

CANADA OPEN GOVERNMENT WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – of which Canada is a member – defines Open government (OG) as a culture of governance based on innovative and sustainable policies and practices inspired by the principles of transparency, accountability, and participation that fosters democracy and inclusive growth. While Open Government formally took off in Canada in 2011 (and whereas OG activities in the different jurisdictions are at varying levels of maturity), a number of jurisdictions, including the Federal Provincial/Territorial and Municipal governments, have been adopting open data policies and releasing open data since 2008.

Jurisdictions are individually working to meet the needs and requirements of the Canadian public with respect to open government, which include:

- Making information and data easier to find by improving search capacity on government websites;
- Making more information and data available in standardized formats with improved metadata, tagging, and indexing;
- Being more open with Canadians by improving policies and rules so that government data and information is open by default; and
- Proactively engaging the Canadian public and giving them an opportunity for a two-way dialogue on open government.

Canada Open Government Working Group (COGWWG) is being formed to provide a platform for multi-jurisdictional information sharing and collaboration on open government activities.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Canada Open Government Working Group is operational as of April 11th, 2017.

MANDATE

Canada Open Government Working Group is a forum for multi-jurisdictional information sharing and collaboration on open government initiatives, tools and principles, including those on common open data, open information and public engagement across jurisdictions.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Canada Open Government Working Group:

- Promotes the implementation of open data, open information and public engagement principles in their jurisdictions and sets strategic direction in support of pan-Canadian open government;
- Shares, enhances, and develops common tools, platforms, practices, and policies to help Canadian governments increase the availability of their data and information to Canadians;
- Sustains these common tools and approaches, as they emerge, by establishing and maintaining governance processes that incorporate jurisdictional interests and promote common goals;
- Identifies gaps and opportunities towards advancing open government across the different jurisdictions;
- Seeks out and considers the perspectives and needs of a diverse range of experts and stakeholders on open government;
- Promotes information sharing across jurisdictions on citizen engagement to maximize investment in open government; and
- Contributes to Canada's participation on the Open Government Partnership and supports domestic open government fora (e.g. Canadian Open Data Summit) to facilitate the sharing of best practices and increase the impact of open government.

MEMBERSHIP

COGWG's membership reflects the multiple levels of government in Canada and is made up of members from the Federal Government, Provinces, Territories and Municipalities. Membership is limited to one or two executive representatives (at the Director level) from each participating jurisdiction, with expertise from a variety of domains.

- The Working Group will be chaired by a representative of the Federal Government (Director, Open Government, Treasury Board Secretariat) and a representative from the provincial/territorial governments (to be reviewed annually)
- Substitutions of members are discouraged – however, to ensure continuity of participation, members may pre-identify one alternate to fully participate in Working Group Meetings.
- Should a member become regularly unavailable to participate in meetings and the Working Group activities, the Co-Chairs will have the authority to request a replacement from the jurisdiction.

OPERATIONS

- Canada Open Government Working Group will meet monthly by teleconference and/or in person as required to deliberate on key priorities, identify actionable items, provide updates on joint initiatives and advance open government principles across Canada.
- On a quarterly basis, meetings will be extended to include jurisdictional senior executives (at the DG level) for input, direction and guidance on Working Group priorities.
- The co-chairs are responsible for organizing and chairing the teleconferences and for sharing with members in advance, relevant information which provides background or a context for discussion.
- Streams of work identified by the Working Group could be co-ordinated and led by working group members. Stream leads would be responsible for:
 - Documenting the scope of the activity stream;
 - Refining and taking ownership of planned activities and propose specific deliverables that will be undertaken; and
 - Providing regular updates to the WG on progress made under the initiatives.
- COGWG may establish sub-groups to study specific issues and develop recommendations when considered necessary.
- As and when required, the Working Group will provide expert advice/guidance and report on open government priorities and progress to Senior Executive Committees such as the Joint Councils of the Public Sector Chief Information Officer Council and the Public Sector Service Delivery Council (Joint Councils), FPT DMs' Table on Service Delivery, and FPT Clerks and Cabinet Secretaries.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW

The Terms of Reference were approved by the Joint Councils on September 8, 2017, and they will be reviewed periodically to ensure that they are current and well aligned with the direction of the Joint Councils.