding towards their heritage registers.
- **6. Prioritize Interoperability as a Revenue Enabler:** Building the future CRHP to connect with provincial planning systems, municipal databases, and federal environmental assessment processes can transform it into an active tool to sustain professional engagement and justify ongoing investment.

5.7 Governance Body Options Analysis

A new model may achieve several objectives including:

- Structural independence from any single government while maintaining accountability to all contributing jurisdictions
- Data sovereignty protections that give contributing jurisdictions confidence their data is secure and under their control
- A permission-based access framework that makes data safe to contribute
- A funding model that ensures the long-term financial sustainability of the Register
- A phased implementation that proves value before scaling
- Efforts towards reconciliation with Indigenous governance

Several relevant governance structure options analyzed and considered are outlined below.

5.7.1 Option 1: Federal Crown Agency / Government Department

The CRHP sits within a federal department (e.g., Parks Canada or CHIN) with a mandate to administer it on behalf of all jurisdictions.

- **Strengths:** Public funding, clear accountability, established legal framework, strong enforcement authority.
- **Weaknesses:** Federal control creates friction with provinces and territories over data sovereignty. Vulnerable to shifting political priorities and budget cycles. Indigenous and community stakeholders may distrust a federally administered model. Slow to adapt and government bureaucracy is not well suited to maintaining a living, evolving registry. Government contracting and computing rules create limitations and raise costs.

5.7.2 Option 2: Intergovernmental Agreement Model

A formal agreement between FPT governments establishes shared responsibility, with one jurisdiction or a rotating secretariat administering the Register on behalf of all signatories.

- **Strengths:** Preserves jurisdictional authority. No new legislation required. Relatively straightforward to establish.
- **Weaknesses:** Requires a jurisdiction to take this on, falling outside provincial authority and accountability. Deeply fragile as any signatory can withdraw, and decisions require consensus which slows everything down. Funding is perpetually negotiable. Has no independent legal identity, making long-term contracts, data licensing, and liability management complicated. In practice these models tend to drift without a strong administrative home.

5.7.3 Option 3: Federal or Provincial Non-Profit Corporation

A standalone non-profit corporation, such as the National Trust for Canada itself, is given responsibility for the CRHP by the data owners, governed by a committee representing key stakeholders.

- **Strengths:** Arm's-length from government, flexible, can receive diverse funding including philanthropic, can move quickly, board composition can reflect stakeholder diversity including Indigenous representation.
- **Weaknesses:** No guaranteed funding as it is perpetually dependent on grants and government contributions that can be clawed back. No statutory authority, so participation by jurisdictions is entirely voluntary.

5.7.4 Option 4: Statutory Corporation / Arm's-Length Crown Entity

Established by federal legislation but operating independently, similar examples include Heritage New Zealand or the CBC. This structure has a defined mandate, independent board, and federal operational funding, but is not a government department.

- **Strengths:** Stable legislative foundation and clear mandate. Could have Indigenous, jurisdictional or representation from other interests built into board composition by statute. Has legal identity to hold data agreements, enter contracts, and manage liability. Carries the authority of a legislated mandate. Legislation could establish the Register as the basis for federal incentives for heritage conservation (tax benefits or funding programs).
- **Weaknesses:** Requires federal legislation, which is slow and politically dependent. Federal legislation may be seen as federal overreach by provinces and territories. Funding still subject to parliamentary appropriation. Can become bureaucratic over time.

5.7.5 Option 5: Multi-Jurisdictional Statutory Authority

A body established by complementary FPT legislation where each jurisdiction passes mirroring legislation recognizing the authority. Existing examples of this arrangement include inter-provincial bodies like marketing boards.

- **Strengths:** Genuinely shared jurisdiction. Each government has legal skin in the game. Strong data sovereignty protections can be built into each jurisdiction's legislation. Most durable model politically because no single government can unilaterally dismantle it.
- **Weaknesses:** Extremely complex and slow to establish as it requires legislative action across multiple jurisdictions. Governance can become unwieldy with too many principals. Achieving consensus on the enabling legislation across 13+ jurisdictions is a significant undertaking.

5.7.6 Option 6: Statutory Trust

Established by legislation as a trust with defined beneficiaries (the public, heritage communities, data-contributing jurisdictions) and trustees responsible for managing the CRHP in accordance with the trust's purposes. Data owners contribute their data under defined terms that preserve their authority over it.

- **Strengths:** The legal separation between the trust and the beneficiaries and data contributors maps cleanly onto the data sovereignty problem. A well-drafted trust deed can establish the governance rules, data rights, and access permissions with legal force without requiring ongoing legislative intervention. Charitable trust status may also provide tax advantages for donors and open philanthropic funding streams.
- **Weaknesses:** Trusts are not commonly used for this large of a purpose in Canada, so there is limited precedent to draw on domestically, therefore legal advice is required. Trustees carry per-

sonal fiduciary liability. Without complementary legislation the trust's authority over participating jurisdictions is contractual rather than statutory, meaning buy-in remains voluntary. Funding still needs to be secured as the trust structure itself does not generate revenue. Finally, the length of time it would take to set up a Trust and get official buy in from all 14 jurisdictions in Canada.

5.8 Proposed Governance Structure: 3 Options

To support the Key Recommendations the CRHP should be re-established either through a non-governmental organization, as a statutory, not-for-profit trust, or through the FTP Table with support from a secretariat. There are strengths and weaknesses to each of these options, and proposed structures are outlined in detail for each of them.

5.8.1 Option 1 – Non-Profit Organization (The National Trust for Canada)

Key question

Can the National Trust credibly separate its role as a heritage advocate from its role as a neutral registry administrator and will provincial, territorial, and potentially Indigenous stakeholders accept that separation? If the answer is yes, this is the most pragmatic and fastest model. If the answer is uncertain, the design must build in structural independence mechanisms that make the separation visible and enforceable.

In this model responsibility for the Canadian Register of Historic Places is with the National Trust for Canada – an existing national non-profit organization with an established heritage mandate, governance structure, and stakeholder relationships. The National Trust would administer the Register as a dedicated program within its organizational structure, using the selected platform and operating under a mandate agreement with participating jurisdictions.

For the National Trust of Canada (or other NGO) model to work however, there are key design challenges to address:

- Perceived conflict of interest - The National Trust advocates for heritage causes and may have positions on specific sites, policies, or designations. As administrator of the CRHP, it must be, and be seen to be, a neutral steward of all participating jurisdictions' data. These roles can come into tension.
- Jurisdictional confidence - Provincial and territorial governments contributing data to the CRHP need confidence that their data is managed by a body accountable to them, not primarily to the National Trust's own board and membership. Building this confidence requires explicit governance mechanisms.
- Organizational capacity - Adding a national registry administration function to the National Trust's existing operations is a significant capacity addition. Without clearly defined resources and strict organizational separation, the CRHP risks being underpowered or de-prioritized against the National Trust's other programs.
- Funding independence - The National Trust's existing revenue base creates potential cross-subsidization in both directions. The Register must have a clearly delineated budget to prevent

either the CRHP drawing on Trust resources without accountability, or Trust priorities shaping CRHP spending decisions.

- Long-term durability - A program within an existing organization is more vulnerable to organizational change than a standalone body. A new CEO, a board strategic pivot, or a financial crisis at the National Trust could affect the Register's continuity.
- Scale mismatch - The CRHP serves a national public interest function of indefinite duration. The National Trust is a mid-sized non-profit organization. Ensuring the CRHP has the resources and profile commensurate with its public importance requires explicit protection mechanisms.

Legal Foundation

Existing Legal Structure - The National Trust for Canada is an existing federally incorporated non-profit organization operating under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. Its charitable purposes, to protect and promote heritage places in Canada, align with the function of the Register. It has an established governance structure, charitable status, and existing legal capacity to hold contracts, employ staff, and manage funds, including endowed funds. The National Trust already delivers a program (Young Canada Works) for the benefit of the heritage community on behalf of government and holds funds “in trust” for the federal government. No new legislation is required to establish this model.

The legal foundation for the National Trust's administration of the CRHP should be a Mandate Agreement between the National Trust and participating jurisdictions. This agreement is more structured than a simple contract, rather it defines the National Trust's obligations, the jurisdictions' rights and obligations, and the governance mechanisms that provide accountability.

Element	Detail
Parties	National Trust for Canada and all participating federal, provincial, and territorial jurisdictions
Term	Initial 5-year* term with renewal options, longer than a standard contract to provide operational stability
National Trust obligations	Administer the CRHP in accordance with the mandate, maintain the platform, manage data contribution agreements, provide annual reporting, convene the stakeholder advisory body
Jurisdiction rights	Data sovereignty protections, seat on the CRHP Advisory Council, right to audit data handling, right to withdraw data on defined terms, approval rights over major changes to the CRHP's structure or fee model
Governance oversight	CRHP Advisory Council (see Section 3) has defined approval authority over key decisions. The National Trust board alone cannot make major Register decisions
Amendment	Material changes to the mandate require consent of a majority of participating jurisdictions. The National Trust cannot unilaterally change its mandate.
Termination	Jurisdictions collectively may transfer the mandate to another body with 12 months' notice if the National Trust materially breaches its obligations

* 5 year is suggested as a minimum guideline

CRHP dedicated budget (strongly recommended)

To address any potential conflict of interest and organizational capacity concerns, the mandate agreement should require the National Trust to separate the CRHP program with the following mechanisms:

- A dedicated CRHP budget, separately audited and reported, no cross-subsidization with National Trust general funds
- A dedicated CRHP team reporting to the CRHP Director, not folded into existing National Trust programs
- A separate CRHP brand identity, distinct from the National Trust brand, to signal the CRHP's neutral public service character
- A conflict-of-interest protocol, where the National Trust has an advocacy position on a heritage matter touching the CRHP, defined recusal and disclosure requirements apply

While there are team members defined, it should be clarified that these may be partial role responsibilities.

Why a dedicated budget matters

Without explicit delineation, the CRHP program will inevitably be pulled toward the National Trust's organizational priorities over time, especially during budget pressures. This is not a reflection of distrust; it is the structural mechanism that makes the National Trust's stewardship of the CRHP credible to external stakeholders, particularly governments contributing their data.

Governance Structure

Two-layer governance

The National Trust model ideally operates a two-layer governance structure: the National Trust's own Board of Directors retains ultimate legal responsibility for the organization, while a dedicated CRHP Advisory Council provides external oversight and stakeholder representation specifically for the CRHP program. These two bodies have distinct and non-overlapping authorities.

National Trust Board of Directors

Element	Detail
Role in the CRHP	Ultimate legal accountability for the National Trust's obligations under the Mandate Agreement. Approves the CRHP annual budget. Appoints and evaluates the CRHP Director.
Limitations	Cannot make CRHP operational or policy decisions unilaterally, these require CRHP Advisory Council approval where specified. Cannot redirect CRHP funds to other purposes.
Conflict of interest	Board members with conflicts on specific CRHP matters must recuse. National Trust's advocacy positions do not bind CRHP operational decisions.

CRHP Advisory Council

The CRHP Advisory Council is the primary governance mechanism for external stakeholder accountability. It has defined approval authority over key CRHP decisions and cannot be dissolved or its powers reduced without the consent of participating jurisdictions.

Element	Detail
Composition	Federal representative, P/T representatives, rotating regionally, Indigenous representatives, Heritage professional experts, Community representatives
Indigenous seats	Suggest these are nominated through process led by national Indigenous heritage organizations. Mirror the Trust model's recommended approach: structural, not advisory.
Chair	Independent and elected by Council members, not appointed by the National Trust
Authority	Must approve fee structure changes; material changes to access tier framework; data contribution agreement templates; Register annual budget; appointment of CRHP Director
Mandatory consideration	Must be formally consulted on program changes; major technology changes; strategic plan; annual report
Meeting frequency	Minimum quarterly. National Trust provides secretariat support
Relationship to NTC Board	Council recommendations on approved matters are binding on the National Trust in relation to the CRHP program. Disputes resolved through the Mandate Agreement's dispute process.

The governance test

The governance structure should pass a straightforward test: can a provincial heritage minister, an Indigenous heritage organization, and an independent heritage professional all look at this structure and conclude that the Register is being administered in the national public interest, not in the National Trust's institutional interest? If any of those three would answer no, the governance design needs strengthening.

Technical Management

Under this model, the National Trust holds the contract with the selected platform vendor and manages the technical platform as part of its CRHP program. The Technology Director sits within the National Trust's CRHP team and is accountable to the CRHP Director and the CRHP Advisory Council for technology decisions.

What the National Trust manages directly (via the CRHP Advisory Council)

- Selected platform contract management and vendor oversight
- Access tier enforcement and user authentication administration
- Data migration from the decommissioned CRHP system
- Tier 2 user registration and support in Phase 2
- Data security oversight and privacy compliance
- Interoperability integrations with provincial planning systems, potentially developed in Phase 2

Technology governance safeguards

Because the National Trust holds the vendor contract, explicit safeguards are required to ensure technology decisions serve the CRHP's public interest mandate rather than the National Trust's institutional preferences:

Safeguard	Mechanism
Open data formats	Required contractually, data must be portable and not locked to any National Trust-controlled system
Advisory Council approval	Material technology changes, new platform, major architecture changes, require CRHP Advisory Council approval, not National Trust Board alone
Technology Director accountability	Dual accountability: operationally to CRHP Director; technically to CRHP Advisory Council on matters affecting data sovereignty or access tier framework
Transition provisions	Mandate Agreement requires National Trust to cooperate fully in technology transfer if mandate passes to another body, including vendor contract assignment
Annual security reporting	Technology Director reports annually to the CRHP Advisory Council on security posture, privacy compliance, and data handling

Staffing for Operations and Technical Management

Phase 1 – Founding CRHP team - The Register team sits within the National Trust's organizational structure but is delineated operationally. Staff report to the CRHP Director, not to National Trust program directors. Salaries are funded from the CRHP budget. As with the FPT Table and Statutory Trust models, all these roles can be combined to create full or part time jobs. Ideally the CRHP Director and Technology Director are 2 separate people with different skill sets (tech can be a shared role with other responsibilities outside the CRHP program).

Role	Status	Responsibilities
CRHP Director	FTE Phase 1 and Phase 2 (~\$90K)	Leads the CRHP program with full accountability.
Technology Director	Contract Phase 1 (~\$30K); FTE Phase 2 (~\$90K fully loaded)	Oversees platform implementation and data migration on contract in Phase 1. Potentially converts to full-time in Phase 2.
Data and Agreements	Duties combined with other roles	Manages data contribution agreements. Operationally critical.
Indigenous Engagement	Duties combined with other roles	Supports Indigenous participation.

Phase 2 potential additions

Role	Status	Responsibilities
Community and Stake-	Duties combined with	Manages professional user community.

holder Relations Lead	other roles	
Policy, Records, and QA Lead	Duties combined with other roles	Manages records, access tier policy, and data standards. Provides support to the CRHP Advisory Council.

Shared services – an advantage of the National Trust model

One genuine operational advantage of housing the CRHP within the National Trust is access to existing shared services that a standalone trust would need to build from scratch. This reduces Phase 1 over-head.

Shared service	Benefit
Financial management	National Trust finance team manages CRHP accounts under CRHP budget, reduces need for dedicated finance staff.
Legal and contracts	National Trust legal resources available for data contribution agreements and vendor contract management, saves significant external legal cost
IT and office infrastructure	CRHP team uses National Trust office and IT infrastructure
Communications	National Trust communications capacity available for CRHP public-facing materials, with delineation to maintain distinct brand identity
Estimated shared services value	~\$40–60K/year which is a meaningful reduction in operating cost vs a standalone body

Item	Estimate
Phase 1 total staffing cost	~\$120-300K/year (1-2 FTE + 1-2 PT or contracts or students)
Phase 1 total operating cost	~\$170-650K/year (including technology and governance) ⁵¹
Phase 2 total staffing cost	~\$200-500K/year (2–5 FTE)
Phase 2 total operating cost	~\$300-600K/year
Shared services saving vs standalone	~\$40-60K/year in Phase 1

Data Framework

The National Trust model must address the data sovereignty concern more explicitly than either alternative, because the National Trust is an organization with its own interests and a non-profit mandate that extends beyond the CRHP. Contributing jurisdictions need clear legal protection that their data is held in trust for the CRHP's public purposes and is not available to the National Trust for any other use.

Data Contribution Agreements

Each contributing jurisdiction executes a Data Contribution Agreement with the National Trust specifically in its capacity as CRHP administrator. The agreement explicitly states that the data is held by the National Trust solely for CRHP purposes and is subject to the terms of the Mandate Agreement.

⁵¹ Technology costs use the low to high range and one third of 1-3 year implementation costs.

Element	Framework
Ownership	Retained absolutely by the contributing jurisdiction. The National Trust holds a strictly scoped licence for CRHP administration purposes only.
Firewall from NTC operations	The National Trust may not use contributed data for any purpose other than CRHP administration, including research, advocacy, communications, or fundraising, without explicit written consent of the contributing jurisdiction.
Access tier authority	Set by the contributing jurisdiction. Technology Director implements technically. Data and Agreements Coordinator audits compliance quarterly.
Reclassification	Jurisdictions may reclassify to a more restrictive tier at any time. Implementation within 48 hours. Reclassification to less restrictive tier requires CRHP Advisory Council approval.
Withdrawal	180 days written notice. Data returned in open format. National Trust deletes all copies upon confirmed return. CRHP Advisory Council notified.
Advocacy firewall	Where the National Trust has taken a public position on a heritage matter, the contributing jurisdiction's data on that matter may not be accessed by National Trust staff outside the CRHP team without Advisory Council approval.

The National Trust's advocacy role creates a unique data protection requirement that does not exist in the Trust or intergovernmental models. A contributing jurisdiction must be confident that its data is not accessible to National Trust advocacy staff who might use it in ways the jurisdiction has not authorized.

The advocacy firewall must be written into both the Mandate Agreement and each Data Contribution Agreement. It requires: physical separation of CRHP data systems from National Trust general systems; access controls that prevent non-CRHP staff from accessing contributed data; and an annual compliance audit reported to the CRHP Advisory Council.

Permission-based access tiers in phase 2 – CRHP Renewal

These tiers are potential opportunities to develop additional features and revenue models that are not likely to be included in the first several years of the project, and perhaps not at all. These tie back to section 4.14.

Tier	Access	Content
Tier 1 - Public	Anyone, no registration	General listing, history, photos, mapping. Free in perpetuity.
Tier 2 - Professional	Registered users (fee-bearing Phase 2)	Full technical data, condition reports, structural records. Anything that can be added/shared to help drive revenue to support the CRHP.
Tier 3 - Jurisdictional	Authorized jurisdiction staff only	Ownership data, sensitive locations, administrative records. Advocacy firewall applies.
Tier 4 - Restricted	Indigenous/Archaeological community consent only	Sacred sites, protected cultural data. National Trust cannot grant access without consent.

Tier 4 – same requirement in all models

Access to Tier 4 data requires written consent from the relevant Indigenous community or governing body, regardless of which model is chosen. The National Trust, the intergovernmental table, and the statutory trust all operate under this constraint. It is a non-negotiable design principle, not a governance option.

Accountability and Risk Management

The National Trust model has a more concentrated accountability structure than the other models as accountability ultimately flows upward through the National Trust's Board of Directors, not to the public or to contributing jurisdictions. The governance design must compensate for this structural gap – suggestions outlined below:

CRHP Director accountability

Accountability line	Mechanism
To the CRHP Advisory Council	Quarterly operational and financial reports. Annual performance review with Council input. Material decisions require Council approval.
To the National Trust Board	Through the ED/CEO of the National Trust. Annual budget approval. Appointment and termination authority.
To contributing jurisdictions	Via the CRHP Advisory Council. Direct communication with P/T contacts on data matters. Right of jurisdictions to audit data handling independently.

CRHP Advisory Council accountability

Mechanism	Description
Annual report	Published publicly and includes audited CRHP financials, data contribution status, Council activities, and progress against mandate obligations.
Mandate compliance review	Annual formal review of National Trust's compliance with Mandate Agreement obligations and presented to contributing jurisdictions.
Stakeholder consultation	Annual public consultation open to all heritage stakeholders, not limited to National Trust membership.
Parliamentary availability	Council chair and CRHP Director available to appear before relevant legislative committees on request.

National Trust Board accountability

Mechanism	Description
Internal audit	CRHP finances internally audited.
Mandate breach consequences	Material breach of Mandate Agreement allows jurisdictions collectively to transfer mandate to another body which creates real accountability in-

	centive for the Board.
Conflict of interest disclosure	Board members must disclose and recuse from decisions where National Trust advocacy positions intersect with CRHP matters.

Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Level	Mitigation
Conflict of interest, real or perceived	High	National Trust's advocacy role creates perception that Register is not neutral. Mitigation: Clear delineation, advocacy firewall, separate brand identity, and independent CRHP Advisory Council with binding authority. Transparent conflict of interest protocol.
Organizational instability at National Trust	Medium-High	Leadership change, financial pressure, or strategic shift at National Trust affects CRHP continuity. Mitigation: Mandate Agreement creates contractual obligations that survive leadership change. Jurisdictions have collective right to transfer mandate if obligations are not met.
Jurisdictional confidence gap	High	P/T governments decline to contribute data because they distrust the National Trust as administrator. Mitigation: CRHP Advisory Council with binding authority over key decisions is the primary confidence mechanism. Advocacy firewall and delineation provide additional assurance. Early engagement with P/T heritage ministers is essential.
Indigenous governance deficit	High	National Trust's existing governance does not include structural Indigenous representation. Adding the CRHP without addressing this replicates this problem. Mitigation: Indigenous seats on the CRHP Advisory Council, nominated independently of the National Trust. Indigenous Engagement Coordinator as duty of CRHP staff.
Underpowered CRHP team	Medium	National Trust de-prioritizes CRHP staffing under budget pressure. Mitigation: Minimum staffing levels defined in Mandate Agreement. Delineated budget cannot fund non-CRHP activities. CRHP Advisory Council approves annual staffing plan.
Data misuse by National Trust staff	Medium	Non-CRHP NTC staff access contributed data for advocacy or fundraising purposes. Mitigation: Physical system separation, access controls, advocacy firewall in both mandate and data contribution agreements, annual compliance audit.
Fee model delayed by NTC priorities	Medium	National Trust defers Phase 2 fee launch due to membership sensitivities or competing organizational priorities. Mitigation: Mandate Agreement includes timeline obligations for Phase 2 readiness. CRHP Advisory Council has approval authority over fee structure, cannot be indefinitely deferred.
Scale mismatch over time	Medium	CRHP grows in importance and complexity beyond National Trust's organizational capacity. Mitigation: Mandate Agreement includes a 5-year review process. If CRHP outgrows the NTC model, jurisdictions and the Advisory Council can initiate transition to a standalone Trust structure.

Funding Model

Phase 1 - The National Trust model has the most favourable funding profile in Phase 1 for two reasons: the National Trust can access philanthropic and foundation funding that a new standalone body could not, and shared services reduce operating costs. Under charity law, money given to a charity for a specified purpose must be used for that purpose. Therefore dedicated funds donated to support the CRHP would need to be spent on it.

A founding endowment, capitalized through a combination of federal seed funding and philanthropic contributions, should be a design goal from the outset, as even modest endowment income provides a buffer against political budget cycles. Core operating funding would come from government contributions by participating jurisdictions, structured as multi-year agreements.

Funding advantage in Phase 1

The National Trust's existing relationships combined with its established federal funding profile, give this model a meaningful head start in Phase 1 fundraising compared to a new standalone body. This is one of the strongest practical arguments for the National Trust model.

Phase 2 funding – professional fee model - exploratory

Phase 2 follows the same fee structure as the Trust model. The National Trust's existing professional networks, architects, planners, heritage consultants, give it a strong base for professional user outreach and early fee adoption. The professional fee model currently lacks a mature understanding of what data could be available and from what sources to attract users of an enhanced access portal. A professional fee model can be part of an overall funding structure that includes other revenue streams.

Source	Target
Professional fees (Tier 2)	Target ~\$525K/year – same fee structure as Trust model
Philanthropic and foundations	~\$80K/year – reduced as fees grow but maintained for community engagement
Federal / P/T contributions	~\$50–80K/year — declining share
Shared services saving	~\$40–60K/year — ongoing advantage of the NTC model
Total Phase 2 budget	~\$660K/year
Government dependency at steady state	~10–15% – comparable to Trust model

National Trust of Canada (NTC) comparison with other models:

Dimension	NTC Model assessment	Comparison
Speed to operational	Fastest. National Trust exists, has governance, staff, and relationships. Estimated 6–9 months to Phase 1 launch.	Statutory Trust: 12–18 months. Intergovernmental Table: 9–12 months.
Independence from government	Strong. National Trust not a government body. Weaker than Statutory Trust due to no legislative foundation.	Statutory Trust: strongest. Intergovernmental: weakest.

Data sovereignty protections	Good through contractual mechanisms. Advocacy firewall adds unique complexity. Weaker than Statutory Trust's deed protections.	Statutory Trust: strongest (entrenched deed). Intergovernmental: medium.
Indigenous governance	Requires deliberate design, NTC existing governance does not include structural Indigenous seats. Achievable through Advisory Council.	All models require deliberate design. Statutory Trust's entrenched seats are the strongest mechanism.
Phase 1 funding	Strongest. NTC philanthropic relationships and shared services give meaningful cost and fundraising advantages.	Statutory Trust: moderate. Intergovernmental: depends on government contributions.
Long-term durability	More vulnerable to NTC organizational change than a standalone statutory body. Mandate transfer provisions provide a floor.	Statutory Trust: most durable. Intergovernmental: most fragile.
Conflict of interest management	Requires most explicit management: advocacy firewall, ring-fencing, independent Advisory Council are essential.	Not applicable to other models.
Professional network advantage	Strongest. NTC relationships with professional community support Phase 2 fee uptake.	Statutory Trust and Intergovernmental must build from scratch.

5.8.2 Option 2: Statutory Trust as a CRHP Model

Key question

Is legislation feasible? This model cannot operate without legislation.

This model separates the ownership of data as it pertains to the FPT and Indigenous partners, the stewardship of the platform by a respected professionally run independent statutory trust, and the standards and policy direction by a shared governance body representative of all Canadians. This structure removes reliance on a single federal department, addressing the imminent Parks Canada withdrawal, ensures long-term continuity beyond political cycles, and preserves jurisdictional authority while enabling national coordination.

For a statutory trust model to work, there are key design challenges to be resolved. These include:

- **Funding permanence** — a sufficiently capitalized trust endowment could generate operating revenue and reduce dependence on regular contributions. This is worth exploring seriously.
- **Legislative underpinning** — a hybrid approach where the trust is established privately but federal and/or provincial legislation formally recognizes its authority and mandates data-sharing into it would significantly strengthen its durability and authority.
- **Trustee composition** — the trust deed should prescribe board composition with specificity: jurisdictional representation, Indigenous representation, professional heritage expertise, and community representation may be defined structurally.

- **Data agreements** — contributing jurisdictions would sign data contribution agreements that spell out what rights they retain, what the trust can do with the data, and under what circumstances data can be restricted or withdrawn. This is where the permission-based access architecture gets its legal foundation.

A statutory trust model can offer Canada the most balanced and future-proof governance approach for the CRHP. It combines independence, accountability, and collaboration, while preserving the authority of jurisdictions. By separating platform stewardship from data ownership and policy authority this model reduces systemic risk and creates a resilient foundation for a modern, trusted, and nationally coordinated heritage register.

The “Canadian Register of Historic Places Trust” (name TBD)

A potential governance model for the CRHP, built around the statutory trust concept, and is:

- Informed by the international examples outlined, factoring in the themes uncovered through the FPT and Indigenous stakeholder interviews
- Can be established through federal enabling legislation and defined as a statutory trust or Crown-adjacent entity
- And operate at arm’s length from government but with a clear public mandate

To operate as designed, the CRHP Trust would be legally mandated to:

- Maintain and operate the national heritage register platform
- Ensure secure, accessible, and authoritative heritage data
- Support interoperability with provincial/territorial systems
- Provide public access while protecting sensitive information

The CRHP should ideally function as national infrastructure, not simply a registry.

Legal Foundation

The Trust is established through a trust deed, ideally underpinned by complementary federal legislation that formally recognizes its authority and mandates participation by federal bodies. Provincial and territorial legislation can mirror this recognition over time, strengthening the Trust’s durability without requiring all jurisdictions to act simultaneously. The trust deed itself is the governing document — it defines the purpose, trustee composition, data rights, access framework, and amendment procedures, and it cannot be altered by any single government. To accept charitable donations, the Trust would also be required to register as a charitable foundation with the Canada Revenue Agency.

Board of Trustees

Requirements of this governing body will include the inclusion of Indigenous representation that is mandatory and proportional, that the body be balanced to prevent dominance by any one jurisdiction or order of government, and that appointments are structured to ensure continuity and staggered terms. Key responsibilities will include approving the strategic plan and budget, overseeing risk, compliance, and sustainability, appointing executive leadership, and ensuring adherence to legislative mandate.

To fulfill these obligations, the governance should be overseen by a multi-stakeholder governing board responsible for strategic direction, accountability, and fiduciary oversight. The board should have around thirteen seats and could be structured as follows:

- Two federal seats drawn from Parks Canada and/or the Department of Canadian Heritage, nominated by the federal government but confirmed by the board
- Four provincial and territorial seats on a rotating regional basis, with each region nominating its own representative and terms staggered to prevent wholesale turnover
- Three Indigenous seats, structurally embedded in the trust deed rather than created by board discretion, nominated through a process led by Indigenous heritage organizations including the Indigenous Heritage Circle
- Two professional heritage seats for recognized experts in heritage conservation, architecture, or related disciplines, appointed by the board on the recommendation of the Professional Advisory Panel
- Two community seats representing the diversity of heritage communities in Canada, including Black, Asian Canadian, and other historically underrepresented communities, appointed through a transparent public process

The chair should be elected by and from the trustees themselves, not appointed by any government, to protect the arm's-length character of the body. One of the members above should be a finance professional, such as a CPA, acting in the role of a dedicated treasurer.

The Secretariat & Technology Director

The Secretariat is the operational engine of the Trust, a small professional staff responsible for day-to-day administration. Technical operations manage the Register's system infrastructure, data integrity, and interoperability. Stakeholder relations maintain ongoing liaison with contributing jurisdictions, manage data contribution agreements, and coordinate community engagement. Policy and standards develop and maintain register listing criteria, access tier rules, and the protocols governing restricted data, particularly around Indigenous sacred sites.

Advisory Councils

Advisory councils are recommended for the Board or Secretariat to consult with when questions arise; these are non-voting positions.

Data Agreement Framework

The data governance model must be one of federated control because the ownership of the data remains with the contributing bodies. Each contributing government enters into a bilateral Data Contribution Agreement with the Trust through a memorandum of understanding (MOU). These agreements are the legal foundation for data sovereignty. The key terms each agreement must address are:

- Ownership is retained absolutely by the contributing jurisdiction
- The agreement grants the Trust a defined licence to house, display, and provide access to the data for the purposes set out in the trust deed – nothing broader
- The Trust cannot sub-licence, commercialize, or transfer data without the contributor's written consent

- Jurisdictions can choose from a push model where they submit data manually, or a simpler, less onerous, pull model where the CRHP itself pulls and processes the data for them
- Sensitive data controls are in place to restrict access to archaeological sites, sacred/ceremonial locations, and Indigenous partners define access rules for their data themselves
- There is a clear separation between the public-facing interface and the underlying database
- In the event public contributions, such as archival photos or letters, or suggested sites for designation, may be considered, public contributions may be allowed but not directly published – they should be routed through either jurisdictions or a formalized Moderation Framework

As the future state CRHP cannot rely on government funding with any degree of certainty, developing a registry product that can increase efficiencies across public and private industries, and generate user fees is recommended. A Tiered Access Architecture is recommended clearly delineating degrees of access.

The agreement also specifies withdrawal terms: a jurisdiction can withdraw contributed data with reasonable notice, with defined transition provisions to ensure the Register's integrity is not destabilized, and a dispute resolution mechanism that is binding and independent of any single government.

Funding Model

The Trust's long-term sustainability requires a predictable funding base rather than a single annual appropriation. A founding endowment, capitalized through a combination of federal seed funding and philanthropic contributions, should be a design goal from the outset, as even modest endowment income provides a buffer against political budget cycles. Core operating funding would come from government contributions by participating jurisdictions, structured as multi-year agreements.

The suggested funding model is blended and stabilized to ensure sustainability is built around both core funding (governmental funding) and supplementation through philanthropic and foundation support, corporate sponsorship, and potentially grants for innovation and interoperability.

Accountability & Risk Management

To succeed, built-in safeguards need to be employed; governance documentation should include legislative reporting requirements, annual public reporting, and independent financial and data governance audits.

Risk mitigation measures include there being no single point of failure due to distributed governance, clear data ownership boundaries, and strong cyber-security controls. This model directly addresses the risks identified in the consultations:

Risk	Governance Response
Federal withdrawal	Independent statutory trust strengthens continuity
Jurisdictional sensitivity	Federated data ownership preserved
Indigenous rights	Embedded co-governance structure
Data misuse/privacy	Tiered access + controlled permissions
Loss of credibility	Independent oversight + curated public interface
System obsolescence	Interoperability + modern infrastructure

Phased Implementation

A phased approach significantly reduces launch risk and gives time to build the user base and demonstrate value before asking anyone to pay. A few things are worth highlighting from this model.

Phase 1 at \$300-\$380K is genuinely achievable without government dependency if a seed endowment and one or two heritage foundation grants can be secured. The National Trust for Canada's involvement is an asset here.

The potential Indigenous Engagement Lead as a contract role in Phase 1 is worth flagging carefully. It is the right financial decision but carries a reputational risk if it looks like Indigenous engagement is being treated as a lower priority than other functions. The framing matters – this should be presented publicly as a senior contract position with a clear and committed path to full-time in Phase 2, not as a part-time role.

The single most important thing to do in Phase 1 to protect the Phase 2 transition is to communicate the fee model clearly from inception.

Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Level	Mitigation
Endowment not secured before launch	High	Phase 1 becomes fragile without endowment yield. Mitigation: Treasurer appointed early; federal one-time seed grant pursued as bridge.
P/T jurisdictions decline to contribute data	Medium	CRHP loses critical mass without broad P/T participation. Mitigation: Data sovereignty protections and structural representation are the primary incentives.
Professional fee uptake below projections	Medium	Phase 2 revenue falls short of target. Mitigation: Ontario benchmark validates willingness to pay; founding member program builds early commitment.
Indigenous engagement treated as advisory	High	Credibility with Indigenous communities collapses if structural governance is diluted. Mitigation: Indigenous seats entrenched in trust deed; cannot be removed by Board vote.
Technology platform underperforms	Low-Medium	Risk is in access tier implementation. Mitigation: Technology Director reviews all data agreements for technical feasibility before signing.
Government withdraws seed funding	Low	Phase 1 designed to not depend on recurring government funding. Mitigation: Philanthropic pipeline developed in parallel.
Fee introduction perceived as monetizing a free service	Medium	Professional users react negatively to Phase 2 fee launch. Mitigation: Fee model communicated from day one; founding member rate offered to early adopters.

5.8.3 Option 3 – FPT Table Ownership as a CRHP Model (Intergovernmental)

Key question

Is there sufficient political will among federal, provincial, and territorial governments to make and

sustain collective decisions about the CRHP over a multi-decade horizon? If the answer is uncertain, the design must build in mechanisms that keep the CRHP functional even when consensus breaks down.

The FPT table model asks governments to do something difficult: make and sustain collective decisions across jurisdictions with different priorities, electoral cycles, and resource levels, without any single government having clear authority to break deadlocks or compel participation.

The outsourcing of operations addresses the technical delivery problem but does not resolve the governance problem. In fact, outsourcing can amplify governance weaknesses, if the table cannot agree, the vendor operates in a vacuum. Design challenges will include:

- Consensus dependency – All substantive decisions require agreement across 14 jurisdictions with different priorities. This creates structural inertia as the model tends toward the lowest common denominator and resists bold decisions.
- Accountability Gap – When operations are outsourced and governance is collective, accountability becomes diffuse. If something goes wrong, no single government or body is clearly responsible.
- Participation fragility – Any jurisdiction can withdraw from the table or reduce its contribution without formal consequence, creating chronic instability in both funding and data.
- Meaningful Indigenous inclusion – An intergovernmental table of Crown governments is ill-suited to meaningful Indigenous representation. Indigenous organizations are typically invited as observers or advisors rather than decision-makers.
- Vendor dependency – Once a vendor is contracted, the table becomes dependent on that vendor's continued performance, pricing, and organizational health – with limited leverage to course-correct if the relationship deteriorates.
- Procurement complexity – Any significant change to the outsourced product requires a procurement process that all participating jurisdictions must agree to fund and authorize – creating long lead times for adaptation.
- Data sovereignty in a vendor environment – Ensuring that a private vendor handles jurisdictional heritage data in compliance with each jurisdiction's requirements adds significant contractual and oversight complexity.

A FPT Table model offers Canada the easiest to set up structure; however, it relies on voluntary participation and funding from areas subject to government budgets.

Legal Foundation

The FPT Table model does not require new legislation to establish, which is one of its primary advantages over more complex governance structures. However, the absence of a statutory foundation is also its most significant legal weakness as participation remains voluntary and enforceable only through contractual rather than legislative mechanisms. There are a few ways to structure this:

A) Multilateral Intergovernmental Agreement (MIA) - A formal agreement signed by the federal government and all participating provinces and territories establishes the table's mandate, decision-making

rules, funding formula, and data obligations. This is the most common legal instrument for intergovernmental bodies in Canada, however it is very fragile for a registry intended to operate in perpetuity.

Element	Detail
Strengths	No legislation required. Can be negotiated and executed relatively quickly. Established precedent in Canadian federal-provincial relations.
Weaknesses	Any signatory can withdraw on notice. Enforcement is diplomatic, not legal. Amendments require consensus of all signatories. Has no independent legal identity – cannot hold contracts, employ staff, or own assets directly.
Examples	Council of the Federation arrangements; some pan-Canadian health and social programs; Canadian Free Trade Agreement.

B) Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council with Secretariat – The MIA establishes not just a table but a formal council with a small dedicated secretariat, hosted by one jurisdiction (typically the federal government or a rotating host) that holds contracts on behalf of the council.

Element	Detail
Strengths	Creates an operational home for the table's administrative functions. The host jurisdiction can hold the vendor contract and employ secretariat staff. More durable than a bare table.
Weaknesses	The host jurisdiction gains de facto administrative power disproportionate to its formal authority. Rotating host arrangements create continuity problems. Still no independent legal identity.
Examples	Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC); some intergovernmental science and research bodies.

C) MIA with Incorporated Secretariat - The MIA establishes a jointly governed non-profit corporation as the secretariat, giving the table a legal identity, the ability to hold contracts, employ staff, and manage the vendor relationship independently of any single government. This is the recommended method as it provides the most durable legal foundation for this model. The incorporated secretariat resolves the contracting and data management problems while the MIA provides the intergovernmental mandate.

Element	Detail
Strengths	Legal identity resolves the contracting problem. Corporation can hold the vendor contract, manage data agreements, and employ the secretariat. Board of the corporation mirrors the intergovernmental table's composition.
Weaknesses	Adds complexity and cost. Corporation requires its own governance, audit, and reporting. Still dependent on the intergovernmental agreement for mandate and funding. Does not resolve participation fragility.
Examples	Some pan-Canadian research organizations; certain FPT infrastructure bodies.

Governance Structure

The table comprises one senior representative from each participating jurisdiction: federal, and all provinces and territories willing to participate. Decisions are made by consensus or, failing consensus, by a defined weighted voting mechanism that prevents any single jurisdiction from having a veto.

Potential table composition and decision-making rules

Element	Detail
Membership	Federal government plus up to 13 provinces and territories, participation is voluntary but strongly incentivized through the ability for participants to access data from other jurisdictions in a central repository
Chair	Rotating among jurisdictions on a two-year cycle with federal government chairs in founding period
Quorum	Majority of signatories including the federal government
Ordinary decisions	Simple majority of participating jurisdictions weighted by data contribution volume
Major decisions	Two-thirds majority is suggested and includes changes to vendor contract, fee structures, data frameworks
Consensus matters	Any decision affecting a jurisdiction's own data requires that jurisdiction's consent
Meeting frequency	Minimum twice annually in person; additional meetings by video as required
Secretariat support	Incorporated secretariat provides meeting management, documentation, and continuity

Finally, to fulfill this option, the actual operations of the register will need to be managed. Ideally by a secretariat, a small non-profit corporation jointly governed by the intergovernmental table, this may potentially be able to sit within an existing non-profit. It holds the vendor contract, manages data contribution agreements, employs secretariat staff, and handles the administrative functions that the table itself cannot perform without a legal identity.

Element	Detail
Legal structure	Federally incorporated non-profit corporation, directors appointed by the intergovernmental table
Board composition	Can be small, and potentially embedded within an existing NGO
Primary functions	Vendor contract management; data contribution agreements; secretariat staffing; financial management; reporting to the table
Staffing	Lean secretariat of 1-2 FTE in Phase 1
Financial oversight	Annual audit; financial statements reported to the table and published publicly
Dissolution	Requires table consensus; assets and data revert to contributing jurisdictions

The vendor relationship

The outsourcing model separates policy authority (the intergovernmental table) from operational delivery (the vendor). The vendor is responsible for the technical platform, data hosting, system maintenance, access tier enforcement, and user support. The secretariat manages the contract, acts as a liaison, and provides oversight.

What is outsourced

- The technical platform - the platform or hosted system housing the CRHP data

- System maintenance, updates, and security patching
- Access tier enforcement and user authentication
- Tier 2 user registration and support (if it becomes applicable)
- Data migration services at transition
- System interoperability with provincial and municipal planning databases
- API management and developer support

What is NOT outsourced

- Policy authority over the CRHP (FPT Table)
- Data contribution agreement negotiation and management (secretariat)
- Designation criteria and data standards (FPT Table)
- Financial management of the intergovernmental body (secretariat)

Vendor contract design principles

The vendor contract must be structured to protect the intergovernmental body's interests over a long time horizon. Key principles include:

Principle	Requirement
Data ownership clause	All data remains the property of contributing jurisdictions. Vendor holds no ownership interest. On contract termination, all data must be returned in open, standard, and portable format within 30 days.
Open format requirement	Data must be stored in non-proprietary formats to prevent vendor lock-in and facilitate future migration.
Security and privacy standards	Vendor must comply with federal and applicable provincial privacy legislation. Quarterly security reporting to the secretariat.
Performance standards	Defined SLAs for uptime, response time, data accuracy, and support. Financial penalties for SLA breach.
Audit rights	The secretariat and any contributing jurisdiction may audit the vendor's data handling practices on reasonable notice.
Transition provisions	Vendor must cooperate fully in transition to a successor vendor, including data transfer, documentation, and handover support, at end of contract.
Term and renewal	Initial 3-year term with two renewal options. Competitive procurement required at each renewal unless table agrees to extend.
Pricing caps	Annual price escalation capped at CPI. No mid-contract price increases without table consent.

Vendor lock-in: a critical risk

Once a vendor has migrated the CRHP's data and built integrations with provincial planning systems, switching costs become very high. The table must negotiate transition provisions and open

data format requirements before contract execution. This is the most important contractual protection and the one most often left out of technology contracts.

Operations and Secretariat Staffing

Phase 1 – The secretariat is intentionally lean, with operations outsourced to a vendor, the secretariat's role is coordination, oversight, and relationship management. These are distinct roles, but they may be able to be combined to create positions.

Role	Status	Responsibilities
Secretariat Director/ Senior Manager	FTE - Phase 1 and Phase 2 (~\$90K fully loaded)	Manages the intergovernmental table process, vendor relationship, stakeholder engagement, and P/T liaison.
Tech Director, Data and Agreements Co- ordinator		Manages data contribution agreements, coordinates with P/T data contacts, oversees access tier compliance, supports vendor contract management. Critical role.
Financial/Admin Of- ficer	Part-time shared services	Manages secretariat financial reporting, audit preparation, meeting logistics, and administrative functions. Can be shared with a host organization in to reduce cost.

For Phase 2 the following roles should be considered:

Role	Status	Responsibilities
Policy, Records, and QA Lead		Develops and maintains designation criteria, data standards, and access tier policy. Works directly with the table on policy decisions and with the vendor on technical implementation of policy changes.
Stakeholder and Com- munity Relations Lead		Manages professional user community, Phase 2 fee membership program, public communications, and community heritage engagement. Reduces burden on the Secretariat Director.

Item	Estimate
Phase 1 total secretariat cost (1-2 FTE + 2 part-time)	~\$150,000 - 250,000/year
Phase 2 total secretariat cost (3–5 FTE)	~\$300,000 - 505,000/year
Vendor contract (technology platform)	~\$60,000 - \$430,000/year ⁵²
Governance and table operations	~\$10,000/year (meetings, travel, administration) ⁵³
Phase 1 total operating cost	~\$305,000 - 405,000/year
Phase 2 total operating cost	~\$455,00 - 660,000/year

⁵² Technology platform costs are included from section 4.12 These and cover the range of tech platform costs.

⁵³ Year 1 governance and legal costs are likely to be higher than subsequent years due to implementation of Data Contribution Agreements and FPT negotiations.

Staffing note

The outsourced model requires fewer technical staff than the Trust model because the vendor carries the platform delivery burden. However, the secretariat must have sufficient capacity to oversee the vendor effectively. Underpowered oversight is a common failure mode in outsourced public sector technology contracts. The Data and Agreements Coordinator is the most important hire after the Secretariat Director.

Data Framework

Data sovereignty in an outsourced model

The data sovereignty challenge is more complex in the outsourced model than in a trust model, because the vendor (a third party) has physical access to data that is legally owned by contributing jurisdictions. The framework must create contractual protections that are as close as possible to the legal protections available in a trust structure.

Data Contribution Agreements

Each contributing jurisdiction executes a bilateral Data Contribution Agreement with the incorporated secretariat. The agreement governs the jurisdiction's relationship with the FPT Table, not with the vendor directly. The secretariat is responsible for ensuring the vendor complies with the terms of each agreement.

Element	Framework
Ownership	Retained absolutely by the contributing jurisdiction. The secretariat holds a defined licence; the vendor holds a sub-licence from the secretariat for operational purposes only.
Sub-licence controls	The vendor's sub-licence is strictly limited to operational delivery. The vendor may not use, share, analyze, or commercialize jurisdiction data for any other purpose.
Access tier authority	Each jurisdiction assigns access tier classifications to their data. The vendor enforces these technically. The secretariat audits compliance quarterly.
Reclassification	Jurisdictions may reclassify data to a more restrictive tier at any time. The secretariat notifies the vendor who must implement within 48 hours.
Withdrawal	180 days written notice to the secretariat. Data returned in open format. Secretariat instructs vendor to delete all copies upon confirmed return.
Audit rights	Contributing jurisdictions may audit the vendor's handling of their data directly or through the secretariat on reasonable notice.

Permission-based access tiers

A tiered access framework is enforced by the vendor technically but governed by table policy.

Privacy and security requirements:

- Vendor must comply with PIPEDA and applicable provincial privacy legislation for all data in its custody.
- Annual third-party security audit of the vendor's data handling practices, results shared with the secretariat and table.
- Data breach notification to the secretariat within 24 hours; notification to affected contributing jurisdictions within 72 hours.
- All data stored in Canadian data centres unless table explicitly approves otherwise.
- Vendor staff with access to sensitive data must undergo background checks and sign confidentiality agreements.
- Most platform management will take place in designated Admin environment

Accountability and Risk Management

The FPT Table model has a more complex accountability chain than a single-body model. The vendor is accountable to the secretariat; the secretariat is accountable to the table; the table is accountable to participating governments; and governments are accountable to their respective legislatures and public. Each link in this chain must be explicitly designed.

Vendor accountability

Mechanism	Description
SLA reporting	Monthly performance reports to the secretariat covering up-time, data accuracy, support response times, and security incidents
Financial reporting	Annual audited financial statements for the contracted services; secretariat right to inspect books
Data handling audit	Quarterly secretariat audit of vendor data handling compliance; results reported to the table
Penalty regime	Defined financial penalties for SLA breach, data handling violations, and unauthorized data use
Termination for cause	Table may terminate the contract with 30 days' notice for material breach; vendor must cooperate in orderly transition

Secretariat accountability to the table

Mechanism	Description
Quarterly reporting	Secretariat Director presents quarterly operational and financial reports to the full table
Annual report	Audited financial statements, vendor performance summary, data contribution status, and strategic progress – published publicly
Table approval thresholds	Expenditures above defined thresholds require table approval; secretariat cannot commit the table without authorization
Director performance review	Secretariat Director performance reviewed annually by table chair with input from all jurisdictions

Table accountability to participating governments

Mechanism	Description
Ministerial reporting	Each jurisdiction's table representative reports to their minister responsible for heritage on the table's activities annually
Legislative availability	Table members available to appear before relevant legislative or parliamentary committees on request
Public transparency	Annual report and financial statements published on a dedicated public website
Stakeholder consultation	Annual public consultation on the Register's development, open to heritage professionals, communities, and the public

Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Level	Mitigation
Jurisdictional withdrawal	High	Any jurisdiction can leave the table, reducing funding and data. Mitigation: MIA includes notice period (minimum 12 months) and transition obligations. Data benefits structure incentivizes participation.
Consensus paralysis	High	Table cannot agree on major decisions, leaving the CRHP in limbo. Mitigation: Weighted voting mechanism for non-consensus matters; defined escalation process; secretariat given standing authority for operational decisions below threshold.
Vendor failure or exit	Medium-High	Vendor becomes insolvent, is acquired, or exits the market. Mitigation: Contract includes data escrow arrangement, open format requirement, and transition cooperation obligations. Secretariat maintains contingency fund for emergency procurement.
Vendor lock-in	High	Switching costs become prohibitive after initial contract. Mitigation: Open data formats required contractually from day one. Transition provisions negotiated before first contract execution. Competitive procurement at each renewal.
Data sovereignty breach by vendor	Medium	Vendor mishandles or commercially exploits jurisdiction data. Mitigation: Strong sub-licence controls, audit rights, mandatory Canadian data storage, background checks for staff with sensitive data access.
Underfunded secretariat	Medium	Table under-funds the secretariat, leading to weak vendor oversight and poor data quality. Mitigation: Minimum secretariat budget defined in MIA. Table cannot reduce below minimum without unanimous consent.
Political disengagement	Medium	Senior officials rotate out; political support for the table wanes. Mitigation: Embed CRHP obligations in each jurisdiction's heritage legislation where possible. Professional fee model in Phase 2 creates external stakeholder constituency that advocates for the CRHP.

Funding Model

Phase 1 is funded by jurisdictional contributions defined in FPT Agreements, supplemented by any available philanthropic or federal program funding. No user fees in Phase 1. All funding is dependent on participation willingness.

Funding vulnerability in this model

The FPT Table model is more dependent on government funding than the Trust model, because it has no endowment mechanism and limited ability to generate independent revenue. This creates chronic vulnerability, if one or two major jurisdictions reduce contributions, the entire budget is destabilized. The Phase 2 fee model is therefore not just a revenue opportunity but a structural necessity for long-term viability.

Phase 2 – Considerations for a professional fee model

Phase 2 explores the option of professional access fees, following the same fee structure as the Trust model. Revenue flows to the incorporated secretariat and is used to fund expanded operations and reduce dependency on jurisdictional contributions.

Source	Target
Professional fees (Tier 2)	Target ~\$525K/year at steady state same fee structure as other models
Jurisdictional contributions	Reduced proportionally as fee revenue grows, target below 30% of budget by year 4
API and data licensing	~\$30–50K/year from Phase 2 onwards
Total Phase 2 budget	~\$660K/year
Govt dependency at steady state	~25–30%, higher than other models due to absence of endowment

6. Recommendations & Next Steps

The planned decommissioning of the CRHP in Spring of 2026 creates an opportune moment to re-imagine a national heritage resource. Without coordinated action, Canada risks not only the loss of a critical dataset but also the fragmentation of heritage information and a decline in public access and trust.

There is strong alignment across engagement streams on the need for a renewed CRHP. Canadians want a CRHP that is modern, inclusive, sustainable, that reflects the full diversity of Canada's heritage, and meets expectations for modern digital access and functionality.

A number of technological tools and governance frameworks have been explored to replace the existing Parks Canada managed Canadian Register of Historic Places. Research, consultations, and engagement sessions have led to the following recommended strategies.

6.1 Recommended Strategies

To achieve a viable and long-standing CRHP, an integrated approach is required, focused first on stabilization, developing a governance and funding model, renewal, and financial stability.

6.1.1 Immediate Stabilization

1. Implement as new digital home, a complete and structured data export of the CRHP and website historicplaces.ca to maintain public access
2. Establish a CRHP committee comprised of FPT representation within the National Trust for Canada

6.1.2 Develop Governance Model & Funding

3. Secure initial investment funds for the preservation of data and project inception
4. Implement a formal data governance framework with all contributing jurisdictions and conduct a jurisdictional data audit

6.1.3 Platform Renewal

5. Select a modern, sustainable platform for renewal

6.1.4 Inclusion, Representation and Participation

6. Envision a future CRHP that is reflective of all Canadians, including community contribution, educational tools, AI integration features, Indigenous representation, and explore revenue generating models

6.2 Recommended Next Steps & Timeline

If the CRHP is to be saved, it will take a coalition of interested parties. This coalition would need to include data owners and funders. A future for the CRHP will depend not only on deploying the right technology but on convening the rights interests to provide it with a broad base of supports.

6.2.1 Immediate (0-3 months)

- Initiate philanthropic and federal conversations around the founding endowment contribution
- Convene a founding governance working group representing FPT and other stakeholders
- Engage legal counsel to draft the Data Contribution Agreement template and the structure of the CRHP Advisory Council
- Begin staff recruitment or work with existing staff while working on funding

6.2.2 Short Term (3-12 months)

- Complete agreements and execute formally
- Seat the Advisory Council
- Hire the Phase 1 founding team
- Engage Technology Director to begin platform implementation and data migration planning
- Execute first wave of Data Contribution Agreements with key jurisdictions

6.2.3 Medium Term (12-24 months)

- Launch Phase 1 Register – public access live
- Prepare Phase 2 readiness review

6.2.4 Phase 2 Launch (2 year plus)

- Expand with Phase 2 staffing
- Consider implementing new features to keep pace with technology where cost effective
- Explore opportunities for a professional user fee model
- Establish annual surplus or deficit to endowment contribution process

6.3 Estimated Cost Summary

To conclude, below is a low-end cost summary. This option utilizes Carleton Digital Twin with the National Trust for Canada as the governance and operating entity. It details initial implementation and ongoing maintenance and staffing costs.

Time * Year	Phase / Component	Build	Annual	20 Year
1 – 2	Salvage CRHP	\$15,000	\$6,300	\$27,600
1 – 20	Mid-tier website	\$20,000	\$4,400 (hosting)	\$108,000

A Path Forward for the Canadian Register of Historic Places
Options Analysis on Functionality, Governance, and Technology

3 – 20	Website maintenance	0	\$6,000	\$108,000
1 – 2	Phase 1 team/operations		\$120,000	\$240,000
2 – 20	Phase 2 system implementation	\$125,000	\$60,000	\$1,325,000
3 – 20	Phase 2 team / operations		\$400,000	\$7,200,000
TOTAL		\$160,000		\$9,012,600

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We recognize that the work of heritage conservation is inseparable from the ongoing stewardship and living knowledge of Indigenous peoples. We are committed to honouring that connection and to working in the spirit of reconciliation, respect, and partnership.

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Appendix A: Technology Glossary

Term	Definition
AGPL	GNU Affero General Public License — an open-source licence requiring that derivative works, including web applications, be released under the same licence
API	Application Programming Interface — a standardized interface allowing software systems to exchange data programmatically
Arches	Open-source heritage information management platform; Python/Django/PostgreSQL; developed by Getty Conservation Institute and World Monuments Fund
ArcGIS	Esri's commercial GIS platform suite, available as Enterprise (self-hosted) and Online (SaaS) versions
CIDOC CRM	ISO 21127 — Conceptual Reference Model for cultural heritage information, defining a formal ontology for heritage data
CKAN	Comprehensive Knowledge Archive Network — open-source data portal software widely used by governments for open data publication
CIMS	Carleton Immersive Media Studio — a research centre within the Azrieli School of Architecture and Urbanism at Carleton University, Ottawa. CIMS has developed Canada's Digital Twin platform and has proposed building a heritage register module for the CRHP successor system. Its not-for-profit stewardship vehicle is Collab Digital Twins (CDT).
CLOUD Act	US Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data Act (2018) — allows US authorities to subpoena data from US-owned providers regardless of where data is stored
CNN	Convolutional Neural Network — a deep learning architecture especially effective for image classification tasks
Django	Python web framework; the foundation of the Arches platform
Elasticsearch	Open-source search and analytics engine; used by Arches for full-text search and faceted filtering
GeoJSON	Open standard geographic data format based on JSON; widely supported
GeoServer	Open-source Java-based geospatial server supporting OGC standards (WMS, WFS, WCS)
HBIM	Heritage Building Information Modelling — application of BIM principles to historic buildings
HBSMR	Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record system — proprietary UK heritage database by Idox Geospatial (formerly Exegesis)
HER	Historic Environment Record — regional heritage databases maintained by local authorities in the UK
HTR	Handwritten Text Recognition — AI-based transcription of handwritten documents
LLM	Large Language Model — AI models (e.g., GPT-4, Claude, Llama) capable of generating and analysing text

Term	Definition
MATAS / MATS	Maintenance and Technical Support Agreement — Idox’s annual support contract for HBSMR
MIDAS	Monument Inventory Data Standard — UK data standard for heritage records
NLP	Natural Language Processing — AI techniques for analysing and generating text
OGC	Open Geospatial Consortium — international body defining open standards for geospatial data (WMS, WFS, WCS, etc.)
PoP	A geographically located replicated system to provide faster network access capabilities
PostGIS	Spatial extension for PostgreSQL adding geographic data types and spatial query functions
PostgreSQL	Open-source relational database; foundation of the Arches platform
RDM	Reference Data Manager — Arches’s built-in thesaurus management component
RBAC	Role-Based Access Control — a system where access to data is assigned based on a user’s role within an organization
SKOS	Simple Knowledge Organisation System — W3C standard for expressing controlled vocabularies and thesauri
SaaS	Software as a Service — cloud-hosted software accessed via subscription, without managing servers
TCO	Total Cost of Ownership — all costs of a system over its lifetime, including licensing, development, hosting, and staffing
WFS/WMS	Web Feature Service / Web Map Service — OGC standards for serving vector and raster geospatial data over HTTP

Appendix B: Key Open-Source Repositories and Resources

Resource	URL / Location
Arches Platform (GitHub)	github.com/archesproject/arches
Arches Documentation	arches.readthedocs.io
Arches for HERs	archesproject.org/arches-for-hers
Arches Community Forum	community.archesproject.org
CKAN (GitHub)	github.com/ckan/ckan
GeoServer	geoserver.org
PostGIS	postgis.net
Leaflet.js	leafletjs.com
Mapbox GL JS	mapbox.com/mapbox-gljs
France POP Platform (GitHub)	github.com/pop-culture/pop
CIDOC CRM	cidoc-crm.org
Transkribus (HTR)	transkribus.eu
ThinkOn (Canadian cloud)	thinkon.com
ICOMOS AI & Heritage	iccrom.org (Ctrl+S Culture report, 2025)
Esri Canada Store	esri.ca/en-ca/store
Arches service providers list	archesproject.org/service-providers
CIMS – Carleton Immersive Media Studio	cims.carleton.ca
Canada’s Digital Twin (Imagining Canada’s Digital Twin project)	canadasdigitaltwin.ca

Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement and Survey Analysis

C.1 Survey

Between February 27–March 15, 2026, a national survey was distributed via SurveyMonkey Enterprise. Participants had the option to complete the survey in either English or French. All data collected is retained and stored in Canada and will be shared with the National Trust for Canada. The survey was promoted through a range of media channels including newsletter and social media to reach the broadest possible cross-section of Canadians, including heritage networks, tourism organizations, municipal channels, provincial and territorial partners, and social media platforms. Claro Solutions additionally reached out to several key stakeholders, interested parties and individuals who wrote letters about the decommissioning of the CRHP inviting them to participate in the survey and circulate widely and/or reach out for additional commentary. Outreach was designed to attract not only active users of the current CRHP but also lapsed users and members of the public who may be unaware of the CRHP's existence or potential value to them.

Survey: Shaping the Future of the Canadian Register of Historic Places The current Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP) will be decommissioned in Spring 2026. This transition creates a genuine opportunity to shape a Register that better serves Canadians. The governance and technical decisions that will define the next chapter of the CRHP are actively being developed now. This is your chance to influence how the Register's data is housed, managed, and accessed.

C.2 Survey Questions

C.2.1 Q1. How do you currently interact with the Canadian Register of Historic Places? (Select all that apply)

- I use it to find information about heritage places
- I use it to learn about the heritage designation process, Standards and Guidelines, or other resources on heritage conservation
- I consult it to inform renovation or construction projects (e.g., development, architecture, planning)
- I use it as a tool to train architects, planners, engineers, or others
- I use it for personal interest or trip planning
- I am not currently familiar with the CRHP
- Other: _____

C.2.2 Q2. How do you like to search for information in the current CRHP? (Select all that apply)

- By location
- By period
- By style or function
- By designating jurisdiction
- By keyword
- By glossary
- On a map

Open Question: How important are the above elements in any future register? And are there any barriers you encounter with the existing search functionality?

C.2.3 Q3. How well does the current CRHP reflect the full diversity of Canada's heritage, including Indigenous, Black, Asian Canadian, and other historically underrepresented communities? (Scale: Very Poorly – Very Well)

Open Question: What types of heritage places or histories do you feel are most underrepresented?

C.2.4 Q4. What information would be most valuable to you in a future CRHP listing? (Select your top three)

- General information about historical significance
- Specific information about architectural or physical value (heritage value and character defining elements)
- Conservation status (Endangered, lost)
- Indigenous cultural significance
- Community significance
- Photos and visual documentation
- Mapping and geographic data
- Links to related sites or resources
- Opportunities to contribute my own stories or photos
- Open to the public (museum, inn, restaurant)
- Other: _____

C.2.5 Q5. How important is it that a future CRHP be accessible in the following ways? (Rate each: Not Important – Essential)

- Available in both official languages
- Available in Indigenous languages
- Available in Other languages

- Mobile-friendly interface
- Open data access for researchers and developers
- Integration or interoperability with other heritage or planning databases
- Accessible to people with disabilities

C.2.6 Q6. How important is it to you that the Register be:

- Authoritative (containing only verified information from reliable sources)
- Comprehensive (including all designated places)
- Up to date (revised on a regular basis)
- A Legal Authority (used as a tool for financial incentives or regulations)

Please rate the importance of each. (Rate on scale: very important — not important at all)

C.2.7 Q7. Should the future CRHP allow for community-led nominations that do not require formal government designation first, understanding that these nominations will be clearly labelled as community contributed? (Open text)

Suggested prompt: Consider Indigenous communities, local heritage groups, and communities whose histories are tied to specific places.

C.2.8 Q8. What would make a future CRHP more useful to you in your work or area of interest? (Open text)

C.2.9 Q9. How concerned are you about the following risks in the transition to a new CRHP system? (Rate each: Not Concerned – Very Concerned)

- Loss of existing data during the transition
- Reduced accessibility during the changeover period
- A governance model that does not reflect diverse community needs
- Inadequate funding for long-term sustainability
- Addressing Privacy concerns
- Online accessibility compliance
- Lack of community input in the design process

C.2.10 Q10. Is there anything else you would like to see considered in the design of a future CRHP, or any additional thoughts you would like to share? (Open text)

C.3 Survey Response Overview

932	614	755	519
Total survey respondents	Open-ended responses on underrepresentation (Q3b)	Responses on community nominations (Q7)	Responses on future improvements (Q8)

C.3.1 Q1 – How Users Currently Interact with the CRHP

930 of 932 respondents answered Q1. Users engage with the register primarily as an information and research tool. A meaningful 10.4% provided write-in responses revealing additional professional and advocacy uses not captured in the closed choices.

Interaction Type	Response Rate
Find information about heritage places	77.4%
Personal interest or trip planning	51.1%
Learn about designation process / conservation resources	37.1%
Inform renovation or construction projects	23.3%
Train architects, planners, or engineers	8.8%
Not currently familiar with the CRHP	11.7%
Other (write-in)	10.4%

Selected write-in responses (Q1) reveal additional uses including grant application support, social media content creation, archaeological assessment, municipal planning, teaching, archival cross-referencing, and tourism promotion.

C.3.2 Q2 – Search Preferences (870 respondents)

870 of 932 responded. Location is the near-universal entry point. 473 respondents also answered a follow-up open-ended question about search barriers in the existing interface.

Search Method	Response Rate
By location	91.3%
On a map	56.8%
By keyword	52.2%
By period	29.9%
By style or function	26.0%
By designating jurisdiction	25.3%
By glossary	6.7%

Note: Q2 percentages are of 870 respondents who answered this question, not the full 932. The open-ended search barriers question (473 responses) is not broken down in the source data.

C.3.3 Q3a – Diversity Representation

819 respondents rated how well the CRHP reflects the full diversity of Canada’s heritage on a 0–100 scale. The average score was 56.2 out of 100, with 113 skipping the question. 44% of respondents feel that the register does not adequately represent the full range of Canadian heritage.

C.3.4 Q3b – What Is Most Underrepresented? (614 open-ended responses)

618 respondents answered Q3b; 314 skipped. Keyword coding of 614 usable responses identifies the following themes. Respondents could mention multiple categories.

Community / Theme	Responses
Indigenous / First Nations communities and places	163
Black / African Canadian heritage	56
Asian Canadian heritage	35
Cultural landscapes, natural sites, and vistas	35
Ethnic / immigrant communities (non-British/French)	29
Rural and small-town heritage	27
Women and gender histories	24
Modern era / post-1945 heritage	17
Industrial and labour history	16
Vernacular and everyday architecture	13
Military heritage	10

C.3.5 Q4a – Most Valuable Information in a Future Listing (ranked, 909 respondents)

Information Type	Weighted Score	% Ranked #1
General information about historical significance	8.04	41.5%
Architectural / physical value — CDEs	7.38	21.7%
Photos and visual documentation	6.59	6.3%
Conservation status: endangered, lost	6.51	7.9%
Community significance	6.22	4.7%
Indigenous cultural significance	5.84	5.1%
Mapping and geographic data	5.43	4.8%
Links to related sites or resources	4.53	1.0%

Information Type	Weighted Score	% Ranked #1
Open to public: museum, inn, restaurant	4.29	7.0%
Opportunities to contribute stories or photos	3.22	4.1%

C.3.6 Q5 – Accessibility Requirements (914 respondents)

Accessibility Feature	Not Important	Neutral	Essential	Total	Avg (out of 3.0)
Open data access for researchers / developers	2.11%	18.44%	79.44%	900	2.77
Accessible to people with disabilities	2.81%	26.15%	71.04%	891	2.68
Available in both official languages	3.95%	28.10%	67.95%	911	2.64
Mobile-friendly interface	4.15%	31.09%	64.76%	891	2.61
Integration / interoperability with other databases	2.12%	35.49%	62.39%	896	2.60
Available in Indigenous languages	10.79%	56.73%	32.48%	899	2.22
Available in other languages	24.77%	63.74%	11.49%	888	1.87

C.3.7 Q6 – Importance of Register Characteristics (917 respondents)

Attribute	Not Important	Slightly	Neutral	Somewhat	Very Important
Up to date (revised on a regular basis)	0.33%	1.32%	2.85%	23.03%	72.48%
Authoritative (verified information only)	0.66%	2.08%	2.63%	22.45%	72.18%
Comprehensive (all designated places)	0.44%	1.87%	4.18%	26.29%	67.22%
A legal authority (financial / policy tool)	5.19%	4.86%	26.96%	32.82%	30.17%

C.3.8 Q7 – Community-Led Nominations (755 responses)

755 of 932 respondents provided open-ended views on whether the CRHP should allow community-led nominations without requiring formal government designation. 177 skipped.

428	56	271
clear 'yes' responses (57% of respondents)	clear 'no' responses (7%)	conditional / nuanced responses (36%)

- Common conditions and concerns raised by the 36% who gave nuanced responses
- Clear labelling to distinguish community nominations from formally designated places
- Need for a transparent evaluation or verification process
- Risk that an uncurated database loses authority and utility for professional users
- Support for inclusion of ‘communities of interest’ such as advocacy groups (e.g., DOCO-MOMO, Art Deco societies)
- Concerns about keeping community entries up to date if places are demolished or altered

C.3.9 Q8 – What Would Make the CRHP More Useful? (519 responses)

526 respondents answered Q8 (519 usable). The following themes were coded from open-ended responses. Respondents could raise multiple themes.

Theme	Responses
Better search, interface, and user experience	137
Keep it free and openly accessible (no paywall)	87
Better maps and geographic features	72
Links and connections to other resources / databases	60
Keep records current and up to date	50
More and better-quality photos	43
Richer, more detailed records	37
Community nominations and contributions	25
More inclusive and diverse content	13
Mobile-friendly experience	6

C.3.10 Q9 – Transition Risks (912 responses)

912 respondents rated 6 risk factors for the transition to a new CRHP system on a 5-point scale from Not Concerned to Very Concerned. Funding sustainability and data loss are by far the top concerns.

Risk Factor	Not Concerned	Slightly	Neutral	Somewhat	Very Concerned
Inadequate funding for long-term sustainability	0.33%	1.77%	3.65%	24.12%	70.13%
Loss of existing data during the transition	2.54%	5.95%	6.95%	26.90%	57.66%
A governance model that doesn't reflect diverse community needs	7.46%	4.01%	23.61%	35.19%	29.73%

Risk Factor	Not Con- cerned	Slightly	Neutral	Somewhat	Very Con- cerned
A legal authority (financial / policy tool)	5.19%	4.86%	26.96%	32.82%	30.17%
Online accessibility compli- ance	5.04%	4.60%	29.48%	32.62%	28.25%
Reduced accessibility during the changeover period	7.56%	7.33%	24.44%	37.33%	23.33%
Lack of community input in the design process	9.00%	7.76%	28.12%	30.15%	24.97%
Addressing privacy concerns	11.90%	7.18%	37.71%	27.38%	15.82%

C.3.11 Q10 – Additional Thoughts (331 responses)

331 of 932 respondents (601 skipped) provided open-ended closing comments. Recurring themes include:

- Strong concern that the CRHP should not go offline during the transition. Multiple respondents explicitly requested that current content remain accessible until a replacement is live.
- Requests for international visibility and links to similar registries in other countries
- The register should be publicized more actively to students, professionals, and tourists world-wide

C.4 Identified User Needs

Synthesized from all quantitative and qualitative data in the survey.

User Need	Evidence
Location-first discovery	91.26% search by location; map-based navigation (56.78%) is a near-universal expectation. Search should be multi-modal and fast. 473 respondents flagged usability barriers with the existing search interface.
Open data, no paywall	79.44% rate open data access as essential. Q8 responses repeatedly warn against any paywall. Free public access is a near-universal expectation across all user segments.
Currency and authority	72.48% (up to date) and 72.18% (authoritative) are the two most highly rated register characteristics. Users depend on CRHP as a trusted reference — not a community wiki.
A better search and interface	137 of 519 Q8 responses (26%) cite interface and search as the top improvement need. This is the single most common theme in free-text feedback across all questions.
Inclusive, diverse content	Average diversity score is 56.2/100. Q3b identifies Indigenous (163 mentions), Black (56), Asian (35), rural (27), and women's (24) histories as the most underrepresented.
Clarity on community nominations	428 of 755 respondents (57%) support community-led nominations, but 36% add conditions around labelling, verification, and curation. A clear governance model for community contributions is essential.
Data continuity through transition	57.66% are 'very concerned' about data loss; 70.13% are very concerned about long-term funding. Q10 respondents repeatedly ask that the current site stay live through transition.
Richer records and visual content	Q4a weighted scores put historical significance (8.04) and architectural value (7.38) at the top. Q8 responses call for more photos, architectural drawings, links to scholarship, and contact information.

C.5 FPT and Stakeholder Interview Guide

Enclosed is the sample interview guide; this document was created as a guide only and each FPT interview was different to accommodate a wide range of participants. Not all questions were asked and conversation was intended to flow organically to capture a broad range of responses.

C.5.1 Interview Purpose

This interview seeks to explore your jurisdiction's interests in a renewed CRHP, including functionalities that reduce duplication of effort and improve discoverability of heritage resources across Canada. This project has two phases: the first objective is to preserve the existing Register and its data in a new technical home. The second objective is to renew the Register through a pan-Canadian approach that reflects all voices of all Canadians, while also improving the user interface and functionality. Your input will help shape the study's conclusions about the future direction, governance, and technical capabilities of the Register.

C.5.2 Section 1: Current State & Gaps

1.1 Using the Current Register

Tell us about your jurisdiction's relationship with the current CRHP? Do you participate?

- If your jurisdiction participated actively in the past but no longer does, what drove your decision to stop?
- Could you describe the current state of your jurisdictional register in terms of digitization level, public accessibility, and data structure, and how it currently aligns with the CRHP?
- Is your digitized provincial register available to the public online?
- Does your provincial register use the data structure of the CRHP? Are there gaps in the CRHP data structure that a new Register should include?
- How does your jurisdiction currently use the CRHP?
- What features of the current CRHP do you find most useful?
- What do you feel is lacking in the current CRHP's features?
- When using the CRHP, what did you find technically challenging?

1.2 Duplication of Effort

- Where does duplication of effort currently occur with your jurisdiction when it comes to heritage data management?
- How easy or difficult is it to discover heritage resources from other jurisdictions through the current platform?
- What improvements would make the biggest difference for your day-to-day work?

C.5.3 Section 2: Future Direction & Vision

2.1 Functionality & Features

- What functionality would be most valuable in a renewed CRHP for your jurisdiction?
- Do you have thoughts or desired features for the CRHP. For example, links to tourism, cultural programming, or other sectors?
- Do you have ideas about potential technical capabilities, such as tiered access levels or enhanced search filters for a re-imagined CRHP?

2.2 Advocacy & Funding Alignment

- How could a renewed CRHP support stronger heritage advocacy in your jurisdiction?
- Do you have ideas about how a renewed CRHP would better align with federal funding opportunities?

C.5.4 Section 3: Governance & Management

3.0 Jurisdictional Interest

- Would your jurisdiction be interested in participating in a renewed Register?
- What would be the necessary conditions for a successful renewal of the CRHP:
- Willing to allow your data to be shared
- Willing to participate in setting up an automatic update system
- Willing to make modest on-going effort to contribute updated information to a common system
- Willing to be an active member of a governance team that makes decisions about the on-going development and management of a common tool
- Would you share your data and participate in an automated or manual update record system?
- Would you be able to provide resources through an 'in-kind' staff contribution?
- Would you participate in a collective decision-making body to govern the CRHP?

3.1 Hosting & Management Model

- What are your thoughts on a non-government partner, external to government, managing and/or hosting the CRHP?
- Do you have perspectives on a non-government partner managing or hosting the platform?
- What data stewardship and security safeguards would your jurisdiction require to be comfortable with that model?

3.2 Governance Structure

- Do you have an interest in participating in the ongoing governance of the Register?
- Do you have perspectives on how a governance model would be structured?
- How important is the participation and engagement of typically underrepresented stakeholders in governance for you?

3.3 Public Access

- Do you have opinions about the level and nature of public access to the CRHP?

C.5.5 Section 4: Participation, Data & Privacy

4.1 Data Sharing

- Are you willing to share your jurisdiction's heritage data with a renewed CRHP?
- Do you have any privacy or data sovereignty concerns about contributing to a national Register?

4.2 Active Role & Contribution

- Would you take an active role in helping to shape a future CRHP; for example, through working groups or pilot testing?
- Would you provide funding or in-kind support? If so, in what capacity?

C.5.6 Section 5: Closing & Additional Thoughts

- Is there anything about the future of the CRHP that we have not touched on that you feel is important?
- Are there other stakeholders or jurisdictions you would recommend we speak with?

C.6 Stakeholder Workshop Design and Format

A total of three stakeholder workshops were held in March 2026 for the following interest groups: National Council, heritage groups and Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP).

Each workshop was tailored to the specific stakeholder group it served, with discussion guides and facilitation approaches adapted to reflect the relationship that the group has with the CRHP. While the format varied across sessions, workshops were structured around three core areas of inquiry:

- **Current state assessment** – participants were invited to reflect on how the current CRHP is funded and whose responsibility it should fall under
- **Future state visioning** – participants were asked to consider what a renewed CRHP could and should look like, including improvements to functionality, governance, data access, and user experience
- **Priorities and trade-offs** – participants were guided through a discussion of competing priorities and practical constraints, helping to identify where there is broad agreement and where difficult choices may need to be made

Each session included structured discussion periods as well as open-ended dialogue, ensuring that participants had the opportunity to raise issues and ideas beyond the prepared discussion guide. Sessions were documented through detailed notes and, where participants consented, recordings, to ensure that the full richness of the conversations could be captured and reflected in the study's findings.