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## **About the Access to Innovation (A2I) project**

- A2I allows approved providers of innovative technological legal services (ITLS) to serve consumers while complying with risk-based public protection requirements.
- ITLS providers apply to participate in the A2I project. Providers must demonstrate that they provide a sufficient quality of service while mitigating risks of harm to consumers.
- Once approved, an A2I participant can provide services in Ontario for a defined time period. During that period, the participant must comply with operating conditions designed and supervised by the Law Society to protect the public.
- A2I participants that meet expectations during their operating period can receive permits from the Law Society to continue providing legal services in Ontario on an ongoing basis.

## **The need for the A2I project**

- Despite concerted efforts across the justice system, access to legal assistance remains elusive for many people. Research shows that Canadians do not seek professional assistance for more than 80 per cent of their legal issues. A legal problem can affect a person's physical, mental, social and financial well-being.
- Innovative technological legal services (ITLS) can increase access to effective legal assistance. Advancements in technological capabilities have contributed to the rapid rise of ITLS. Through websites, apps and software, ITLS providers can help people understand, navigate and address their legal issues. There is growing consumer demand for these supports.
- The A2I project responds to regulatory issues that innovators and consumers have faced in developing and using ITLS. A2I is designed to provide greater certainty about the rules and standards that will apply to ITLS providers and to provide consumers with increased choice and confidence that the assistance they receive is effective and safe.

## **Benefits of the A2I project**

- **Facilitating access to justice:** By safely removing and adjusting regulatory barriers, the A2I project encourages the development and operation of innovative technological legal services (ITLS) that can reach legal consumers in new ways, especially in areas of high unmet legal need.
- **Protecting the public:** By carefully assessing and supervising ITLS providers, the A2I project ensures that consumers feel confident that they can make informed choices about the services they receive, are protected from risks of incompetent or unethical services and have recourse available, if necessary.



- Spurring innovation: By reducing regulatory uncertainty and offering routes to approved service provision, the A2I project gives ITLS providers confidence that they can grow sustainable operations and encourages them to continue developing innovative new legal solutions for Ontarians. By establishing operating criteria and parameters, the A2I project can also help give ITLS providers targets for the features and protections they need to build into their service models. This helps shape the responsible development of innovative tools.
- Supporting regulatory re-evaluation: By gathering real, detailed evidence about ITLS operations, the A2I project helps inform decision-making about the appropriate scope of the Law Society's regulatory framework.
- Educating legal professionals and the public: By highlighting new and innovative ways of providing legal services, the A2I project helps legal professionals understand the opportunities and challenges associated with ITLS and helps members of the public identify new opportunities to access legal help. Legal professionals can observe consumer interest in these new service models and can enhance their work by using, adapting to, or developing their own ITLS tools.

## How to become an A2I participant

Innovative technological legal services (ITLS) providers may apply to join the Access to Innovation (A2I) project at any point. This rolling admission offers participants the flexibility to apply at whatever stage in their development works best for them.

The A2I project is currently accepting proposals to participate via letters of intent sent to [acesstoinnovation@lso.ca](mailto:acesstoinnovation@lso.ca).

Details about what to include in your letter of intent can be found at [www.LSO.ca/A2I](http://www.LSO.ca/A2I) under "how to apply."



Potential applicants and others interested in receiving updates about A2I and information about events are invited to email [acesstoinnovation@lso.ca](mailto:acesstoinnovation@lso.ca) to be added to the mailing list.

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*The Law Society regulates **lawyers and paralegals** in Ontario in the public interest. The Law Society has a mandate to protect the public interest, to maintain and to advance the cause of justice and the rule of law, to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario and to act in a timely, open and efficient manner.*

**Media contact:** Jennifer Wing, Senior Communications Advisor, External Relations and Communications, [jwing@lso.ca](mailto:jwing@lso.ca). Follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).