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Data reference standard on the business number

1. Preamble

1.1 This data reference standard is intended to ensure that departments and agencies use the business number (BN) as the standard identifier for all transactions between businesses and the Government of Canada (GC).

1.2 The BN is a unique, nine-digit number assigned to a business to provide a consistent representational format for identifying businesses in Canada.

1.3 This standard is also intended to standardize the format for capturing BNs in systems and identified in datasets to enable data interoperability and improve data quality.

1.4 The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is the designated issuing organization for the BN.

1.5 This data reference standard will be reviewed as required by the data domain stewards, in consultation with the data reference standard custodian.

1.5.1 GC enterprise data domain stewards:

- CRA
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)

1.5.2 GC enterprise data reference standard custodian: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

2. Effective date

2.1 This data reference standard takes effect on May 7, 2024.

3. Requirements

3.1. This data reference standard provides details on the requirements set out in subsection 4.3.1 of the *Directive on Service and Digital*.

3.2. Service owners and data practitioners must:

3.2.1 use the BN as the standard identifier for businesses in all transactions between businesses and their department or agency

3.2.2 apply the data architecture table (Appendix A) to describe BNs in new systems developed and datasets created after the effective date of this standard

3.2.3 validate BN and business identity information

4. Application

4.1 This data reference standard applies to organizations described in Section 6 of the *Directive on Service and Digital*.

4.2 This data reference standard applies to datasets and systems that are developed after the effective date of this reference standard.

5. References

5.1 This reference standard should be read in conjunction with:

- [Directive on Service and Digital](#)
- [Standard for Managing Metadata](#)

Related policy instruments:

- [Policy on Service and Digital](#)

Additional information on the use of the BN:

- [Business Number Adoption](#) (Only accessible on the GC network)
- [BN Web Validation Look-Up Tool](#) (Accessible only via login)

6. Enquiries

6.1 For interpretation of any aspect of this reference standard, contact ServiceDigital-ServicesNumerique@tbs-sct.gc.ca.

6.2 For information on validating BNs and business identity information, contact the BN Adoption mailbox at ISED (bnadoptionne@ised-isde.gc.ca). ISED is the federal lead in promoting the use of the BN across the GC.

Appendix A: Data architecture table

Table 1. Structure of the business number

Element name	Business number
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Definition	A unique, nine-digit number that is assigned to a business for use in transactions with the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal levels of government and with Indigenous governments in Canada.
Data type	Numeric
Field length (minimum/maximum)	9 digits
Example	123456789

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