# Deloitte.

# The robots are here:
# Are you ready?

In a time of increasing budgetary pressure and rising demand on public services, robotic process automation (RPA) is proving to be a viable and innovative way to address the challenges facing government and the public sector.

## What is RPA?

Robotic process automation is a technology that uses software robots, or bots, to automate repetitive tasks. RPA is different than typical enterprise tools because it uses the existing user interface, just like human staff does, to perform its work. It mimics repeatable, rules-based processes across systems, including websites, email, and databases. RPA can shave 40-80% off the time it takes to manually process the same information. It also performs tasks with a high degree of accuracy and quality, reducing processing errors by 20–40%.

## How can RPA help in the public sector?

A robust automation strategy can help address numerous current challenges, such as:

- Increasing demand from citizens, hiring freezes, or staffing reductions

- Difficulty hiring and retaining entry-level staff for data-entry and processing positions

- Growing backlog of work

- Frequent policy changes that need to be integrated into business practices

- Lack of capacity of teams to resolve the issues blocking the organization's progress while also keeping on top of day-to-day tasks

## What kinds of tasks can RPA handle?

The characteristics of tasks that are ideal for RPA:

- Are based on structured and digital input data

- Involve significant manual work with little or no automation support

- Include high-transaction volumes that are labour-intensive, time-consuming, or have significant impacts from errors

- Are prone to consistent backlogs and fluctuations in demand
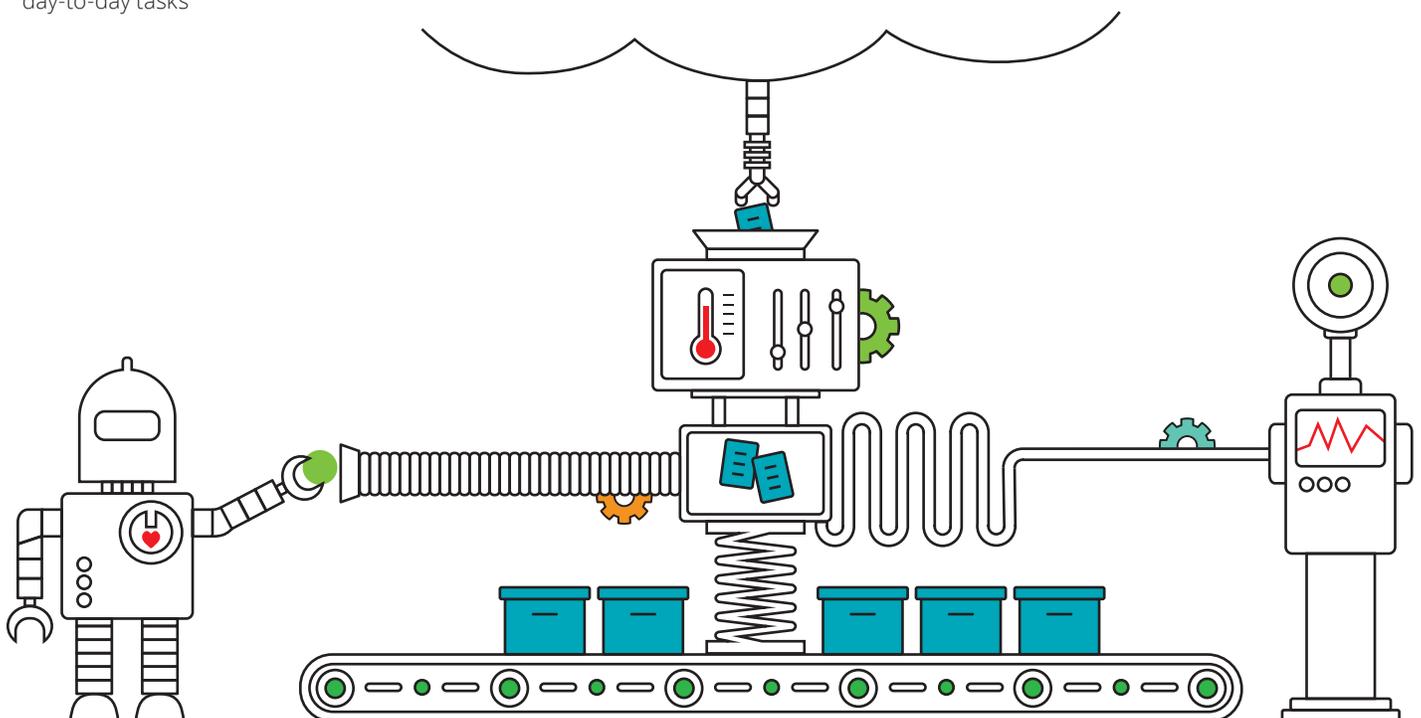
# Why it's important for the public sector to consider RPA

We think the public sector is an industry that will benefit from a wider use of RPA. The interplay of automation technologies can bring fundamental changes in how the public sector operates and delivers services to citizens.

By taking over the repetitive and mundane tasks, RPA can free up the time of frontline workers, help them make strides in their productivity, and improve their responsiveness to the public. It can allow them to be redirected to work that is more interesting and more valued, and make better use of their skills. RPA also reduces the risk of mistakes, such as inadvertently providing staff with unauthorized access to certain information, which is an important consideration when dealing with confidential and sensitive citizen data.

## How can RPA be implemented in the public sector?

In many countries, spending on the public sector has remained stagnant while citizen demands have increased, forcing organizations to do more with less. RPA presents a real opportunity for public sector organizations to increase their output, reduce errors, and meet service expectations, all the while maintaining a stable labour workforce.

Potential industry-specific opportunities include:

- **Central government:** Accounting and external reporting, revenue and accounts receivable management, expenditures, payables and payments management, and employee lifecycle management, including recruitment and onboarding.

- **Security/justice:** Cyber/fraud referrals, traffic and penalty notices, crime management, and character inquiry/background check and verification.

- **Health:** Nursing licence verification, health supplies inventory management, and patient discharge processing.

- **Education:** Admissions and enrolment management, student timetable scheduling and school usage management, student finance management, and alumni database maintenance.

- **Social services:** Incident reporting, case management, program enrolments and eligibility verification, facility usage management, and resource allocation.

## How could the public sector benefit?

- **Improved efficiency and quality:**
  Automation can release 40-80+% of the hours staff currently spend on processing activities and thereby create opportunities to redeploy those hours (capacity) to improve service delivery outcomes to citizens. RPA also reduces processing errors by 20–40%, as bots perform tasks with a high degree of accuracy.

  *Use case:* In Canada, Deloitte implemented a proof-of-concept for an organ and tissue donation agency to automate the transfer of lab data between hospital systems. The automation reduced the effort required to conduct data entry by lab assistants, minimized potential errors, and reduced backlogs, a key benefit when identifying donors and recipients for the organ donation process.

- **Refocused capacity:**
  The automation of routine tasks frees employees to focus on higher-order activities, develop new competencies, and build expertise.

- **Improved citizen/employee experience:**
  RPA can enhance the work of employees by reducing repetitive and manual tasks, creating a more productive workforce. Automation can also provide better and more cost-effective service to customers.

  *Use case:* A government department in British Columbia executed an RPA to process customer applications more quickly. The automation reduced the processing time by 90%, reduced the error rate to zero, and identified opportunities to reallocate 20 to 40 employees to more valuable and strategic work.
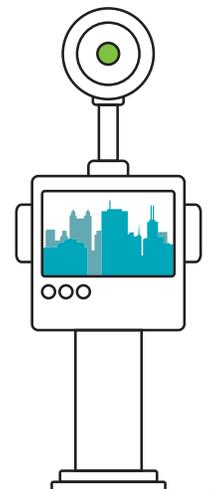
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