# Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Canada Progress Report 2016-2017

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# Executive Summary: Canada

**Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) Progress Report 2016–17**

Canada's third plan included commitments related to improving access to information, increasing fiscal transparency, utilizing open data, and engaging Canadian citizens and the world in open government principles. While the development of the third action plan saw increased stakeholder engagement, participating stakeholders expressed concerns that their opinions were not fully considered in drafting the final plan. Moving forward, the government should embrace a more robust co-creation process that affords stakeholders a greater voice in the wording of commitments, and places special emphasis on engagement with First Nations.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a voluntary international initiative that aims to secure commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. Canada began participating in OGP in 2011. The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) carries out an annual review of the activities of each country that participates in OGP.

The Open Government Steering Committee, led by the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), continued to be the lead coordinating agency for OGP activities in Canada. However, coordination for the third action plan, though still led by the TBS, included a variety of departments and agencies under the Open Government Director General Committee, the Open Government Working Group, the Open Government Resource Development Working Group, and communities of practice. These open government committees and working groups were each responsible for coordinating different aspects of Canada's third action plan.

The third action plan involved coordination between the federal government and subnational governments. Because of Canada's federal system of government, most of the commitments in the third action plan

**At a Glance:**

Member since: 2011
Number of commitments: ...... 22

**Level of Completion:**

Completed: 0
Substantial: 86% (19)
Limited: 14% (3)
Not started: 0

**Commitment Emphasis:**

Access to information: 86% (19)
Civic participation: 45% (10)
Public accountability: 5% (1)
Tech & innovation for transparency & accountability: 50% (11)

**Commitments that are**

Clearly relevant to an OGP value: 95% (21)
Of transformative potential impact: 5% (1)
Substantially or completely implemented: 86% (19)
All three (✪): 1

target improvements at the federal level, though there are also some commitments which include collaborative activities with provinces and municipalities.

## OGP Process

Countries participating in the OGP follow a process for consultation during development of their OGP action plan and during implementation.

Development of Canada's third action plan involved a variety of in-person and online consultations with civil society stakeholders and included an electronic "voting" system on potential commitments. While stakeholder engagement had expanded from the previous action plan development, some stakeholders expressed scepticism toward the degree to which their input actually impacted the final action plan.

The government created a new multi-stakeholder forum to monitor action plan implementation, comprised of government and civil society representatives. The establishment of the new consultation mechanism during the first year of the action plan gradually replaced the previous advisory panel, leading to low levels of consultation during this transitional period. The IRM researcher recommends appointing civil society "champions" for each commitment to serve as points of contact for ongoing assessment and engagement during implementation.

The government published its self-assessment report for the first year of implementation in draft form on 18 August 2017 along with a consultation on the draft until 1 September and submitted its final self-assessment (in both English and French) on 20 November 2017.

## Commitment Implementation

As part of OGP participation, countries make commitments in a two-year action plan. Canada's action plan contains 22 commitments. Table 1 summarizes each commitment's level of completion and potential impact. Table 2 provides a snapshot of progress for each commitment and recommends next steps. In some cases, similar commitments are grouped and reordered to make reading easier.

Note that the IRM updated the criteria for starred commitments in early 2015 in order to raise the standard for model OGP commitments. Under these criteria, commitments must be highly specific, relevant to OGP values, of transformative potential impact, and substantially completed or complete. Canada received one starred commitment (Commitment 11).

Table 1: Assessment of Progress by Commitment

| COMMITMENT SHORT NAME | POTENTIAL IMPACT | | | | LEVEL OF COMPLETION | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✪ COMMITMENT IS MEASURABLE, CLEARLY RELEVANT TO OGP VALUES AS WRITTEN, HAS TRANSFORMATIVE POTENTIAL IMPACT, AND IS SUBSTANTIALLY OR COMPLETELY IMPLEMENTED. | NONE | MINOR | MODERATE | TRANSFORMATIVE | NOT STARTED | LIMITED | SUBSTANTIAL | COMPLETE |
| **Theme 1: Open by Default** | | | | | | | | |
| **1 Enhance access to information** | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 1.1 Access to information consultations | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 1.2 Introduce legislation | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 1.3 Full Access to Information Act review | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| **2 Streamline requests for personal information** | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 2.I Central website for requests | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 2.2 Written explanation for delayed response | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| **3 Expand and improve open data** | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 3.I Inventories of federal data | ■ | ■ | | | | | ■ | ■ |
| 3.2 Targets and progress reports | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 3.3 Guidance for releases, engagement, and exceptions | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 3.4 Publish StatsCan data | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 3.5 Unified online search tool | ■ | | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 3.6 International Open Data Charter | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| **4 Provide and preserve open information** | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 4.I Open Information Portal | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 4.2 Data retention guidelines | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 4.3 Access to records | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 4.4 Update online archive | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 4.5 Expand GCDOCS | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | |
| **5 Define an approach for measuring open government performance** | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 5.I Performance Framework | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 5.2 Report on the Directive on Open Government | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |
| 5.3 Indicators to measure open government | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | |

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| **6 Develop open government skills across the Federal Public Service** | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 6.I Learning opportunities | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 6.2 Education forums and workshop | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 6.3 IT strategic plan consultation | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| **7 Embed Transparency Requirements in the Federal Service Strategy** | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 7.I Single window for government services | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 7.2 Performance standards | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| **Theme 1I: Fiscal Transparency** | | | | | | | | |
| **8 Enhance access to culture & heritage artifacts** | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 8.I Develop standards | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 8.2 Enhance searchability | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 8.3 Expand participants | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 8.4 Digital collections | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | | | |
| **9 Enhance openness of information on government spending and procurement** | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 9.1 Interactive tool | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 9.2 Enhance Content on Canada.ca | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 9.3 Financial reporting | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 9.4 Update BuyandSell website | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 9.5 Best practices case study | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| **10 Increase transparency of Budget and other Department of Finance information** | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 10.1 Publish 2017 budget data | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 10.2 Publish monthly briefing notes | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 10.3 Explore additional budget transparency | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| **✪11 Increase transparency of grants and contributions funding** | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 11.1 Centralize and expand G&C | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 11.2 Expand departments' G&C disclosures | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| 11.3 Heritage pilot project | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | |
| **12 Improve public information on Canadian corporations** | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 12.1 Pilot program | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 12.2 Multi-jurisdictional prototype | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| **Theme III: Innovation, Prosperity, and Sustainable Development** | | | | | | | | |
| **13 Increase the availability and usability of geospatial data** | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 13.I Improve geospatial data access | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| 13.2 Develop standards | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | ■ | |

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| 13.3 Develop applications | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| **14 Increase openness of federal science activities (open science)** | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 14.I Chief Science Officer | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 14.2 Increase S&T data | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| 14.3 Increase S&T engagement | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| 14.4 Open science metrics | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 14.5 Open access for scientific grants | X | X | X | | X | X | | |
| 14.6 Digital data management | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| **15 Stimulate innovation through Canada's Open Data Exchange (ODX)** | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 15.I Map 150 companies | X | X | | | X | X | X | X |
| 15.2 Online platform | X | X | | | X | X | X | X |
| 15.3 National open data network | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 15.4 Three demonstration projects | X | X | X | | X | X | | |
| 15.5 15 data-driven companies | X | X | X | | X | X | | |
| **16 Align open data across Canada (Open Data Canada)** | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 16.I Common open data principles | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| 16.2 Priority datasets | X | X | X | | X | X | | |
| 16.3 Online search service | X | X | X | | X | X | | |
| 16.4 Open Data Canada | X | X | | | X | X | X | X |
| **17 Implement the Extractives Sector Transparency Measures Act** | X | X | | | X | X | X | |
| 17.1 Outreach with reporting entities | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| 17.2 Common online window | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| 17.3 Align ESTMA across jurisdictions | X | X | X | | X | X | | |
| **18 Support openness and transparency initiatives around the world** | X | X | | | X | X | X | |
| 18.1 2030 Agenda | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 18.2 Chair IATI | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 18.3 Global training | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 18.4 Global open data projects | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 18.5 Partner in GODAN | X | X | X | | X | X | | |
| **Theme IV: Engaging Canadians and the World** | | | | | | | | |
| **19 Engage civil society on open government** | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |
| 19.I Multi-stakeholder mechanism | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | |
| 19.2 Targeted engagement activities | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| **20 Enable open dialogue and open policy making** | X | X | X | | X | X | X | |

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| 20.1 Promote Open Dialogue | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | |
| 20.2 Identify supports | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | |
| 20.3 Identify best practices | ● | | | | ● | ● | | |
| 20.4 Open government indicators | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | | |
| **21 Promote open government globally** | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | |
| 21.1 International forums | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | | |
| 21.2 Open data in Francophone Africa | ● | | | | ● | ● | ● | |
| 21.3 Support international instruments | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | |
| **22 Engage Canadians to improve key Canada Revenue Agency services** | ● | ● | ● | | ● | ● | ● | |
| 22.1 Tax statistics consultation | ● | | | | ● | ● | | |
| 22.2 Clarify charities rules | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| 22.3 Indigenous benefits consultation | ● | ● | | | ● | ● | ● | ● |

Table 2: Summary of Progress by Commitment

| NAME OF COMMITMENT | SUMMARY |
|---|---|
| **1. Enhance access to information**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Minor<br>• Completion: Substantial | This commitment seeks to enhance the Access to Information Act through a participatory process. However, interviewed stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with the structure and ambition of the commitment as written. The Treasury Board Secretariat carried out the stakeholder consultation prior to the first year of the action plan, as was the House of Commons' review of the Access to Information Act. The government then introduced Bill C-58 in the House of Commons. However, reactions to this bill among civil society have been negative. The IRM researcher recommends improving Bill C-58 by expanding the right of filing access requests to the Cabinet and Prime Ministers' offices, requiring better documentation by officials, creating binding timelines for responding to requests, formalizing fee waivers and narrowing overbroad exceptions. |
| **2. Streamline requests for personal information**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Limited | The process for requesting personal information held by the government is challenging for Canadians, since it can be difficult to determine the appropriate agency. This commitment aims to improve this process by developing a centralized website for submitting personal information requests and implementing a 30-day guarantee for responses. According to the government's self-assessment report, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat identified business requirements for the website and completed usability testing for the Access to Information and Privacy Online Pilot website. TBS shared implementation options for the 30-day guarantee for requests for personal information with the Secretariat, then shared implementation options with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC) for feedback. The IRM researcher recommends that Canada consider implementing a central system similar to Mexico's Infomex website for requests under the Access to Information Act. |
| **3. Expand and improve open data**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Substantial | This commitment seeks to boost the quality, visibility, and accessibility of open data. The Treasury Board implemented a wide range of activities, including publishing departmental data inventories online, publishing 4,000 new non-spatial datasets and 27,000 new geospatial datasets on open.canada.ca, establishing an interdepartmental Open Government Resource Development Working Group, disseminating the 2016 census results according to an established calendar, and announced that Canada will adopt the International Open Data Charter. The IRM researcher recommends bringing the conversation beyond online consultations, and establishing a more in-person presence, in addition to more interactive means of remote communication such as teleconferences. |
| **4. Provide and preserve open information**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Minor<br>• Completion: Substantial | This commitment aims to resolve challenges to the preservation and accessibility of information that result from a lack of clear government guidance around how information should be found, used, shared, and preserved. This commitment also responds to one the five SMART recommendations from Canada's previous IRM report. The government relaunched the Open Information Portal, developed of an Open by Default Pilot Project, and developed and released draft guidelines on retention and disposition rules for digital content to receive public and |

| | stakeholder comment. In addition, the government rolled out the GCDOCS program, a government-wide information technology solution for effective management of federal records and documents, to 85,000 federal government workers. |
|---|---|
| **5. Define an approach for measuring open government performance**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Unclear<br>• Potential Impact: Minor<br>• Completion: Substantial | This commitment seeks to address a lack of unified and objective indicators for measuring open government progress in Canada by creating a performance management framework for open government.<br>The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat has developed and published an online progress tracker for its OGP commitments, though it is only expected to receive quarterly updates, and developed a draft performance framework for open government in accordance with existing global indexes. It is currently working to collaborate with the Open Government Working Group, as well as other governments and the OECD, on better practices for measuring impact. The IRM researcher recommends carrying this project forward to the final development of a performance management framework with indicators and its application to the government's actual progress, with greater parallel to OGP values. |
| **6. Develop open government skills across the Federal Public Service**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Minor<br>• Completion: Substantial | Several stakeholders have cited the pervasive "culture of secrecy" among public servants as a priority area to be addressed. This commitment aims to improve attitudes of public servants towards openness, as well as the understanding of openness across the Federal Public Service. The government has provided training for a total of 35,755 public servants from 109 federal organisations in courses which are related to open government. It also held several educational forums and workshops, including the Canadian Open Data Summit, a Go Open Data panel, and public engagement learning opportunities developed and delivered by the Privy Council Office. The IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward into the next action plan, but to consider the broader need to shape institutional culture alongside more direct skills-based training programs. |
| **7. Embed transparency requirements in the federal service strategy**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: None<br>• Completion: Substantial | This commitment seeks to ensure rigorous assessments of key government services and report these findings publicly. The government developed a new Service Strategy which was highlighted in the Clerk of the Privy Council's Twenty-Fourth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service. According to the Treasury Board Secretariat, the strategy includes "performance measures to enable public reporting on progress," and that the government is "in the process of defining key performance indicated and determining what data they can leverage." The IRM researcher recommends not to carry this commitment forward to future action plans. |
| **8. Enhance access to culture & heritage collections**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Minor<br>• Completion: Limited | This commitment aims to mitigate geographic limitations on Canadians' ability to access cultural and heritage artifacts by creating and expanding digital collections and to develop a searchable national database of cultural works. Consulted First Nations stakeholders expressed concern about the cultural context in which these works might be presented, potentially distorting their value. The Department of Canadian Heritage has developed a pilot website including 166,762 objects, with a variety of reference points and taxonomic classifications to improve searchability, in collaboration with eight partner museums. The |

| | Department of Canadian Heritage expects the network to expand to 100 museums by the end of the 2017 fiscal year, though the standard of presentation had been scaled back. Moving forward, the IRM researcher recommends ensuring a user-centric approach to data presentation and consider First Nations' concerns over proper contextualisation of the new data system. |
|---|---|
| **9. Enhance openness of information on government spending and procurement**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Limited | Building on a commitment from the previous action plan to provide more easily searchable information on governmental websites, this commitment aims to unify and expand the information published online about government spending and procurement. Due to the ongoing nature of enhancing openness around spending and procurement but the limited progress to date, the IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward to the next action plan, with emphasis on expanding the BuyandSell.gc.ca website. |
| **10. Increase transparency of budget and other Department of Finance information**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Minor<br>• Completion: Substantial | Building on a commitment from the previous action plan to release 2015 budget information, this commitment aims to expand and expedite available information regarding the budget and to provide briefing notes from the Department of Finance related to underlying issues raised regarding the budgeting process. During the first year of implementation, datasets on the 2017 budget were published online, the Department of Finance began publishing monthly briefing notes prepared by officials for the Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary and the Deputy Minister, and the Department of Finance posted summary reports of the results of pre-budget consultations for the 2016 and 2017 budgets. The government self-assessment states that survey submissions for the 2017 budget were significantly higher than previous years, possibly indicating a higher level of public engagement with the budgeting process. The IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward, potentially by expanding the amount of information on briefing notes, and by adopting a more limited approach to redactions. |
| **✪11. Increase transparency of grants and contributions funding**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Transformative<br>• Completion: Substantial | The current system for reporting on grants and contributions is distributed across government, is not standardized, and only applies to contracts over $25,000. This commitment aims to advance access to information and public oversight over government grants and contributions. The Canadian Heritage pilot included in this commitment could significantly improve Canada's financial disclosure system, making the impact of this commitment on transparency potentially transformative.<br><br>The Treasury Board Secretariat has made over 37,000 grant and contribution disclosures available on the open.canada.ca website and developed and uploaded training sessions online. The Office of the Comptroller General has developed a draft guideline to lower the threshold for grant and contribution disclosure to $1. Lastly, all Canadian Heritage grants and contributions over $1 are being posted online. While it is too early to comment on the overall impact, the CSO Powered By Data has begun working with the information and expressed confidence the data will support the work of civil society. The IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward to future action plans, with special emphasis on the promising Canadian Heritage pilot. |

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| **12. Improve public information on Canadian corporations**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Minor<br>• Completion: Substantial | Corporate accountability is an issue of growing interest and relevance in Canada, but the federal system can create jurisdictional challenges for users seeking to navigate the open data system. This commitment seeks to enhance the searchability and availability of information on Canadian businesses that is held in business registries at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels. Innovation, Science, and Economic Development created a pilot program for a unified search tool and expanded this prototype to eight provinces between November 2016 and March 2017. The IRM researcher recommends that the government expands the amount of business information that it collects once this program is operational. |
| **13. Increase the availability and usability of geospatial data**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Substantial | Although geospatial data is the largest publicly available data type in Canada in terms of quantity, this commitment seeks to enhance the usability, searchability and accessibility of this data. During the first year of implementation, Natural Resources Canada increased the total number of records available on the Open Maps component of the Open Government catalogue from 200 to 573, is participating in the US Federal Geographic Data Committee Open Geospatial Consortium (OCG), the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, and the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), and developed several applications which use geospatial data. The IRM researcher recommends affording a stronger role to leading data institutions, to allow them greater latitude to push the envelope in terms of innovating new ways to package and deliver information. |
| **14. Increase openness of federal science activities (open science)**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Substantial | Under the previous government, there was widespread evidence of government scientists being "muzzled" by a strict communications policy. This commitment aims to make it easier for Canadians to access scientific research produced by their government and was an important thematic focus for consulted civil society stakeholders. At the time of this report, the government had appointed the Chief Science Officer, launched the Federal Science Library, and developed a report for Environment and Climate Change Canada on open science metrics, among other activities. Consulted stakeholders noted the initiatives of the current government have had a significant positive impact on the openness of federal science activities. The IRM researcher recommends carrying these initiatives forward with more clearly identifiable benchmarks in the next action plan. |
| **15. Stimulate innovation through Canada's Open Data Exchange (ODX)**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Substantial | This commitment seeks to support private sector utilization of open data and to improve understanding around how the private sector can extract value from open data. The Open Data Exchange (ODX) completed its mapping of Canadian companies, launched the results on its website. and completed and launched the online platform to showcase this information. ODX also carried out a national tour, posted reports from Atlantic Canada, Central Canada, and Western Canada on their website, and provided a range of support to participants in its programs. One interviewed stakeholder reported that their business had been substantially helped by the program. The IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward, creating a parallel structure for incubating civil society programs in this field and instituting better transparency structures for ODX itself. |

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| **16. Align open data across Canada (Open Data Canada)**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Substantial | This commitment aims to mitigate challenges that Canadians face in obtaining and comparing information from different jurisdictions. The government's attempt to develop common open data principles was carried out in collaboration with Open North. The Treasury Board Secretariat developed a draft work plan on a cross-jurisdiction federated search service to be piloted by the provinces of Alberta, Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec, and the Canadian Open Data Summit took place in Edmonton from 12-14 June 2017. According to Open North, there has been a change in tone among inter-jurisdictional working groups, along with an increase in collaboration and joint meetings. The IRM researcher recommends that the government work to enhance implementation of strong open data standards across the federal government itself, and to adopt the international open data charter at the federal level. |
| **17. Implement the Extractives Sector Transparency Measures Act**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Minor<br>• Completion: Substantial | Canada passed the Extractive Industry Transparency Measures Act (ESTMA) in connection with its second action plan. This commitment aims to improve implementation of ESTMA and expand the utility and accessibility of material released about ESTMA. Natural Resources Canada carried out several outreach activities to promote awareness of ESTMA, developed an online portal for ESTMA reports, and held bilateral meetings on ESTMA with Quebec, the United Kingdom and France, to align standards. Publish What You Pay-Canada has utilized the information which has been uploaded to Natural Resources Canada's new online portal, though they are also critical of the materials which are available. The IRM researcher recommends addressing these concerns in line with generally promoting better practices for open data. |
| **18. Support openness and transparency initiatives around the world**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Minor<br>• Completion: Substantial | This commitment includes several initiatives to increase transparency of international development funding, and to share skills and knowledge in this area with developing countries. While the commitment focuses on increasing open government internationally, certain milestones might also have a positive impact on Canada by developing new skills in implementing transparency policies. During the first year of the action plan, Canada was elected to chair the International Aid Transparency Initiative, Open Data for Development (OD4D). The government held a series of trainings through the School of Data training program and 58 new datasets from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada were released onto the open data portal. If the government seeks to continues these positive initiatives in future action plans, the IRM researcher recommends that included projects have a more tangible connection to Canada through a more active participation of Canadian government agencies beyond the International Development Research Centre 's funding and oversight role. |
| **19. Engage civil society on open government**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate | This commitment seeks to remedy weaknesses in the civil society consultation structure that occurred during Canada's first two action plans. Discussions between the Treasury Board Secretariat and civil society stakeholders resulted in draft terms of reference to establish a permanent consultation mechanism. The government planned to call a nomination process for representatives and launch the forum formally in late 2017. Also, |

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|---|---|
| • Completion: Substantial | various agencies have carried out consultations connected to their OGP commitments. Civil society representatives noted that government attitude towards engagement and consultation had substantially improved since the current government took power. The IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward, both by expanding the scope of civil society consultations, and by pushing toward a stronger standard of co-creation in the development and execution of action plans. |
| **20. Enable open dialogue and open policy making**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Substantial | The commitment calls for active public engagement, and in particular with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, in accordance with a prominent campaign promise by the new government and reflecting a major human rights priority in Canada. As part of the implementation, the Privy Council Office developed and posted a set of draft principles for Consultations and Public Engagement. Additionally, they facilitated a workshop with First Nations leaders at the Canadian Open Data Summit. The Privy Council Office also held discussions at the Canadian Open Data Summit and the Civic Tech Ottawa workshops to improve online consultation tools. The IRM researcher recommends working with First Nations governments to help build their own capacity for civic engagement and participation. |
| **21. Promote open government globally**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Substantial | This commitment is designed to foster Canada's engagement and leadership on global open data issues. The Canadian government participated in several global forums on open government. Open Data for Development co-hosted a regional stakeholders' meeting to commence work on a Francophone Africa open data hub, and the International Development Research Centre translated the Open Data Barometer into French and Spanish and developed regional reports. The IRM researcher recommends the intended nature and results of this international engagement be explained in more precise detail to provide a clearer roadmap for tracking success. |
| **22. Engage Canadians to improve key Canada Revenue Agency services**<br>• OGP Value Relevance: Clear<br>• Potential Impact: Moderate<br>• Completion: Substantial | The current government ordered a suspension of tax audits targeting charities engaged in political activities and pledged to undertake reforms to prevent future abuses. To implement the commitment, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) published an online survey of opinions toward statistical tax data and carried out consultations on clarifications to the rules around charities and political engagement, receiving almost 20,000 written submissions. Separately, the CRA contracted two public opinion research studies, with Indigenous communities and vulnerable populations, including urban Indigenous Canadians, and is working closely with other federal partners to identify next steps for applying the findings of these studies. Civil society stakeholders have noted a considerable improvement in civic space as a result of the suspension of tax audits. The IRM researcher recommends the next action plan should continue to address this important priority area of reforming rules impacting charities. |

## Recommendations

While the development of Canada's third action plan saw improved transparency and greater engagement with stakeholders, stakeholders expressed concerns that the government entered the consultation process with a pre-existing idea of which commitments were to be included in the action plan. A main recommendation is that the government develop a more robust co-creation process that allows civil society to express disproval of commitments. The co-creation process should also include a special mechanism for engaging First Nations' stakeholders that addresses the unique challenges that these communities face. In addition, Canada's next action plan should fully commit to reform the Access to Information Act beyond the limited revisions envisaged in the current action plan.

Beginning in 2014, all OGP IRM reports include five key recommendations about the next OGP action planning cycle. Governments participating in OGP will be required to respond to these key recommendations in their annual self-assessments. These recommendations follow the SMART logic; they are Specific, Measurable, Answerable, Relevant, and Timebound. Given these findings, the IRM researcher presents the following key recommendations:

Table 3: Five Key Recommendations

| |
|---|
| Improve consultations for the next action plan, including co-creation standards |
| Earmark specific resources for the implementation of OGP commitments |
| Work with Canada's First Nations to develop mutual commitments for improving openness, engagement and transparency |
| Pass robust reforms to the Access to Information Act |
| Harness Canada's existing open data expertise to boost the accessibility and usability of published information |

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**Eligibility Requirements:** To participate in OGP, governments must demonstrate commitment to open government by meeting minimum criteria on key dimensions of open government. Third-party indicators are used to determine country progress on each of the dimensions. For more information, see Section VII on eligibility requirements at the end of this report or visit bit.ly/1929F1I.

# 1. Introduction

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is an international multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to their citizenry to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance. OGP provides an international forum for dialogue and sharing among governments, civil society organisations, and the private sector, all of which contribute to a common pursuit of open government.

Canada began its formal participation in September 2011, when John Baird, then the Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared his country's intention to participate in the initiative.[1]

In order to participate in OGP, governments must exhibit a demonstrated commitment to open government by meeting a set of (minimum) performance criteria. Objective, third-party indicators are used to determine the extent of country progress on each of the criteria: fiscal transparency, public official's asset disclosure, citizen engagement, and access to information. See Section VII: Eligibility Requirements for more details.

All OGP-participating governments develop OGP action plans that elaborate concrete commitments with the aim of changing practice beyond the status quo over a two-year period. The commitments may build on existing efforts, identify new steps to complete ongoing reforms, or initiate action in an entirely new area.

Canada developed its national action plan from March to July 2016. The official implementation period for the action plan was 1 July 2016 through 30 June 2018. This year one report covers the action plan development process and first year of implementation, from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017. Beginning in 2015, the IRM started publishing end-of-term reports on the final status of progress at the end of the action plan's two-year period. Any activities or progress occurring after the first year of implementation will be assessed in the end-of-term report. The government published its self-assessment on 18 August 2017 for a consultation which remained open until 1 September 2017. This is in accordance with OGP requirements.

The Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM) of OGP has partnered with Michael Karanicolas, in an independent capacity, who carried out this evaluation of the development and implementation of Canada's third action plan. To gather the voices of multiple stakeholders, the IRM researcher organized stakeholder focus groups in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto, following which, he carried out a series of individual interviews in person and by phone. The IRM aims to inform ongoing dialogue around development and implementation of future commitments. Methods and sources are dealt with in Section VI of this report (Methodology and Sources).

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[1] The letter is available at: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/canada-letter-of-intent-join-ogp.

# II. Context

This is Canada's third action plan, and the first since the country's 2015 election. It attempts to reverse course on many of the problematic policies which marked the final years of the previous government. But while most stakeholders have seen substantial improvement since the election, there are concerns about a lack of ambition to take bold, progressive steps forward, and that the pace of improvements may slow moving forward. Civil society is watching keenly to see whether Canada's recent rebranding marks a true substantive transformation on openness and civic engagement, or merely a change in tone.

## 2.1 Background

On 19 October 2015, Canada held an election which resulted in the replacement of Stephen Harper of the Conservative Party of Canada, who had served as Canada's Prime Minister since 2006, with a new government led by Justin Trudeau of the Liberal Party. The final years of the previous government were marked by a sharp decline in government openness and civic engagement. This included, among other things, chronic underfunding of the Information Commissioner's Office,[1] the launch of a constitutional challenge by the Information Commissioner to protest destruction of records subject to an information request,[2] the "unprecedented" use of the Canada Revenue Agency to attack charitable organisations critical of the government,[3] the "muzzling" of federal scientists from speaking openly about their research,[4] the destruction of years of scientific research data,[5] and the introduction of new criminal restrictions on speech that were widely criticized by civil society and academics.[6]

Since the 2015 election, a significant amount of the current government's agenda has been devoted to reversing problematic policies of its predecessor. For example, in June 2016, the government approved the allocation of emergency funding for the Office of the Information Commissioner in order to help clear the mounting backlog of appeals.[7] Shortly following the election, the government suspended all action in relation to the remaining audits and objections that were part of the Political Activities Audit Program.[8] The government also initiated a process to scale back the controversial changes made to the Anti-terrorism Act, including the new criminal restrictions on speech mentioned above.[9]

In general, the new government has worked to present itself internationally as a progressive force. To a large degree, it has been successful in reshaping its image.[10] This rebranding includes increased engagement with the Open Government Partnership; as of March 2017, Canada was elected to a seat on the OGP Steering Committee.[11] However, while discussions with civil society stakeholders as part of the development of this report revealed a common feeling that the new government has been a substantial improvement to its predecessor on matters of openness, civic engagement and public accountability, there are underlying concerns that the pace of improvement may be slowing as Canada moves further from the election, and that the government may not follow through on key promises pertaining to open government. A notable example here are the reforms to Canada's Access to Information Act, which have fallen short of what many expected, and what was promised in the last campaign.[12] The new government has also backpedalled on promises to reform the electoral system.[13] First Nations stakeholders consulted in the preparation of this report were particularly sceptical as to the current government's ability to follow through on the bold promises made during the campaign, and claimed that, thus far, any changes in relationships have been more superficial than

substantial.[14] Other indicators even suggest that the deterioration of key rights has continued. Reporters Without Borders downgraded Canada's ranking on the World Press Freedom Index in 2017 and in 2016, citing recent cases of surveillance against journalists,[15] the arrest and prosecution of a journalist covering a protest,[16] and a demand by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for a reporter to turn over his research records.[17] However, in relation to press freedom, it is also worth noting a recent positive development in the introduction of a bill to shield press sources, which journalists in Canada have long called for.[18]

### 2.2 Scope of Action Plan in Relation to National Context

In general, the action plan touches on most of the high priority themes impacting Canada that stakeholders identified during this and previous consultations. Particularly notable is Commitment 1, on access to information reform, which stakeholders, including civil society and the country's Information Commissioners, have been requesting since Canada's first action plan in 2012.[19] Indeed, recommendations for reforming the Access to Information Act go back decades, to at least 1987, when a report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General recommended many of the same changes stakeholders are pushing for today.[20] In addition, steps to "unmuzzle" Canadian public scientists (Commitment 14), to clarify the tax rules impacting charities (Commitment 22), and to improve engagement with First Nations (Commitment 20) all address important thematic challenges, as expressed in the previous section. The current action plan also provides for continuing improvement in areas where Canada has already made strong progress, including its open data programming, and commitments to capitalize on prior efforts to increase available information by enhancing the searchability, usability and accessibility of online material. On the whole, Canada's action plan is impressive for the wide range of issues it tackles, though it is worth noting that many of these are addressed in a broad and imprecise way.

Interviews with Canadian stakeholders that were carried out as part of the IRM process revealed that, although there were no complaints about important themes being left out, there were widespread concerns about the limited scale and ambition of the commitments and their corresponding milestones. For example, Commitment 1, on access to information, promises to introduce legislation improving Canada's Access to Information Act, a major priority of civil society stakeholders, but it leaves aspects of the legislative package subject to interpretation, and does not commit the government to passing the changes.

It is worth noting that the current action plan was developed shortly after the 2015 federal election, when the new government was facing many competing priorities. In discussions with the IRM, officials cited the proximity to the election as a reason why the consultation period to develop the action plan was brief. However, while this suggests that the next action plan could potentially include more precisely defined and ambitious commitments, there is a contrary concern among civil society that, as the government moves further into its term, and by extension closer to the next election, there may be a tendency to become more risk averse. Given that forward advancement is a hallmark of OGP membership, civil society hopes that progress can be maintained and accelerated in future plans.

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[2] Gloria Galloway, "Information commissioner takes Tories to court over long-gun data," *Globe and Mail*, 23 June 2015. Available at: https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/judge-orders-ottawa-to-hand-over-gun-registry-data/article25072076/.

[3] Dean Beeby, "Canadian charities feel 'chill' as tax audits widen into political activities," *Toronto Star*, 10 July 2014. Available at: https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/07/10/canadian_charities_feel_chill_as_tax_audits_widen_into_political_activities.html.

[4] Lesley Evans Ogden, "Nine years of censorship," *Nature*, 3 May 2016. Available at: www.nature.com/news/nine-years-of-censorship-1.19842.

[5] Gloria Galloway, "Purge of Canada's fisheries libraries a 'historic' loss, scientists say," *Globe and Mail*, 7 January 2014. Available at: https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/purge-of-canadas-fisheries-libraries-a-historic-loss-scientists-say/article16237051/.

[6] Dan Taekema, "Journalist group and civil liberties association start constitutional challenge to anti-terrorism Bill C-51," 21 July 2015. Available at: https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/07/21/journalist-group-and-civil-liberties-association-start-constitutional-challenge-to-anti-terrorism-bill-c-51.html. See also a joint letter by civil society organisations against the reforms, available at: https://www.law-democracy.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Joint-statement-Bill-C-51-must-be-scrapped-April-13-2015-FINAL.pdf.

[7] Marie-Danielle Smith, "Information commissioner receiving 'extraordinary' $3 million in new funding to resolve access complaints," *National Post*, 17 June 2016. Available at: nationalpost.com/news/canada/information-commissioner-receiving-extraordinary-3-million-in-new-funding-to-resolve-access-complaints.

[8] Dean Beeby, "Political activity audits of charities suspended by Liberals," *CBC News*, 4 May 2017. Available at: www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-revenue-agency-political-activity-diane-lebouthillier-audits-panel-report-suspension-1.4099184.

[9] Michael Geist, "Five Eyes Wide Open: How Bill C-59 Mixes Oversight with Expansive Cyber-Security Powers," 21 June 2017. Available at: www.michaelgeist.ca/2017/06/billc59/.

[10] Stephen Rodrick, "Justin Trudeau: The North Star," *Rolling Stone*, 26 July 2017. Available at: www.rollingstone.com/politics/features/justin-trudeau-canadian-prime-minister-free-worlds-best-hope-w494098.

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[12] Laura Stone, "Trudeau government breaks campaign promise on access-to-information law," *Globe and Mail*, 19 June 2017. Available at: https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/coming-liberal-bills-to-reform-access-to-information-national-security-measures/article35355974.

[13] Alex Boutilier, "Trudeau abandons pledge to reform Canada's elections," *Toronto Star*, 1 February 2017. Available at: https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/02/01/trudeau-drops-pledge-to-reform-canadas-electoral-system-in-his-first-term.html.

[14] Ottawa consultation, 18 September 2017, followed up by an interview by phone on 11 October 2017.

[15] "SQ had 7th journalist under surveillance, chief tells inquiry," *CBC News*, 10 April 2017. Available at: www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-spying-journalists-commission-1.4063212.

[16] "Press freedom groups condemn charges against N.L. journalist over Muskrat Falls protest," *Canadian Press*, 10 March 2017. Available at: www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/justin-brake-muskrat-falls-charges-1.4018965.

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[18] Tonda MacCharles, "Journalist shield law could soon become reality in Canada," 8 June 2017. Available at: https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/06/08/journalist-shield-law-could-soon-become-reality-in-canada.html.

[19] Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada, Letter on Open Government to the President of the Treasury Board (Ottawa: January 2012). Available at: http://www.oic-ci.gc.ca/eng/rr-sl-odi-adi_2012_1.aspx.

[20] Referenced in Parliamentary Information and Research Service, The Access to Information Act and Proposals for Reform (6 June 2012), p. 2. Available at: http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2005-55-e.pdf.

# III. Leadership and Multi-Stakeholder Process

Canada's consultation in the development of the latest action plan generally met minimum OGP requirements, apart from the fact that there was no active multi-stakeholder forum during the current plan's development. There was also strong sentiment among civil society that the process needed further improvement in terms of timelines and standards for co-creation. The process was also heavily weighted toward public sector employees. Consultation during implementation has been low, but the current work to establish a new multi-stakeholder consultation mechanism should provide an avenue for improvement going forward.

## 3.1 Leadership

This subsection describes the OGP leadership and institutional context for OGP in Canada. Table 3.1 summarizes this structure while the narrative section (below) provides additional detail.

Table 3.1: OGP Leadership

| 1. Structure | Yes | No |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Is there a clearly designated Point of Contact for OGP (individual)? | X | |
| | Shared | Single |
| Is there a single lead agency on OGP efforts? | | X |
| | Yes | No |
| Is the head of government leading the OGP initiative? | | X |
| 2. Legal Mandate | Yes | No |
| Is the government's commitment to OGP established through an official, publicly released mandate? | X | |
| Is the government's commitment to OGP established through a legally binding mandate? | | X |
| 3. Continuity and Instability | Yes | No |
| Was there a change in the organisation(s) leading or involved with the OGP initiatives during the action plan implementation cycle? | | X |
| Was there a change in the executive leader during the duration of the OGP action plan cycle? | | X |

Since Canada's first action plan, the country's participation in the OGP has been handled by an Open Government Steering Committee led by the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS).[1] TBS continues to generally take the lead under this action plan, and there are four major elements to the coordination of open government activities in Canada:

1. The Open Government Director General Committee, which provides high-level coordination and support for advancing open government principles

across the Government of Canada, including the development and implementation of commitments for Canada's OGP action plans.

2. The Open Government Working Group, which focuses more specifically on coordinating and advancing government-wide open government efforts and to track progress on commitments in Canada's OGP action plans. This Working Group is made up of the leads on each commitment in the third action plan and open government coordinators (typically Director-level staff responsible for coordinating open government work in their respective departments/agencies).

3. The Open Government Resource Development Working Group, which works to develop tools and resources that can be used by departments and agencies across government to support their open government work. This group is made up of working-level officials responsible for open government implementation.

4. Communities of practice, including the Public Engagement Community of Practices, which reinforces the work of the other three groups.

The latest action plan also includes coordination with numerous other government bodies for both its development and implementation, including the Office of the Information Commissioner, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, Statistics Canada, Library and Archives Canada, Public Services and Procurement Canada, the Canada School of Public Service, Natural Resources Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Global Affairs Canada, the International Development Research Centre, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, the Privy Council Office, the Canada Revenue Agency, the Department of Justice, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development.

The action plan involved some coordination between the federal government and subnational governments, particularly to align open data practices across the country (this will be further discussed in the next section). However, Canada's Constitution establishes a federal system of government where power is divided between the federal and provincial levels, limiting the ability of the federal government to unilaterally impact country-wide change. As a result, most of the commitments in Canada's action plan are targeted towards improvements at the federal level, though there are also some commitments which include collaborative activities with provinces and municipalities. It is also worth noting in this regard that Canada's most populous province, Ontario, recently joined the OGP pilot program which aims to extend OGP membership to subnational entities.[2]

According to Canada's latest action plan, the 2016 budget allotted $11.5M over five years toward supporting engagement with Canadians, and to "accelerate the provision of digital content", and a further $12.9M over the same period to "make it easier for Canadians to access government information, including their personal information."[3] However, Canada does not have a specific budget dedicated to OGP. According to the Treasury Board Secretariat, there are currently a total of 20 employees (18 full-time and two part-time) dedicated to working on OGP, as well as open government more broadly.

## 3.2 Intragovernmental Participation

This subsection describes which government institutions were involved at various stages in OGP. The next section will describe which nongovernmental organisations were involved in OGP.

Table 3.2 Participation in OGP by Government Institutions

| How did institutions participate? | Ministries, Departments, and Agencies | Legislative | Judiciary (including quasi-judicial agencies) | Other (including constitutional independent or autonomous bodies) | Subnational Governments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Consult:** These institutions observed or were invited to observe the action plan but may not be responsible for commitments in the action plan. | 13[4] | Parliament of Canada | 0 | 5[5] | 10[6] |
| **Propose:** These institutions proposed commitments for inclusion in the action plan. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0[7] |
| **Implement:** These institutions are responsible for implementing commitments in the action plan whether or not they proposed the commitments. | 8[8] | 0 | Office of the Information Commissioner Office of the Privacy Commissioner | 5[9] | 5[10] |

Participation and consultations with government agencies overlapped significantly with the general consultation process, as most participants (59%) in the in-person consultations represented governments at the federal, provincial or municipal levels. This includes 19% of participants from governments at the provincial or territorial level and a further 4% representing municipal governments.[11] Table 3.2 above details which institutions are confirmed as having been involved.

Although the consultation process engaged heavily with different government institutions, and the commitments themselves involve a wide range of actors at different levels of government, there is no indication these institutions were able to propose commitments beyond general suggestions as part of the action plan development.

## 3.3 Civil Society Engagement

Countries participating in OGP follow a set of requirements for consultation during development, implementation, and review of their OGP action plan. Table 3.3 summarizes the performance of Canada during the 2016-2018 action plan.

Table 3.3: National OGP Process

<table>
<tr><td colspan="7"><strong>Key Steps Followed: 6 of 7</strong></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="9"><strong>Before</strong></td><td colspan="3"><strong>1. Timeline Process & Availability</strong></td><td colspan="3"><strong>2. Advance Notice</strong></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Timeline and process available online prior to consultation</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td rowspan="2">Advance notice of consultation</td><td>No</td><td>Yes</td></tr>
<tr><td>✔</td><td></td><td></td><td>✔</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"><strong>3. Awareness Raising</strong></td><td colspan="3"><strong>4. Multiple Channels</strong></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Government carried out awareness-raising activities</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td rowspan="2">4a. Online consultations:</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">✔</td><td rowspan="3"></td><td>✔</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">4b. In-person consultations:</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td></tr>
<tr><td>✔</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"><strong>5. Documentation & Feedback</strong></td><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4" rowspan="2">Summary of comments provided</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td></tr>
<tr><td>✔</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3"><strong>During</strong></td><td colspan="6"><strong>6. Regular Multi-stakeholder Forum</strong></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">6a. Did a forum exist?</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td rowspan="2">6b. Did it meet regularly?</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><span style="color:red">X</span></td><td></td><td><span style="color:red">X</span></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="5"><strong>After</strong></td><td colspan="6"><strong>7. Government Self-Assessment Report</strong></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">7a. Annual self-assessment report published?</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td rowspan="2">7b. Report available in English and administrative language?</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td></tr>
<tr><td>✔</td><td></td><td>✔</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">7c. Two-week public comment period on report?</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td><td rowspan="2">7d. Report responds to key IRM recommendations?</td><td>Yes</td><td>No</td></tr>
<tr><td>✔</td><td></td><td>✔</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

The consultation process to develop Canada's third action plan on open government took place between 31 March – 15 July 2016.[12] It included both online components, through which 56% of the participants engaged, as well as a series of in-person roundtable consultations in cities across Canada on April 20, May 3, May 5, May 10 and May 12. Invitations to these in-person consultations were sent between two and four weeks in advance. The government also used social media to engage the public. A full dataset of comments received was made available online through Canada's open government portal.[13] Copies of the group discussion comment sheets from the in-person consultations, as well as of every individual comment sheet, are also available online.[14] An interesting element of the process is that the government established an online "voting" system for electronic comments received, allowing online visitors to express approval for particular ideas by marking them with a thumbs up, and thereby gauge which inputs were garnering traction with the public.

The consultation process also allowed the public to provide feedback on the consultations themselves, and the government has developed a set of proactive recommendations for future consultations based on this feedback.[15] However, it is worth noting that several of the recommendations are similar to those contained in previous IRM reports, namely providing a longer timeline for commenting on the draft Action Plan, publishing consultation timelines well in advance (at least four weeks before commencement) to allow for more detailed submissions, and improving promotion and awareness raising around consultations in order to boost attendance. A further recommendation, to expand engagement with under-represented communities, including senior citizens and indigenous Canadians, also echoes previous requests for more in-person consultations in prior IRM reports.

Earlier IRM reports criticized the consultation processes for Canada's previous action plans on several grounds, including a lack of in-person engagement, low awareness raising, an overly controlled dialogue, and a lack of transparency around consultations.[16] Indicators for the latest process show that engagement has expanded from 260 responses in 2012[17] up to 1,385 in this latest process.[18]

Nonetheless, while consultations have expanded, several civil society stakeholders expressed scepticism as to the degree to which their inputs were fully considered during the development of the action plan. Publish What You Pay-Canada noted the large number of departments involved in the commitments and questioned whether substantial buy-in from so many different agencies could have been obtained within the relatively short period between the consultations and the unveiling of the action plan. This suggests the government may have entered into the process with a fairly clear preconception of what commitments would be undertaken by the various agencies.[19]

Another point to note is that 59% of the participants in the in-person consultations came from various levels of government, up from 42% in 2014. While participation of government stakeholders is important, the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation questioned whether having such a large proportion of public-sector participants could skew the consultations, leading to prioritization of issues that may not align with those of civil society or the public at large.[20] The government appears to have recognized this problem by including a recommendation in its summary report on the open government consultations that, going forward, federal public servants should be provided with internal consultation mechanisms to ensure that future consultations focus on those outside of the government.[21]

Table 3.4: Level of Public Influence
The IRM has adapted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) "Spectrum of Participation" to apply to OGP.[22] This spectrum shows the potential level of public influence on the contents of the action plan. In the spirit of OGP, most countries should aspire for "collaborative."

| Level of public input | | During development of action plan | During implementation of action plan |
|---|---|---|---|
| Empower | The government handed decision-making power to members of the public. | | |
| Collaborate | There was iterative dialogue AND the public helped set the agenda. | | |
| Involve | The public could give feedback on how commitments were considered. | X | |
| Consult | The public could give inputs. | | X |
| Inform | The government provided the public with information on the action plan. | | |
| No Consultation | No consultation | | |

## 3.4 Consultation During Implementation

As part of their participation in OGP, governments commit to identify a forum to enable regular multi-stakeholder consultation on OGP implementation. This can be an existing entity or a new one. This section summarizes that information.

Under previous action plans, consultation during implementation was managed through an advisory panel on open government which was comprised of members from civil society, business and academia, and whose role was to provide advice and guidance on open government activities. However, over the course of the current action plan cycle, a new multi-stakeholder consultation mechanism is being established. This mechanism is comprised of 12 members, four of whom are to be drawn from government, six from civil society and two from other sectors. This new mechanism is tentatively scheduled to begin work in October 2017.

Partly because a new mechanism was being established, consultation was relatively low in the first year of implementation for this action plan. Although the previous advisory panel was never formally disbanded, engagement declined as the new mechanism was being considered. However, this decrease in engagement was from an already low level of involvement. The midterm IRM report for the second action plan noted that the advisory panel had not met in over a year as of October 2015.[23] Some stakeholders consulted in the preparation of that report were unsure as to whether the panel still existed, a confusion that persists.

## 3.5 Self-Assessment

The OGP Articles of Governance require that participating countries publish a self-assessment report three months after the end of the first year of implementation. The self-assessment report must be made available for public comments for a two-week period. This section assesses compliance with these requirements and the quality of the report.

The government's self-assessment report for 2017 was made available in draft form on 18 August 2017.[24] A consultation on the draft self-assessment report was held until September 1, and the government submitted its final self-assessment report (in both English and French) to the OGP website on 20 November 2017.[25]

The draft self-assessment report focused entirely on the implementation progress for the action plan commitments,[26] which it addressed in a systemic and comprehensive manner. This includes both a narrative for each commitment, and the launch of an

online dashboard to be periodically updated with ongoing status checks on progress toward Canada's action plan goals.[27]

Although the draft self-assessment report does not include discussion of the consultation process that led to the development of the action plan, this information was provided through a separate document published alongside the final version of the action plan.[28]

## 3.6 Response to Previous IRM Recommendations

Table 3.5: Previous IRM Report Key Recommendations

| | Recommendation | Addressed? | Integrated into Action Plan? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Reform and improve implementation of the Access to Information Act. | ✔ | ✔ |
| 2 | Overhaul the Advisory Committee to become an active, permanent dialogue mechanism around the OGP and improve meaningful public dialogue to move beyond informing and consulting to enhanced citizen collaboration and empowerment. | ✔ | ✔ |
| 3 | Support the collection and analysis of additional Canadian data while increasing the diversity and quality of datasets available. | X | ✔ |
| 4 | Ensure that commitments made in future action plans are supported by proper resources to facilitate the work of the public servants responsible for implementing the plan. This would enhance the potential for successful implementation. | X | X |
| 5 | Develop and publicize a clear policy on the preservation of digital material. | X | ✔ |

The 2015 midterm IRM assessment included five main recommendations for the government going forward. Of these, only two were addressed in the government's 2016 end-of-term self-assessment: reforming the Access to Information Act and overhauling the Advisory Committee.[29] However, the government's actual record of integrating these recommendations is significantly better, as four of the five recommendations have been addressed as part of the third action plan. It is worth noting that the relative impact of the suggested solutions varies. For example, although the latest action plan does address the Access to Information Act, something its predecessors failed to do, the commitments only pledge to carry out consultations and to propose reforms, rather than to actually pass improvements to the Act or its implementation. The recommendation to overhaul the advisory committee has been addressed through the establishment of the new multi-stakeholder consultation mechanism. The one recommendation which was not integrated into the current action plan, on securing proper resources for OGP commitments, remains a major challenge, and is reiterated as a recommendation in this assessment.

¹ See Canada's year-1 self-assessment report at: http://open.canada.ca/en/implementation-canadas-action-plan-open-government-year-1-self-assessment-report#toc4.

² See: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/about/working-groups/ontario-canada-subnational-pioneer.

³ Canada's latest action plan is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/content/third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.

⁴ Justice Canada, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Department of Finance, Global Affairs Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, Department of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development, Natural Resources Canada, Privy Council Office, Public Services and Procurement Canada, and the Treasury Board Secretariat.

⁵ Statistics Canada, Canada School of Public Service, Library and Archives Canada, International Development Research Centre, and the Canada Revenue Agency.

⁶ Provincial governments represented were Ontario, Yukon, Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec. Municipal governments were Vancouver, Edmonton, Quebec City, Toronto, and Victoria.

⁷ The province of Ontario provided a detailed submission, with suggestions that were incorporated into commitments 3 and 5. Yukon, Alberta, Victoria, and Edmonton all proposed ideas which were worked into the final action plan, though this engagement seems to fall short of fully proposing commitments.

⁸ Department of Justice, Department of Finance, Department of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development, Natural Resources Canada, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Global Affairs Canada, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, and Public Services and Procurement Canada.

⁹ Statistics Canada, Canada School of Public Service, Library and Archives Canada, International Development Research Centre, and the Canada Revenue Agency.

¹⁰ Ontario, Québec, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, and British Columbia.

¹¹ "What We Heard: Summary report on open government consultations March 31 – July 15, 2016," Treasury Board Secretariat, March 2017. Available at: open.canada.ca/en/content/what-we-heard-summary-report-open-government-consultations-march-31-july-15-2016.

¹² Id.

¹³ See: http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/8ef41d2e-9309-486a-9f9f-bfd11945a959.

¹⁴ See: http://open.canada.ca/en/content/what-we-heard-summary-report-open-government-consultations-march-31-july-15-2016#chap9 and http://open.canada.ca/en/content/what-we-heard-summary-report-open-government-consultations-march-31-july-15-2016#chap10

¹⁵ "What We Heard: Summary report on open government consultations March 31 – July 15, 2016," Treasury Board Secretariat, March 2017. Available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/content/what-we-heard-summary-report-open-government-consultations-march-31-july-15-2016#chap7

¹⁶ See: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/canada-2012-2013-irm-progress-report.

¹⁷ See: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/canada-2012-2013-irm-progress-report.

¹⁸ See: http://open.canada.ca/en/content/what-we-heard-summary-report-open-government-consultations-march-31-july-15-2016.

¹⁹ Ottawa consultation, 18 September 2017.

²⁰ Halifax consultation, 12 September 2017.

²¹ "What We Heard: Summary report on open government consultations March 31 – July 15, 2016," Treasury Board Secretariat, March 2017. Available at: open.canada.ca/en/content/what-we-heard-summary-report-open-government-consultations-march-31-july-15-2016.

²² "IAP2's Public Participation Spectrum," International Association for Public Participation, 2014. Available at:
c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/foundations_course/IAP2_P2_Spectrum_FINAL.pdf.

²³ Mary Francoli, "Canada Progress Report 2014-2015," Open Government Partnership Independent Reporting Mechanism. Available at: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/1.Canada14-15_English_Final_0_0.pdf.

²⁴ The draft self-assessment is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/draft-consultation-mid-term-self-assessment-third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.

²⁵ Canada Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report 2016-2018,
https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/canada-mid-term-self-assessment-report-2016-2018.

²⁶ Because the Mid-Term Self-Assessment Report was received by OGP after the period of research for this evaluation, this section discusses the draft self-assessment as it was in September.

²⁷ The dashboard is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/content/progress-tracker-third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.

²⁸ Available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/content/what-we-heard-summary-report-open-government-consultations-march-31-july-15-2016#chap9.

²⁹ The self-assessment in available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/end-of-term-self-assessment-report-action-plan-open-government-2014-2016.

# IV. Commitments

All OGP-participating governments develop OGP action plans that include concrete commitments over a two-year period. Governments begin their OGP action plans by sharing existing efforts related to open government, including specific strategies and ongoing programs.

Commitments should be appropriate to each country's unique circumstances and challenges. OGP commitments should also be relevant to OGP values laid out in the OGP Articles of Governance and Open Government Declaration signed by all OGP-participating countries.[1]

## What Makes a Good Commitment?

Recognizing that achieving open government commitments often involves a multiyear process, governments should attach time frames and benchmarks to their commitments that indicate what is to be accomplished each year, whenever possible. This report details each of the commitments the country included in its action plan and analyses the first year of their implementation.

The indicators used by the IRM to evaluate commitments are as follows:

- **Specificity:** This variable assesses the level of specificity and measurability of each commitment. The options are:
  - High: Commitment language provides clear, verifiable activities and measurable deliverables for achievement of the commitment's objective.
  - Medium: Commitment language describes activity that is objectively verifiable and includes deliverables, but these deliverables are not clearly measurable or relevant to the achievement of the commitment's objective.
  - Low: Commitment language describes activity that can be construed as verifiable but requires some interpretation on the part of the reader to identify what the activity sets out to do and determine what the deliverables would be.
  - None: Commitment language contains no measurable activity, deliverables, or milestones.
- **Relevance:** This variable evaluates the commitment's relevance to OGP values. Based on a close reading of the commitment text as stated in the action plan, the guiding questions to determine the relevance are:
  - Access to Information: Will the government disclose more information or improve the quality of the information disclosed to the public?
  - Civic Participation: Will the government create or improve opportunities or capabilities for the public to inform or influence decisions?
  - Public Accountability: Will the government create or improve opportunities to hold officials answerable for their actions?
  - Technology & Innovation for Transparency and Accountability: Will technological innovation be used in conjunction with one of the other three OGP values to advance either transparency or accountability?[2]
- **Potential impact:** This variable assesses the *potential impact* of the commitment, if completed as written. The IRM researcher uses the text from the action plan to:
  - Identify the social, economic, political, or environmental problem;
  - Establish the status quo at the outset of the action plan; and
  - Assess the degree to which the commitment, if implemented, would impact performance and tackle the problem.

**Starred commitments** are considered exemplary OGP commitments. In order to receive a star, a commitment must meet several criteria:

- Starred commitments will have "medium" or "high" specificity. A commitment must lay out clearly defined activities and steps to make a judgement about its potential impact.
- The commitment's language should make clear its relevance to opening government. Specifically, it must relate to at least one of the OGP values of Access to Information, Civic Participation, or Public Accountability.
- The commitment would have a "transformative" potential impact if completely implemented.[3]
- The government must make significant progress on this commitment during the action plan implementation period, receiving an assessment of "substantial" or "complete" implementation.

Based on these criteria, Canada's action plan contained one starred commitment, namely:

- Commitment 11: Increase transparency of grants and contributions funding

Finally, the tables in this section present an excerpt of the wealth of data the IRM collects during its progress reporting process. For the full dataset for Canada and all OGP-participating countries, see the OGP Explorer.[4]

## General Overview of the Commitments

Canada's third action plan is diverse in its thematic focus, including commitments addressing all four OGP values as well as a variety of subthemes including freedom of association and the civic space, the volume of open data to be released, the accessibility and usability of open data, engagement with the public and in particular with Canada's indigenous peoples, public reporting and performance measurement systems, and access to cultural materials. This is laudable in that it demonstrates intent by Canada's Liberal government to move forward on multiple fronts to enhance openness. The volume of commitments, and the diversity of staff and departments involved in the plan, is a further testament to the fact that the government has significant interest in progress toward better openness and public engagement. However, many milestones are written in a broad and imprecise way, promising merely to "enhance" or "improve" systems. The vague nature of these milestones leaves significant room for interpretation as to what level of improvement is planned, which in turn makes it difficult to assess progress or completion. Civil society stakeholders consulted in the preparation of this report also pointed to a lack of ambition in several of the commitments, suggesting a generally cautious approach towards what was being promised in the action plan. This may be connected to a recurring problem, as noted in the 2015 midterm IRM report and in the Recommendations section of this IRM report, whereby action plans are not supported by dedicated resources, thereby limiting ambition.

## Themes

The action plan is structured in four priority areas: Open by Default, Fiscal Transparency, Innovation, Prosperity, and Sustainable Development, and Engaging Canadians and the World.

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[1] Open Government Partnership: Articles of Governance, June 2012 (Updated March 2014 and April 2015), https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/attachments/OGP_Articles-Gov_Apr-21-2015.pdf.

[2] IRM Procedures Manual. Available at: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/IRM-Procedures-Manual-v3_July-2016.docx.

[3] The International Experts Panel changed this criterion in 2015. For more information visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/node/5919.
[4] OGP Explorer: bit.ly/1KE2WiI.

## Theme 1: Open by Default

## 1. Enhance Access to Information

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will move forward on a first round of concrete proposals to improve the Access to Information Act, informed by the views of Parliament, the Information Commissioner, and consultations with Canadians, and will then undertake a full review of the Act by no later than 2018.*

**Milestones:**
*1.1. Seek input from Parliament, the Information Commissioner, stakeholders and through consultations with Canadians on how to revitalize access to information.*

*1.2. Introduce legislation to move forward on improvements to the Access to Information Act.*

*1.3. Once this first round of improvements has been implemented, undertake a full review of the Access to Information Act by no later than 2018.*

**Responsible institution:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Supporting institutions:** Justice Canada and the Privy Council Office

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 1. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 1.1. Access to information consultations | | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | | ✔ |
| 1.2. Introduce legislation | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | | ✔ |
| 1.3. Full Access to Information Act review | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | ✔ | | | |

## Context and Objectives

This commitment is targeted toward improving the Access to Information Act through consultations with Parliament, the Information Commissioner, stakeholders, and the public. Canada's Access to Information Act has not been substantially updated since it was first passed in 1983, and it currently ranks 49th in the world according to the RTI Rating, a comparative assessment of right to information laws.[1] Calls to reform the Access to Information Act, including from the Information Commissioner, have been a recurring feature of Canada's OGP stakeholder consultation processes since the first action plan cycle.[2] The Information Commissioner's inclusion as a core stakeholder in the first milestone of this commitment is noteworthy, since her input was not actively sought in the generation of previous action plans. Stakeholders consulted for the preparation of this assessment emphasized the importance of reform, describing the current Act as "outdated" and "dysfunctional."[3] But while civil society stakeholders active in right-to-information matters have been glad to see the inclusion of this action area, several, including Publish What You Pay-Canada and the Centre for Law and Democracy, expressed unhappiness with the structure and ambition of the commitment as it is phrased. While the commitment addresses a major priority area, uncertainty regarding the nature and extent of reforms which will ultimately be enacted (if any) substantially reduces the potential for impact, as does the fact that, over the past few years, several similar consultations have already been carried out, all of which arrived at similar conclusions regarding the necessary changes.[4]

## Completion

Milestone 1.1 was mostly completed before implementation of the action plan formally commenced, with a consultation that was carried out by the Treasury Board in May and June 2016.[5] A civil society participant in one of the consultations described the process as "very thorough,"[6] though other participants noted that the similarities between these recommendations and those produced in earlier processes in 2016 and 2015 suggested the additional consultations were unnecessary.[7] The House of Commons' review of the Access to Information Act was also published prior to the start of this action plan, in June 2016. However, the government's responses to both the public consultation and the parliamentary committee report were published during this action plan, in October 2016.[8] This milestone has been completed.

For Milestone 1.2, on 19 June 2017 the government introduced Bill C-58 in the House of Commons.[9] This bill would make several changes to the Act, namely enhancing the power of the Information Commissioner and expanding proactive disclosure among 240 government institutions, as well as allowing government institutions broader power to dismiss requests. Technically, this milestone has been completed, though it is worth noting that reactions to this bill have been highly negative among civil society. The Centre for Law and Democracy released a joint letter signed by 38 organisations, and a further 26 journalists, academics and other stakeholders, calling for Bill C-58 to be scrapped and replaced with a better reform effort.[10] First Nations leaders have also called on the government to withdraw Bill C-58,[11] and Canada's Information Commissioner released an assessment which claimed that the changes would actually result in a regression of existing rights.[12]

The government reports in its self-assessment that progress has not started on Milestone 1.3, which is scheduled for 2018.

## Next Steps

Successive IRM reports, as well as opinions expressed at stakeholder consultations across the country, suggest that this commitment is among the most important

reform areas in the current action plan, if not the most important. However, throughout the consultations in preparation for this report, civil society stakeholders expressed profound disappointment with the government's progress in improving the Access to Information Act. Dr. Teresa Scassa, a law professor at the University of Ottawa, noted that access to information was an area which had been neglected for years, and continued to be neglected under the current government.[13] Publish What You Pay-Canada noted that the proposed reforms failed to address their major frustration in using the system, which is the over-broad exceptions.[14] Open North expressed that access to information reform remained the biggest challenge to advancing transparency, noting that at this point it was beginning to overshadow progress in other areas.[15]

As noted above, civil society has called for Bill C-58 to be significantly improved in order to frontload more necessary reforms, namely to expand the right of filing access requests to the Cabinet and Prime Ministers' offices, to create a duty to document for officials, to create binding timelines for responding to requests, to formalize fee waivers contained in the May 2016 Interim Directive on the Administration of the Access to Information Act, and to narrow overbroad exceptions and subject them to test for harm and a mandatory public interest override. The IRM researcher recommends that these specific improvements be carried forward as commitments in the next action plan if they are not possible in the current action plan. Another point to consider for future action plans is the lack of technological or innovative proposals connected to this thematic area. The IRM researcher recommends that the government consider technologically innovative solutions to enhance Canada's right to information system in the next action plan. For example, the Centre for Law and Democracy pointed to the centralised website in Commitment 2, and wondered why it was only being applied for requests for personal information, as opposed to being more broadly utilized for access to information requests.[16]

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[1] See: http://www.rti-rating.org/country-data/. Canada's ranking of 49th is as of 15 October 2017.
[2] Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada, Letter on Open Government to the President of the Treasury Board (Ottawa: January 2012). Available at: http://www.oic-ci.gc.ca/eng/rr-sl-odi-adi_2012_1.aspx.
[3] These quotes are from Toby Mendel of CLD and Fred Vallance-Jones, respectively, at the Halifax consultation which took place on 12 September 2017.
[4] See, for example, "Striking the Right Balance for Transparency–Recommendations to modernize the Access to Information Act", Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada, March 2015. Available at: www.oic-ci.gc.ca/eng/rapport-de-modernisation-modernization-report.aspx.
[5] See: http://open.canada.ca/en/content/what-we-heard-revitalizing-access-information-online-consultations-may-june-2016.
[6] Duncan Pike of CJFE, at the Toronto consultation on 15 September 2017.
[7] See: https://www.law-democracy.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/17.04.04.ATIA-delay.let1_.pdf.
[8] Both are available at: http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/ETHI/report-2.
[9] Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 2017. Available at: http://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-58/first-reading.
[10] Joint letter to the Canadian government on its proposals to reform the Access to Information Act, Centre for Law and Democracy, 28 September 2017. Available at: https://www.law-democracy.org/live/letter-to-the-president-of-the-treasury-board-demanding-access-to-information-reform/.
[11] Beatrice Britneff, "First Nations call on Liberals to scrap information access bill", iPolitics, 4 December 2017. Available at: https://ipolitics.ca/2017/12/04/first-nations-call-liberals-scrap-information-access-bill/.
[12] "Failing to Strike the Right Balance for Transparency: Recommendations to Improve Bill C-58", Office of the Information Commissioner, 28 September 2017. Available at: http://www.ci-oic.gc.ca/telechargements-downloads/userfiles/files/eng/reports-publications/Special-reports/OIC_SpecialReport2017_ENG_Online(1).pdf.
[13] This was expressed at the Ottawa consultation, 18 September 2017, though her views are more fully expressed on her blog at:

http://www.teresascassa.ca/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=262:bill-c-58s-order-making-powers-a-huge-disappointment&Itemid=80.

[14] Ottawa consultation, 18 September 2017.
[15] Conversation by phone on 3 October 2017.
[16] Halifax consultation, 12 September 2017.

## 2. Streamline Requests for Personal Information

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will make it easier for Canadians to access their own personal information held by government.*

**Milestones:**
*2.1. Develop a central website where Canadians can submit personal information requests to any government institution, with first phase of roll-out targeted for 2018.*

*2.2. Implement a 30-day guarantee for requests for personal information, backed by a commitment to provide a written explanation to the requester and the Privacy Commissioner should a request take longer than 30 days to fulfill.*

**Responsible institution:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Supporting institution(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 2. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | No | | ✔ | | |
| 2.I. Central website for requests | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | No | | ✔ | | |
| 2.2. Written explanation for delayed response | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | No | | ✔ | | |

### Context and Objectives
Canadians requesting personal information held by the government are faced with a challenging process, since it can be difficult to determine the appropriate agency to approach, and at the outset of the action plan only a minority of institutions allowed requests to be filed online. This commitment aims to improve this process by developing a centralized website for submitting personal information requests and implementing a 30-day guarantee for responses. The milestones are reasonably specific, though some details about submitting requests through the new centralized

website still require clarification. The centralization of the requesting process, along with expediting wait times, could be a significant improvement for requesters. However, conversations with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner illustrated a strong need for better engagement and communication in taking this commitment forward.[1]

### Completion

There has been limited progress in implementing Milestone 2.1. The government's self-assessment report states that the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat has identified business requirements for the website and completed usability testing for the Access to Information and Privacy Online Pilot site.[2]

For Milestone 2,2, the self-assessment reports that the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat has shared implementation options for the 30-day guarantee for requests for personal information with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (OPC) and received feedback. This was confirmed, in a limited sense, by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, though they also expressed confusion regarding the current status of this milestone, and the avenue forward.[3] The government's self-assessment reports substantial progress, but says that the approach still needs to be finalized before implementation can begin. Given that there are approximately 240 institutions subject to the Privacy Act, each of which faces their own unique technical and operational challenges, an assessment of substantial progress would require the government to have at least reached the implementation phase. An assessment of limited progress seems more appropriate for Milestone 2.2.

Significant challenges remain for full implementation of both milestones. As such, this commitment does not appear to be on schedule for completion.

### Next Steps

During stakeholder consultations, the Canadian Association of Journalists noted that centralizing and simplifying the system was a positive step.[4] This sentiment was generally echoed by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.[5] However, both the Office of the Privacy Commissioner and the Canadian Association of Journalists noted that the system for responding to personal information requests was substantially under-resourced across the federal government, a systemic problem which will hinder the potential impact of this commitment. Both also expressed a need for more structural reform, including revamping the personal information bank system[6] as well as the Privacy Act as a whole.

Other stakeholders, including the Centre for Law and Democracy and Fred Vallance-Jones of the University of King's College, proposed that the centralized portal should be extended to receive requests under the Access to Information Act, as well as requests for personal information.[7] It is worth noting that Mexico's Infomex website, which has been online since 2008, allows users to not only send requests across the federal executive branch, the Supreme Court and several states and municipalities, but also to appeal agency decisions and consult every request and public response ever processed electronically by the government.[8] Although not included in the action plan, Canada's self-assessment indicates that this is actually being contemplated. The IRM researcher recommends that Canada consider taking this idea forward to create a central system for requests under the Access to Information Act.

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[1] Conversation by phone on 5 October 2017.
[2] The draft self-assessment is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/draft-consultation-mid-term-self-assessment-third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.
[3] Conversation by phone on 5 October 2017.

[4] Toronto consultation, 15 September 2017.
[5] Conversation by phone on 5 October 2017.
[6] Personal information banks are descriptions of the personal information that a government institution controls, along with information about how the data is collected, used, disclosed, retained and disposed.
[7] Halifax consultation, 12 September 2017.
[8] The Infomex website is available at: https://www.infomex.org.mx/gobiernofederal/home.action.

## 3. Expand and Improve Open Data

**Commitment Text:**

*The Government of Canada will increase the quality and visibility of federal data holdings and set measurable targets for the release of open data over the next five years.*

**Milestones:**
*3.1. Develop and publish departmental inventories of federal data, as required by the Directive on Open Government, to support collaboration with the public on setting priorities for the release of open data.*

*3.2. Set a baseline for the total volume of open data to be released over time and establish departmental targets for the publication of releasable data over the next five years:*
- *Publish departmental targets and progress on departments' release of open data.*

*3.3. Develop and refine guidance to help federal departments and agencies set priorities for the release of high-value open data and understand the specific circumstances under which data cannot be released for privacy, security, and/or confidentiality reasons:*
- *Establish data quality standards for open data;*
- *Provide guidance on engaging with key communities in Canada (e.g., First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, etc.) to better understand their needs when setting priorities for the release of open data;*
- *Develop metadata standards to enhance data interoperability and discoverability; and*
- *Develop guidance on the anonymization of datasets.*

*3.4. Provide access to high-quality, open statistical data and information from Statistics Canada, free of charge, in machine-readable formats under an open license and accessible via open.canada.ca:*
- *Release the results of the 2016 Census (Short Form and Long Form) in 2017 based on a published release schedule; and*
- *Host on-line "Chat with an Expert" and in-person "Talking Stats" sessions to enable Canadians to interact with Statistics Canada analysts and better understand the published data.*

*3.5. Improve Canadians' access to data and information proactively disclosed by departments and agencies through a single, common online search tool:*
- *Enhance self-service tools for departments to publish proactive disclosure information to strengthen the quality of data being released.*

*3.6. Adopt the International Open Data Charter and initiate implementation of the Charter requirements:*
- *Encourage civil society and private sector organizations to open up their own data where this would be of public benefit; and*
- *Measure progress and report on Canada's implementation of Charter principles.*

**Responsible institutions:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat; Statistics Canada

**Supporting institution(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. For Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 3. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | No | | | ✔ | |
| 3.I. Inventories of federal data | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | | ✔ |
| 3.2. Targets and progress reports | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | No | | | ✔ | |
| 3.3. Guidance for releases, engagement, and exceptions | | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 3.4. Publish StatsCan data | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 3.5. Unified online search tool | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 3.6. International Open Data Charter | | ✔ | | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | ✔ | | |

## Context and Objectives

This commitment is not built around a particular problem, but rather contains a series of measures which aim to boost the quality, visibility, and accessibility of open data. In addition to expanding the total amount of information available, the commitment aims to unify standards for publication and enhance systems for accessing data. The milestones are reasonably specific, and most of them are objectively verifiable, though they require some degree of interpretation in terms of measurability. In most cases, the milestones would generate important progress if fully implemented, such as simplifying and expediting the publishing process for public agencies. In assessing this commitment, civil society stakeholders who participated in the

consultations generally found the measures encouraging, though there were common concerns about ease of use and how user-friendly the system is, particularly for researchers or journalists seeking fully contextualized information about a particular issue.[1] Therefore, the commitment's potential impact is marked as moderate.

## Completion

Milestone 3.1 has been completed. The self-assessment reports 89% of large departments, 61% of small departments, and 4% of micro-organisations submitted their open data inventories as of October 2016, in line with the deadline set by the Treasury Board.[2] The Treasury Board published these data inventories online in March 2017.[3] A voting system has been implemented to allow Canadians to weigh in on future prioritization for open data initiatives.

Over the first year of the action plan, 4,000 new non-spatial datasets and 27,000 new geospatial datasets were published on open.canada.ca. Representatives of the Treasury Board reported that government departments are required by the Directive on Open Government to develop plans for the release of future datasets, but that these have not been consolidated or published.[4] As a consequence, substantial progress has been made toward implementing Milestone 3.2, but it does not appear that this milestone is on track to be completed, since the departmental targets are not being gathered for publication.

Regarding Milestone 3.3, the self-assessment reports that an interdepartmental Open Government Resource Development Working Group has been established, and is developing a guidance document on data quality, accessibility, official languages, privacy and security, prioritisation, anonymisation, and metadata standards.[5] The government also hosted a workshop on facilitating indigenous participation at the Canadian Open Data Summit in Edmonton in June 2017. This milestone is on schedule to be implemented.

For Milestone 3.4, the dissemination of the 2016 census results is proceeding according to an established calendar.[6] The government's self-assessment reports that five "Chat with an Expert" sessions and four "Talking Stats" sessions were held in the first year of implementation, though transcripts suggest that only four and three actually took place, respectively.[7] Nonetheless, substantial progress has been made here, and the milestone is on schedule.

In relation to Milestone 3.5, the Treasury Board Secretariat produced templates for a range of disclosures, including grants and contributions,[8] position reclassifications,[9] acts of founded wrongdoing,[10] annual contracts,[11] hospitality expenses,[12] and supplemental hospitality information.[13] The Treasury Board Secretariat also published guides for producing access to information summaries,[14] centralized hospitality publishing,[15] centralized grants and contributions publishing,[16] and for using the Annual Travel, Hospitality and Conferences Publishing System.[17] The self-assessment further reports that departments are migrating their proactive disclosure to open.canada.ca. This milestone is on track, and substantial progress has been made toward its implementation.

The self-assessment reports limited progress towards implementing Milestone 3.6 based on the fact that Treasury Board Minister Scott Brison announced on 9 December 2016 that Canada will adopt the International Open Data Charter,[18] and that Canada is a Lead Steward of the Open Data Charter, an advisory board, of representatives from government and expert organisations who guide the work of the Charter.[19] Assessing progress on implementing the Charter's principles depends on

the level of implementation expected, but based on the language of the milestone, Canada should be able to complete it within the timeframe of this action plan.

**Next Steps**

This commitment contains several important action areas which could be carried forward in future action plans. However, in considering the impact of these specific commitments, it is worth pointing out that the number of "Chat with an Expert" and "Talking Stats" sessions which took place between July 2016 and June 2017 is identical to the number which took place over the preceding year, though, if the self-assessment planning is accurate, that number will increase over the second year of the action plan cycle. Connected to the idea of fostering open communication, Open North suggested that Canada's open data landscape could be improved by fostering more public access to data managers themselves, who are best placed to contextualize information being released as well as to shape future policy around publication.[20] Open North further suggested, regarding Milestone 3.5, that it would be beneficial to reduce the internal procedure required for public servants to publish information.[21]

Powered By Data noted an ongoing need to expand the conversation about open data to include more policy-makers, researchers, and civil society beyond the open data community that typically engages on this issue.[22] The IRM researcher recommends bringing the conversation beyond online consultations, and establishing more of an in-person presence, in addition to more interactive means of remote communication such as via teleconferences.

The Centre for Law and Democracy pointed to Milestone 3.1 as addressing a particularly important action area, through its potential to generate citizen feedback loops regarding the data which is made available, and recommended that this milestone be taken forward to future action plans.

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[1] Toronto consultation, 15 September 2017.
[2] The draft self-assessment is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/draft-consultation-mid-term-self-assessment-third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.
[3] The inventories are available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/search/inventory.
[4] Directive on Open Government, last modified 16 September 2016. Available at: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=28108.
[5] The draft self-assessment is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/draft-consultation-mid-term-self-assessment-third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.
[6] Available at: http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/rt-td/index-eng.cfm.
[7] See: http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/chatwithanexpert/transcripts and http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/events/past-eng.
[8] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/add1c674-6653-5b6f-bbd1-e9671112ef31.
[9] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/958a0d91-acdc-5cf5-8297-543296ca1652.
[10] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/a55305ee-4974-59aa-a4ea-e334baf0f321.
[11] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/f377fa50-7686-5317-9d5c-2aaa58c1afe2.
[12] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/42071198-1928-5ce8-8e72-9daf00a8d79e.
[13] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/88b847b4-da78-5f4b-9de0-5b1c3fdc4e44.
[14] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/d893fc48-df79-5ec2-99c3-1f7db4067bc5.
[15] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/c53bc147-c412-582f-8b4d-8647b2211308.
[16] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/345db334-b036-595e-af22-deceb0c64d3b.
[17] Available at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/3509d5f4-676d-534e-b508-b5f5f3cf6303.
[18] "Government of Canada shows global leadership on open government," Treasury Board Secretariat, 9 December 2016. Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/news/2016/12/government-canada-shows-global-leadership-open-government.html.
[19] See: https://opendatacharter.net/who-we-are/.
[20] Montreal Consultation, 20 September 2017.
[21] Montreal Consultation, 20 September 2017.
[22] Interviewed by phone, 29 September 2017.

## 4. Provide and Preserve Open Information

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will establish government-wide initiatives, platforms, and tools to ensure that open information is discoverable and accessible for use by future generations.*

**Milestones:**
*4.1. Enhance the Open Information Portal on open.canada.ca to improve access to digital publications made available by the federal government and develop a strategy to ensure the sustainability of access over time.*

*4.2. Develop and publish clear guidelines on the preservation and retention of digital content.*

*4.3. Increase Canadians' access to records documenting the continuing memory of the Government of Canada.*

*4.4. Update Library and Archives Canada's online archive of the Government of Canada's web presence to ensure Canadians' long-term access to federal web content.*

*4.5. Expand the implementation of the government-wide information technology solution for the effective management of federal records and documents (GCDOCS) as a foundation for improved transparency:*
- *Roll out this common solution managed by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) to 125,000 government workers across government departments by June 2018.*

**Responsible institutions:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat; Library and Archives Canada; Public Services and Procurement Canada

**Supporting institution(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified.

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 4. Overall | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.1. Open Information Portal | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | Yes | ✔ | | |
| 4.2. Data retention guidelines | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | Yes | | ✔ | |
| 4.3. Access to records | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | ✔ | |
| 4.4. Update online archive | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | ✔ | |
| 4.5. Expand GCDOCS | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | Yes | | ✔ | |

## Context and Objectives

This commitment aims to resolve challenges to the preservation and accessibility of information that result from a lack of clear government guidance around how information should be found, used, shared, and preserved. This commitment is relevant to the OGP value of access to information by helping to ensure that a proper paper trail is maintained for potential requesters.

This issue was the subject of a major legal battle between the Information Commissioner and the government when, in 2015, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police destroyed gun registry records that were subject to a request.[1] The development of a clear policy on the preservation of digital material was also one of five 'SMART' recommendations included in Canada's 2015 IRM report. However, although the commitment addresses an important area, most of the milestones, except for Milestone 4.5, suffer from a lack of specificity. For example, the commitment does not outline how the Open Data Portal will be enhanced, or how Library and Archives Canada will be updated. The low specificity makes it difficult to accurately assess progress and ultimately limits the potential impact that can be scored in this assessment. Moreover, the organisation of this commitment is somewhat confusing, as it includes some milestones related to data preservation, but others that seem more connected to Commitment 3: Expand and Improve Open Data.

## Completion

The government self-assessment reports limited progress on Milestone 4.1, including the relaunch of both the Open Information Portal[2] and registry.open.canada.ca, the latter of which replaces three distinct publishing platforms. Four government departments (Canadian Heritage, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Natural Resources Canada and the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat) are collaborating on the development of an Open by Default Pilot Project.[3] Future steps contemplated in the self-assessment include providing guidance on the scope of open information as well as the accessibility and official language requirements for new content. There is no reason to believe that the government will not achieve this milestone, as written, by June 2018, though the vague nature of the phrasing makes progress difficult to assess critically.

According to the self-assessment, the task of developing guidance on retention and disposition rules for digital content (Milestone 4.2) has been delegated to the Open Government Resource Development Working Group. Draft guidelines were developed and released for public comment to government stakeholders as well as

the Open Canada Working Group (which comprises provincial and territorial partners).[4] In response to follow-up queries from the IRM researcher, the Treasury Board Secretariat reported that they aim to publish the final version on open.canada.ca by the end of December 2017. Substantial progress has been made, and this milestone is on track for completion.

The self-assessment notes that a large number of files have been placed online by Library and Archives Canada, including 8,161,794 pages of government records, 150,000 personnel files from the First World War, and 45 historical datasets.[5] By June 2018, the government estimates that a further 240,000 pages, 160,000 personnel files, and 45 datasets will be released. This is certainly a large volume of information, suggesting the commitment is on schedule, though again the lack of specificity in the milestone makes a proper assessment of progress difficult.

Regarding Milestone 4.4, the government self-assessment reports that Library and Archives Canada has collected 3.34 terabytes from the Government of Canada web domain, and an additional 1 terabyte of information from Government of Canada YouTube Channels.[6] The self-assessment reports that this information is still being indexed, and once that is done the material will be publicly available. This is substantial progress and the milestone is on schedule.

Regarding Milestone 4.5, the self-assessment reports that the GCDOCS program has been rolled out to 85,000 federal government workers thus far, giving them access to a standardised archiving and records management system which ensures consistent information infrastructure across participating institutions.[7] This is substantial progress and the milestone is on schedule.

### Next Steps
The development of a clear policy on the preservation of digital material was one of five 'SMART' recommendations included in Canada's 2015 IRM report. However, if Milestone 4.2, which addresses this issue most directly, is not fully implemented in the current action plan, the IRM researcher recommends carrying it forward to the next action plan. In consultations around the government's open data and open science policies, Dr. Tracey Lauriault suggested that the government should consider equivalent preservation policies toward raw research data, which can be of tremendous use to researchers.[8] Preservation policies are particularly important to consider in light of data which has been taken down from government sites under the federal Web Renewal Initiative, in some cases leaving significant gaps for researchers.

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[1] Bruce Cheadle, "Constitutional challenge of retroactive Tory law on gun registry data in limbo," *Canadian Press*, 29 March 2016. Available at: www.cbc.ca/news/politics/court-challenge-gun-registry-data-law-1.3511277.
[2] See: http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset?portal_type=info&q.
[3] See: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/en/open-by-default-pilot.
[4] The draft guidelines are available at: https://gccollab.ca/file/group/29260/all# (registration required).
[5] See: http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/personnel-records.aspx.
[6] The draft self-assessment is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/draft-consultation-mid-term-self-assessment-third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.
[7] At the time of research, in October 2017, that number had grown to 94,000, according to figures shared by Public Services and Procurement Canada with the IRM researcher.
[8] Interviewed in Ottawa, 19 September 2017.

## 5. Define an Approach for Measuring Open Government Performance

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will integrate performance indicators for openness and transparency into a Performance Management Framework for Open Government.*

**Milestones:**
*5.1. Integrate key performance indicators related to openness and transparency as part of a Performance Framework for managing data and information government-wide.*

*5.2. Measure and report publically on annual departmental progress on implementation of the Directive on Open Government.*

*5.3. Work on developing a performance management framework and indicators that can better measure a wider breadth of Open Government efforts and outcomes.*

**Responsible institution:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Supporting institution(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 5. Overall | | ✔ | | | Unclear | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 5.I. Performance Framework | | ✔ | | | Unclear | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 5.2. Report on the Directive on Open Government | | | ✔ | | Unclear | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 5.3. Indicators to measure open government | | ✔ | | | Unclear | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | ✔ | | |

**Context and Objectives**

This commitment aims to address a lack of unified and objective indicators for measuring open government progress in Canada by creating a performance management framework for open government. It is easy for governments to point to thousands of datasets which are being released as proof of expanding openness, but more difficult to consider the overall impact of their efforts. Both milestones 5.1 and 5.2 are essentially duplicative to existing reporting requirements under the OGP, though Milestone 5.1 provides a stronger model for implementation of this responsibility. Milestone 5.3 could have a more substantial potential impact, since it could allow for a thorough and contextual assessment of the impacts of openness. However, all three milestones, and in particular Milestone 5.3, are phrased relatively vaguely, leaving room for interpretation as to how the reporting will take place, and what level of implementation is anticipated under this action plan. Moreover, in order to have relevance to OGP values, and in particular the value of public accountability, the indicators and reporting contained in this commitment need to be both publicly facing and responsive to public inputs. As a consequence, the commitment is currently marked as unclear relevance, though this is not to deny its potential value as a mechanism for promoting progressive improvement. The lack of clarity, as well as the relatively duplicative nature of milestones 5.1 and 5.2, lead to a scoring of only minor potential for impact overall.

**Completion**

In relation to Milestone 5.1, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat has developed and published an online progress tracker for its OGP commitments.[1] The self-assessment implies that further progress will be limited to quarterly updates of the tracker, meaning that the overall impact of this milestone will be only marginally beyond the government's existing reporting requirements under the OGP. Under this reading, the commitment is on schedule.

Milestone 5.2 also appears duplicative, as the language in the government's self-assessment is almost identical to the reporting under Milestone 3.1. As a result, the second milestone is indeed on schedule, but the progress appears to be duplicative of other milestones.

According to the government's self-assessment, as well as consultations with lead officials on this commitment, Milestone 5.3 is on schedule.[2] The government has researched existing global indexes and developed a draft framework for the work. It is currently working to collaborate through the Open Government Working Group, as well as engaging with other governments, and the OECD, to discuss better practices for measuring impact. A work plan has also been developed and published.[3]

**Next Steps**

At a stakeholder consultation, a representative of Open North noted the importance of measuring impacts and outcomes, rather than purely looking at outputs.[4] Supplying data is just the starting point, they noted, the real question is whether governments are adding value down the production line. Milestone 5.3 of this commitment is of substantial importance in this regard. Although the current phrasing in the action plan is somewhat vague regarding the level of progress which is anticipated under the current cycle, the IRM researcher recommends carrying this project through to the final development of a performance management framework, indicators and their application to the government's actual progress in parallel to OGP reporting.

[1] Available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/content/progress-tracker-third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.

[2] The draft self-assessment is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/draft-consultation-mid-term-self-assessment-third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.

[3] The working plan is available for download at: https://gccollab.ca/file/view/62638/en1-pager-on-performance-measurementfr1-pager-on-performance-measurement (registration required).

[4] Montreal consultation, 20 September 2017.

# 6. Develop Open Government Skills across the Federal Public Service

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will support a shift to greater transparency and engagement within the public service through Open Government learning material and opportunities for public servants.*

**Milestones:**
*6.1. Provide enhanced information management learning opportunities and additional materials to raise public servants' awareness and understanding of open government principles and practices, including:*

- *Using open data and information to support policy analysis and development;*
- *Sharing best practices in digital public engagement;*
- *Setting priorities for the release of open data and information based on potential public impact and benefit; and*
- *Implementing the Directive on Open Government.*

*6.2. Lead and/or participate in educational forums and workshops designed to further the understanding of how to increase government transparency and foster civic engagement.*

*6.3. Through public consultation on the 2016 Government of Canada IT Strategic Plan, consider feedback on how software solutions, including open source, can be best leveraged to meet strategic objectives.*

**Responsible institutions:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat; Canada School of Public Service

**Supporting institutions:** GovLab; the Government of Canada's policy community

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 6. Overall | | ✔ | | | ✔ | ✔ | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 6.I. Learning opportunities | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |

| 6.2. Education forums and workshop | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6.3. IT strategic plan consultation | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | ✔ | | ✔ | Yes | | | ✔ | |

## Context and Objectives

This commitment aims to improve attitudes of public servants toward openness, as well as increase understanding of openness across the Federal Public Service. This will facilitate the implementation of new policies and procedures. The commitment calls for a range of training programs and educational and skills-development initiatives. Several stakeholders, including Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, the Canadian Association of Journalists, and the Canadian Unitarian Council, cited the pervasive "culture of secrecy" as a priority area to be addressed.[1] However, the Canadian Association of Journalists noted that the milestones are primarily focused on skills development, rather than changing the culture which was at the root of the problem, and that a lack of buy-in to the value of transparency at senior levels can prevent even well-meaning and well trained public servants from releasing information.[2] Canadian Journalists for Free Expression further suggested that the incentive structures needed to change to ensure that officials do not face sanction for releasing information, a sentiment which was echoed by Open North.[3] Overall, while it is easy to track progress towards the specific milestones included here, the level of progress toward this broader goal is more difficult to track, reducing the score for specificity and limiting the potential impact of this commitment to minor. This challenge could potentially be relevant to the work being carried out under Milestone 5.3, to develop a proper assessment of progress towards developing a culture of open government.

## Completion

The government reports substantial progress toward Milestone 6.1. According to documents from the Canada School of Public Service shared with the IRM researcher, the government has provided open government training for 35,755 public servants from 109 federal organisations.[4] Though these courses predate the current action plan, the Canada School of Public Service reports that they were updated and upgraded. The self-assessment also reports that 34 learning events for 1,800 federal public servants were held by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, as well as the creation of an Open Government landing page in GCcampus, which is not available online but has been shared with the IRM researcher.[5]

For Milestone 6.2, the government's self-assessment lists involvement in several educational forums and workshops, as evidenced by embedded links, including the Canadian Open Data Summit, a Go Open Data panel, and five one-day training sessions for 135 participants, with two train-the-trainers sessions, developed and delivered by the Privy Council Office.

The government's self-assessment reports substantial progress toward Milestone 6.3. The Treasury Board Secretariat posted the government's IT Strategic Plan online for comments in Summer and Fall 2016,[6] with further consultations held in February and March 2017 with the federal Chief Information Officer and Information Management Senior Officer communities.

Each of these milestones is scored as being on track for completion, with substantial progress made. However, it is also worth noting that the milestone language here is vague, and does not provide measurable outputs, making it difficult to assess full completion.

**Next Steps**

The IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward into the next action plan. Training is by its nature an ongoing process as new federal public servants enter the workforce and as protocols continue to evolve. However, civil society sees broader cultural change as more important than skills development in reducing resistance, particularly at senior levels, to information disclosures. Future action plans could consider the broader need to shape institutional culture alongside more direct skills-based training programs. Open North also suggested that simplifying and reducing the procedure required for public servants to publish information could be helpful at promoting a broader culture of open government.

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[1] Toronto consultation, 15 September 2017.
[2] Toronto consultation, 15 September 2017.
[3] Montreal consultation, 20 September 2017.
[4] Documents were received via email on 28 September 2017.
[5] The draft self-assessment is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/draft-consultation-mid-term-self-assessment-third-biennial-plan-open-government-partnership.
[6] See: https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/information-technology/information-technology-strategy.html.

## 7. Embed Transparency Requirements in the Federal Service Strategy

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will develop a new Clients-First Service Strategy that embeds requirements for openness and transparency in the delivery of government services.*

**Milestones:**
*7.1. Develop a Government of Canada Clients-First Service Strategy that aims to create a single, user-centric online window for all government services.*

*7.2. Establish new performance standards and set up a mechanism to conduct rigorous assessments of the performance of key government services, and report findings publicly.*

**Responsible institution:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Supporting institutions:** Service delivery departments and agencies.

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 7. Overall | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 7.I. Single window for government services | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 7.2. Performance standards | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | ✔ | | |

### Context and Objectives

According to the action plan, the aim of this commitment is to ensure rigorous assessments of key government services and publicly report the findings. Milestone 7.1 is reasonably clear and would provide Canadians with a single place to obtain information on government services and programs, thus making it somewhat relevant

to the OGP value of access to information. Milestone 7.2 also has some relevance to the OGP goal of access to information, by promoting transparency in government functions through public reporting, though the vagueness of the deliverable here makes potential impact difficult to assess. For example, it does not specify the nature of the mechanism by which the assessment will be carried out, nor the degree to which it will be public facing (beyond merely reporting its findings).

**Completion**

Canada's self-assessment reports substantial progress towards Milestone 7.1. The new service strategy was developed and was highlighted in the Clerk of the Privy Council's Twenty-Fourth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service.[1] The milestone is on track for completion.

For Milestone 7.2, Canada's self-assessment reports that "the new Service Strategy includes performance measures to enable public reporting on progress."[2] In response to follow-up queries from the IRM researcher, a representative from the Treasury Board Secretariat said that they are "currently in the process of defining [their] KPIs and determining what data [they] can leverage."[3] The government reports this as substantial progress, though in the absence of clearer and more concrete deliverables a score of limited progress seems more appropriate.

**Next Steps**

As it is currently drafted, this commitment is of questionable value to Canada's OGP progress, as the milestones are only very generally related to access to information. The IRM researcher recommends not to carry it forward to future action plans. Establishing performance standards and public reporting programs is an area which shows some promise, though it is unclear how this milestone is distinct from Milestone 5.1.

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[1] See: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pco-bcp/documents/pdfs/clerk-greffier/24rpt-eng.pdf.
[2] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 7 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-7-embed-transparency-requirements-federal-service-strategy.
[3] Email received on 11 October 2017.

## Theme II: Fiscal Transparency

## 8. Enhance Access to Culture & Heritage Collections

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will expand collaboration with its provincial, territorial, and municipal partners and key stakeholders to develop a searchable National Inventory of Cultural and Heritage Artefacts to improve access across museum collections.*

**Milestones:**
*8.1. Develop authorities and standards to guide the consistent implementation of this approach.*

*8.2. Enhance the ability to search and browse across museum collections.*

*8.3. Expand the network of museums participating in this initiative and the links to related external resources.*

*8.4. Host digital collections for museums that currently do not have a digital presence.*

**Responsible institution:** Canadian Heritage

**Supporting Institutions(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 8. Overall | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | No | | ✔ | | |
| 8.I. Develop standards | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | No | | ✔ | | |
| 8.2. Enhance searchability | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | No | | ✔ | | |
| 8.3. Expand participants | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | ✔ | | |

| 8.4. Digital collections | | ✔ | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | No | ✔ | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Context and Objectives**

This commitment aims to mitigate geographic limitations on Canadians' ability to access cultural and heritage artifacts by creating and expanding digital collections. The commitment also seeks to network these collections together to develop a searchable national database of cultural works. The milestones are spelled out with relatively low specificity, failing to mention details such as the target number of museums and works which will ultimately be included in this scheme. This, combined with the fact that the commitment only deals with a very limited subsection of information (culture and heritage collections), places a low ceiling on potential impact.

**Completion**

The Department of Canadian Heritage has developed a pilot website including 166,762 objects, with a variety of reference points and taxonomic classifications to improve searchability.[1] The work is being carried out in collaboration with eight partner museums: the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the McCord Museum, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, the Musée des beaux arts de Montréal, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Vancouver Art Gallery. However, in response to queries by the IRM researcher, the Department of Canadian Heritage said that it expected the network to be expanded to 100 museums by the end of the 2017 fiscal year, though the standard of presentation had been scaled back.[2] While the original plan had been to publish information as Linked Open Data (LOD), resource challenges have led them to adopt a more conventional database format instead.

The government's self-assessment reports this commitment as behind schedule. However, the vague nature of the milestones, and a lack of clarity in the action plan of what an intended finished product should look like, make it difficult to judge whether it is reasonable to expect the commitment will be completed by June 2018.

**Next Steps**

While there is value in expanding Canadians' access to shared cultural heritage, particularly given the vast size of the country, some First Nations stakeholders expressed concern as to whether proper contextualisation is being considered adequately in developing the system.[3] Josée Plamondon, a digital librarian, similarly warned that without proper organisation and context, repositories can end up as "a cemetery for data."[4] On the other hand, Camille Callison, an Indigenous Services Librarian at the University of Manitoba, stated cultural preservation was also an important goal underlying this initiative, which speaks to the value of carrying the database forward.[5] In discussing contextualisation and ease of use, Josée Plamondon pointed out that organisation and robust tagging are important facets in determining the value of this initiative, which hinged on whether the database adopts a user centric-approach to data presentation.[6] The IRM researcher recommends that the government consider these ideas going forward, to the extent they have not already been embedded in the development of this database.

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[1] The website is at: http://chin-rcip.canadiana.ca/aclod2/search/artefact.
[2] Responses received via email on 13 October 2017.
[3] Ottawa consultation, 18 September 2017.
[4] Montreal consultation, 20 September 2017.

5 Interviewed at the Sectoral Commission meeting at the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2 October 2017.
6 Montreal consultation, 20 September 2017.

## 9. Enhance Openness of Information on Government Spending and Procurement

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will increase the transparency of government spending and procurement to hold government accountable for public expenditures.*

**Milestones:**

*9.1. Release an interactive tool that will increase the granularity of data and information made available and enable Canadians to better understand federal departmental spending:*
- *Expand the types of data, graphics, and analytics available including:*
  - *Planned and actual results;*
  - *Comparisons between historical and planned spending; and*
  - *Spending on specific components such as salaries, capital, transfer payments, etc.*
- *Enable users to explore government spending of the most interest to them based on key data elements (e.g., target group, program type, priority area, etc.).*

*9.2. Enhance online content pertaining to government finances on Canada.ca to make information and tools on government spending readily accessible to Canadians.*

*9.3. Provide targeted and timely material to make government accounting and financial reporting more consistent, transparent, and understandable to Canadians.*

*9.4. Pilot updating the buyandsell.gc.ca site to record the full details of contracts (in addition to awards), contract amendments, and the final termination of contracts.*

*9.5. Participate in a case study to share best practices from Public Service and Procurement Canada's pilot of the Open Contracting Data Standard on BuyandSell.gc.ca.*

**Responsible institutions:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat; Department of Finance Canada; Public Services and Procurement Canada

**Supporting Institutions(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | OGP Value Relevance | Potential Impact | On Time? | Completion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | No | | ✔ | | |
| 9.1. Interactive tool | | | | ✔ | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 9.2. Enhance Content on Canada.ca | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | ✔ | | |
| 9.3. Financial reporting | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | ✔ | | |
| 9.4. Update BuyandSell website | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | No | | ✔ | | |
| 9.5. Best practices case study | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | ✔ | | |

## Context and Objectives

This commitment aims to unify and expand the information published online about government spending and procurement. It builds on Commitment 8 of the second action plan, to provide more easily searchable information on governmental websites. Apart from milestones 9.2 and 9.3, the commitment presents a reasonably clear roadmap forward, with milestones which have the potential to generate significant improvements to the system. Civil society stakeholders that attended the IRM consultations were generally supportive of moves to enhance the information available, though they noted that usability and accessibility is becoming an increasing challenge. Canadian Taxpayers' Federation warned that the website risked becoming a "dumping ground" for data, while the Canadian Unitarian Council, the Canadian Association of Journalists and Fred Vallance-Jones all noted a strong need to improve searchability and contextualisation of information posted online.[1]

## Completion

Over the first year of the action plan, the Treasury Board of Canada's InfoBase website expanded to include an Inventory of Government of Canada Organizations,[2] enhanced information about government spending,[3] and an improved metadata tagging system.[4] The government made substantial progress and Milestone 9.1 is on track to be completed on time.

For Milestone 9.2, the Department of Finance has added datasets to the Canada.ca website, including the Fiscal Monitor 2016-2017,[5] data related to the International Aid Transparency Initiative,[6] and data tables connected to the federal budget.[7] The government self-assessment reports that limited progress has been made, with significant additional publications to come in the second year of implementation.[8] The self-assessment rates this as being on schedule for completion, though the low specificity of the milestone makes this difficult to assess.

In terms of budgetary information connected to Milestone 9.3, the government self-assessment points to an explanatory document connected to the 2017 budget,[9] as well as a summary report of pre-budget consultations.[10] The self-assessment reports limited progress on this milestone, with more activities to come in the second year of implementation.[11] Again, the self-assessment rates this as being on schedule for completion, and low specificity of the commitment makes this difficult to assess.

Regarding Milestone 9.4, Public Services and Procurement Canada released the Standing Offers and Supply Arrangements Application.[12] However, it is unclear where progress stands regarding releasing full details of contracts. As of the time of research, the website appears to only list basic data such as the dates of awards, amount awarded, etc. The IRM researcher reached out to the commitment leads at Public Services and Procurement Canada, who declined to provide further information. The IRM researcher assesses limited progress has been made, and that the commitment is not on track to completion.

For Milestone 9.5, according to the government's self-assessment, Public Service and Procurement Canada's pilot of the Open Contracting Data Standard on BuyandSell.gc.ca reinforced the need to standardise data from the outset using the Open Contracting Data Standard format, and it demonstrated the importance of linking procurement data from all phases of the procurement process.[13] The self-assessment reports limited progress on this milestone. However, it should be possible to complete it within the action plan cycle. The government reports that once the implementation of a full contract life-cycle is made available in the Open Contracting Data Standard format, case studies will be initiated, with an eye to publishing lessons learned.

### Next Steps
The IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward to the next action plan, as enhancing openness around spending and procurement is necessarily an ongoing process. If Milestone 9.4 is not completed within this action plan cycle, it would be a good area to continue to improve and expand the website going forward.

During consultations for this report, stakeholders noted the importance of focusing on the usability of information that is provided. Open North stressed the importance of taking a user-centric approach to publishing and consider the needs of the public, as well as researchers and other heavily engaged stakeholders, in designing these systems. One such consumer, Canadian Taxpayers Federation, stressed a need for stronger contextualisation going forward, such as information about the purposes underlying particular procurement calls, or the relationship between different calls, to allow users to obtain a more complete picture of government spending. In a similar vein, Ernie Boyko noted that as more information is published, taxonomies and metadata tagging will become increasingly important, indicating that expanded work in these areas may be particularly valuable.

Other stakeholders stressed a need to present information in styles that are more user friendly, allowing the data to be easily understood by average Canadians, rather than researchers. The Canadian Unitarian Council questioned whether sufficient promotional work had been done to raise general awareness of the information's availability. Similarly, the Canadian Association of Journalists suggested tutorials for Canadians on how to use these new tools may be a useful addition.

[1] Toronto consultation, 15 September 2017, and Halifax consultation, 12 September 2017.

[2] Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/reporting-government-spending/inventory-government-organizations.html.

[3] See: https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#orgs/gov/gov/infograph/results.

[4] See: https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#metadata.

[5] Available at: http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/45eb6514-0e38-48da-9a12-233d16813f4b.

[6] Available at: http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/65515b1b-b545-4ce5-8e96-bf51babcfb65.

[7] Available at: http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/2a84c234-633c-4cc6-9282-f40ff12f5bc7.

[8] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 9 is available at:
http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-9-enhance-openness-information-government-spending-and-procurement.

[9] Available at: http://www.budget.gc.ca/2017/docs/plan/3min-en.html.

[10] Available at: http://www.fin.gc.ca/pub/pbc-cpb/2017-eng.asp.

[11] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 9 is available at:
http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-9-enhance-openness-information-government-spending-and-procurement.

[12] Available at: https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/standing-offers-and-supply-arrangements. Last accessed 13 October 2017.

[13] The pilot is available at: https://buyandsell.gc.ca/procurement-data/open-contracting-data-standard-pilot.

## 10. Increase transparency of Budget and other Department of Finance information

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will provide access to the datasets used in the Federal Budget each year in near real time and proactively disclose the list of briefing note titles prepared on economic and other matters.*

**Milestones:**
*10.1. Starting with Budget 2017, make all data from Budget charts and tables available in near real time to facilitate analysis by citizens and Parliamentarians.*

*10.2. Post publicly the list of briefing note titles prepared by Department of Finance officials on a regular basis, in order to be transparent about issues raised.*

*10.3. Explore options to increase the transparency of the budget pre-consultation process.*

**Responsible institution:** Department of Finance

**Supporting Institutions(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 10. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 10.1. Publish 2017 budget data | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | | ✔ |
| 10.2. Publish monthly briefing notes | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | | ✔ |
| 10.3. Explore additional budget transparency | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |

## Context and Objectives

This commitment builds on a commitment from Canada's previous action plan to release information connected to the 2015 budget. The overall goal of this commitment is to expand and expedite information regarding the budget itself and to provide briefing notes from the Department of Finance related to underlying issues regarding the budgeting process. Milestone 10.1 and 10.2 spell out the action area relatively clearly, though they are slightly ambiguous regarding the timeframe, with terms like "near real time" and "on a regular basis." Milestone 10.3, to "explore options to increase the transparency of the budget pre-consultation process," does not describe any action that can be objectively measured or verified. In terms of potential impact, although budget data itself is of substantial utility for oversight by citizens, researchers and advocacy groups, the titles of briefing notes by themselves do not provide a particularly important boost to transparency. The vague nature of the third milestone makes the potential impact difficult to assess accurately, making the overall potential impact of the commitment minor.

## Completion

Datasets connected to the 2017 budget were published online on 20 March 2017.[1] Milestone 10.1 has been completed.

Beginning in August 2016, the Department of Finance began publishing monthly briefing notes prepared by officials for the Minister, the Parliamentary Secretary and the Deputy Minister.[2] Milestone 10.2 has been completed.

Regarding Milestone 10.3, the Department of Finance posted summary reports of the results of pre-budget consultations for the 2016 and 2017 budgets.[3] It is difficult to assess overall progress since the commitment lacks a clear endpoint. In terms of future steps, the self-assessment merely states that the government will "continue to explore ways to increase awareness and transparency."[4] In this context, the summary reports could be counted as substantial progress towards this milestone, though an accurate assessment is not possible.

## Early Results

The government self-assessment reports that survey submissions for the 2017 budget were significantly higher than previous years. According to the Summary Report on the 2016 Federal Pre-Budget Consultations, a total of 5,267 survey responses were received as part of that process.[5] The Finance Canada 2017 Pre-Budget Consultations Summary Report records that 32,826 online surveys were received.[6] This may indicate a higher level of public engagement with the budgeting process.

## Next Steps

Budget transparency lends itself to progressive improvement, as technology, expectations and engagement move forward. Knowing funding allocation is a core aspect of public oversight, and a positive area for continued progress. The IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward, potentially by expanding the information on briefing notes, as the titles by themselves provide limited context. This could include releasing the notes themselves, with appropriate redactions where necessary. However, it is also worth considering a more limited approach to redactions. Of the 118 briefing notes that have been posted for August 2017, 52 have had their titles redacted (44%).[7] The frequency with which material is redacted varies significantly depending on the thematic areas. None of the briefing titles from the Law Branch or Corporate Services Branch were redacted, whereas fully 21 out of 24 briefing notes on Federal Provincial Relations and Social Policy were redacted (87.5%). In addition to careful consideration of whether such high redaction rates are

necessary in dealing with the titles of the notes, the IRM researcher recommends publishing supplemental information for redacted materials, to provide users with a description of the area being discussed, without revealing sensitive particulars.

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[1] Available at: http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/2a84c234-633c-4cc6-9282-f40ff12f5bc7.

[2] Available at: http://www.fin.gc.ca/disclose-divulgation/bn-nb/index-eng.asp.

[3] See http://www.fin.gc.ca/pub/pbc-cpb/2016-eng.asp and http://www.fin.gc.ca/pub/pbc-cpb/2017-eng.asp.

[4] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 10 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-10-increase-transparency-budget-and-other-department-finance-information.

[5] "Growing our Economy Together: Summary Report on the 2016 Federal Pre-Budget Consultations," Department of Finance, last modified 22 March 2016. Available at: http://www.fin.gc.ca/pub/pbc-cpb/2016-eng.asp#ftnref1.

[6] "Finance Canada 2017 Pre-Budget Consultations Summary Report," Department of Finance, last modified 22 March 2017. Available at: www.fin.gc.ca/pub/pbc-cpb/2017-eng.asp.

[7] List of briefing notes prepared for the Minister, the Deputy Minister and the Parliamentary Secretary – August 2017, Department of Finance, last modified 3 October 2017. Available at: http://www.fin.gc.ca/disclose-divulgation/bn-nb/2017-08-eng.asp.

## ✪11. Increase Transparency of Grants and Contributions Funding

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will provide one-stop access to consistent, searchable data on grants and contributions (Gs&Cs) programs across the federal government.*

**Milestones:**
*11.1. Provide Canadians with centralized access to standardized information on grants and contributions funding that is proactively disclosed by federal departments via a common, searchable portal on open.canada.ca:*

- *Establish a standardized, common template for federal departments to publish their data through the centralized portal;*
- *Increase access to Gs&Cs information through a decrease to the required disclosure amount from $25,000 to $1;*
- *Provide training to federal departments on how to upload their data; and*
- *Ensure historical data previously disclosed by federal departments on grants and contributions funding is searchable via the central portal.*

*11.2. In consultation with internal and external stakeholders, expand the amount of information on grants and contributions funding disclosed by departments to align with international standards.*

*11.3. Pilot an approach to improving transparency in the delivery of grants and contributions by Canadian Heritage, including publication of:*

- *An increased level of detail in the data proactively disclosed on individual grants and contributions awarded by the department;*
- *Performance results against published service standards; and*
- *Data on events and celebrations funded by the department.*

**Responsible institutions:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat; Canadian Heritage

**Supporting institution(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified    ...

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 11. Overall | | | | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | Yes | | | ✔ | |

| 11.1. Centralize and expand G&C information | | | ✔ | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | Yes | | ✔ | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11.2. Expand departments' G&C disclosures | ✔ | | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | ✔ | |
| 11.3. Heritage pilot project | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | ✔ | |

**Editorial note:** This commitment is clearly relevant to OGP values as written, has transformative potential impact, and is substantially or completely implemented and therefore qualifies as a starred commitment.

### Context and Objectives

The current system for reporting grants and contributions is distributed across government, is not standardised, and only applies contracts over $25,000. This commitment aims to advance access to information and public oversight over government grants and contributions. The commitment will centralise and expand information on grants and contracting by federal departments on the open.canada.ca website, aligning the expansion of information with international standards, and piloting a grants and contributions publication approach with Canadian Heritage. The milestones are relatively clearly defined, including measurable and verifiable outcomes such as dropping the required disclosure amount to $1 and centralising reporting on the open.canada.ca portal. These deliverables would provide for a significant expansion of published information and would work toward unifying and standardising the different reporting systems currently in use. In stakeholder consultations, representatives of Powered by Data noted that the commitment was closely related to a proposal they had submitted during the 2016 ideas consultation, though they noted that the commitment also reflects ideas already advanced by champions within government.[1] Powered By Data confirmed they were pleased with both the government's initial engagement in developing the milestones and with the progress on the commitment thus far. Overall, the commitments are scored as having a transformative impact, in part due to the importance of the pilot being carried out by Canadian Heritage, which has the potential to significantly improve Canada's financial disclosure system in the years to come.

### Completion

Overall, the commitment is on schedule to be completed.

With regard to Milestone 11.1, the Treasury Board Secretariat has made over 37,000 grants and contributions disclosures available on the open.canada.ca website.[2] In addition, training sessions and online materials have been developed and uploaded by the Treasury Board Secretariat to an internally available GCpedia page.[3] The Office of the Comptroller General has developed a draft guideline to lower the threshold for grants and contributions to $1, which has been opened to public consultation.[4] This represents substantial progress toward completion.

Regarding Milestone 11.2, the Office of the Comptroller General has brought 32 departments into the consultation process,[5] and developed a draft standard and a draft guideline.[6] This also represents substantial progress toward completion.

With regard to Milestone 11.3, all Canadian Heritage grants and contributions in excess of $1 are being posted online, along with service standard results for their programming.[7] This represents substantial progress, and the commitment is on schedule.

**Early Results**

Although work on the broader standards, in line with milestones 11.1 and 11.2, remains under development, Canadian Heritage's pilot project is well underway and has increased the level of information available. Though it is too early to comment on the overall impact, Powered By Data has begun working with the information, and expressed confidence the information will assist civil society.

**Next Steps**

As noted above, Powered by Data has been a key partner in the development of this commitment. In conversations with the IRM researcher, they were positive regarding the government's engagement in developing this commitment, as well as the overall quality of the data as released. The IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward to future action plans and build on its potentially transformative impact. The Canadian Heritage pilot, which includes information about results alongside granting information, is a particularly promising area to continue and expand in future action plans.

Powered By Data also noted that more needed to be done to expand the audience using open data. At present, consultation and engagement avenues are only aimed toward those who are already familiar with the benefits and uses of open data.

In addition to expanding engagement, Powered By Data provided several suggestions for improving the accessibility and usability of this information going forward. Machine readability was a key recommendation here, in terms of requiring that grantees report back using consistent formats to facilitate cross-comparison. Geographic searchability is another area that might be expanded, allowing users to search based on where a project occurred (as opposed to the geographic location of the grantee). Similarly, Powered By Data suggested a nexus with Commitment 16, insofar as expanding this open data program to include grants from other jurisdictions would provide significant utility.

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[1] Conversations with Powered by Data took place at a focus group in Montreal on 20 September 2017 and via phone on 29 September 2017.

[2] See: open.canada.ca/en/search/grants.

[3] Training materials are available at: www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Proactive_Disclosure_on_Open.Canada.ca (this link is only functional on networked Canadian government machines, though the IRM reviewer was able to view an offline copy with the assistance of Treasury Board Secretariat staff).

[4] See: open.canada.ca/en/grgca-ldrosc-consultation.

[5] In response to queries, Jacob Topic of the Office of the Comptroller General provided a list of six external consultation meetings, and a further 26 internal consultation meetings, which took place. External stakeholders consulted include Powered by Data, Imagine Canada, Open Calgary, and the Council of Ontario Universities.

[6] See: open.canada.ca/en/grgca-ldrosc-consultation.

[7] See: open.canada.ca/en/search/grants?_ga=2.162107004.1347862626.1499174882-1187550498.1490712190&f%5B0%5D=org_name_en%3ACanadian%20Heritage and www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/service-standards/service-standards-results.html.

## 12. Improve Public Information on Canadian Corporations

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will provide searchable information on Canadian businesses that is held in business registries at the federal, provincial, and territorial level.*

**Milestones:**

*12.1. Launch a pilot project to provide citizens and business with online capacity to search existing federal and provincial (from Ontario, Québec, and Nova Scotia) business registries through a single search tool.*

*12.2. Develop a proof of concept and prototype of a digital solution for reducing burden in the areas of corporate search, registration, and reporting for Canadian businesses that is expandable to all registries across Canada in order to drive consistency in corporate data provided to the public by both federal and provincial governments.*

**Responsible institution:** Innovation, Science, and Economic Development

**Supporting institution(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** In the government's self-assessment report, the government added the following milestone that was not included in the original action plan. This milestone will be assessed in the year two End of Term report:

*Launch a pilot of the digital solution using real data in a test environment. The online corporate search component will be released for testing by users.*

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 12. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 12.1. Pilot program | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | | ✔ |
| 12.2. Multi-jurisdictional prototype | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | | ✔ |

**Context and Objectives**

This commitment addresses robust corporate accountability by enhancing the searchability and availability of information on Canadian businesses held in business registries at the federal, provincial, and territorial level. Corporate accountability is an issue of growing interest and relevance, and robust information is an essential component of civil society oversight. In Canada in particular, the federal system can create jurisdictional challenges for users seeking to navigate the open data system. However, while this commitment was generally welcomed by civil society stakeholders consulted for this report, some noted that the commitment's potential for impact was relatively low since it focused on accessibility of information rather than the relatively small amount of information regarding corporate registration collected.[1] The Centre for Law and Democracy noted that Canada ranks among the most opaque countries in the world when it comes to business information. This point of view was echoed by Publish What You Pay-Canada, who referred to Canada's business registry system as "complicated" and "out-of-date," and described this commitment as "low-hanging fruit."

**Completion**

Innovation, Science, and Economic Development created a concept prototype in late 2016. The department then partnered with seven provinces, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and with the federal government, to work towards a functional pilot which will use real data from their registries. The IRM researcher was able to view a demonstration of this pilot from Innovation, Science, and Economic Development, who are in the process of carrying out usability and functionality testing on it.

**Next Steps**

Several stakeholders, including the Centre for Law and Democracy,[2] Publish What You Pay-Canada, and Canadians for Tax Fairness, have requested Canada's OGP efforts promote transparency for Canadian corporations.[3] Once the program being developed under this commitment is operational, the IRM researcher recommends that the government consider expanding the amount of business information it collects. In particular, there appears to be significant support among civil society stakeholders for the establishment of a public registry of the beneficial owners of companies and trusts.[4]

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[1] See, for example, this report from Transparency International detailing secrecy in Canada's real estate market which facilitates money laundering: "Doors Wide Open: Corruption and Real Estate in Four Key Markets," Transparency International, 29 March 2017. Available at: https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/doors_wide_open_corruption_and_real_estate_in_four_key_markets.

[2] CLD's 2016 submission is available at: http://www.law-democracy.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Canada.OGP-AP3-Ideas.May16.pdf.

[3] See: http://open.canada.ca/en/Beneficial_Ownership_Transparency.

[4] A joint letter from 23 Canadian NGOs, including several of the major civil society participants in the OGP, is available at: http://www.publishwhatyoupay.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Orgs-call-for-Beneficial-Ownership-Transparency-in-Canada.pdf.

## Theme III: Innovation, Prosperity, and Sustainable Development

## 13. Increase the Availability and Usability of Geospatial Data

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will make more high-quality, authoritative, and useable geospatial data available in open formats to support better services to Canadians.*

**Milestones:**
*13.1. Improve access to open geospatial data through the expansion of open maps:*
- *Increase the number of federal geospatial datasets available through a single window enabling Canadians to more easily find relevant geospatial data that can be mapped and visualized;*
- *Provide access to satellite imagery through an open licence; and*
- *Work with researchers, data enthusiasts, and developers who use geospatial data to share their work through the open maps gallery.*

*13.2. Develop geospatial data and web service standards:*
- *Increase the quality and standardization of critical geospatial data assets through strategic investments;*
- *Implement a management and investment framework for high value federal geospatial data assets; and*
- *Participate in geospatial standards bodies to ensure that Canada's data continues to be accessible and interoperable nationally and internationally.*

*13.3. Develop Geospatial Applications:*
- *Build mobile applications to disseminate key information to Canadians in an interactive format, which makes complex and large amounts of information easy to understand;*
- *Provide targeted applications, which use open geospatial data to address the policy priorities of government; and*
- *Provide the ability for Canadians to share data they collect through standardized tools.*

**Responsible institution:** Natural Resources Canada

**Supporting institutions:** Member departments of the Federal Committee on Geomatics and Earth Observations (FCGEO) supporting the Federal Geospatial Platform (FGP)

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. For Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 13. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 13.I. Improve geospatial data access | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 13.2. Develop standards | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 13.3. Develop applications | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |

## Context and Objectives

The collection and sharing of geospatial data has been an early focus of Canada's open data efforts, and Canada's public laboratories have strong expertise on this issue. Although geospatial data represents the largest quantity of publicly available data by a significant margin, this commitment includes milestones aimed at expanding the information available still further. However, and more significantly, the commitment also focuses on increasing the usability, searchability and accessibility of this data. Standardisation is a major part of this effort as a necessary first step toward integrating datasets developed by different institutions from various levels of government. International engagement is another key component, as Canada aims to lead in the development of global data standards in order to promote usability across jurisdictions. This commitment aims to advance Canada's open data work across these themes by improving access to geospatial data, developing geospatial data and web service standards, and developing geospatial applications. The milestones are relatively clearly defined, including identifying specific types of applications they seek to develop and sub-thematic priorities such as mapping. The commitment addresses an important practice area and provides for significant continuing progress, though it is scored as having moderate potential impact, rather than a transformative one, because the specific milestones represent a continuation of existing policies rather than transforming existing practices.

## Completion

Over the course of the action plan, Natural Resources Canada has increased the total number of records available on the Open Maps component of the Open Government catalogue from 200 to 573.[1] All datasets are available through an open licence. However, regarding engagement with researchers, data enthusiasts, and developers, Natural Resources Canada indicates that the map gallery is not ready yet to host user-contributed content, though they indicated they plan to have this online by June 2018. The self-assessment rates substantial progress on this milestone, and that it is on schedule for completion, which appears accurate.[2]

In terms of progress to develop geospatial data and web service standards (Milestone 13.2), the self-assessment reports that Natural Resources Canada is participating in the US Federal Geographic Data Committee Open Geospatial Consortium (OCG), the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, and the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C). Consultation with Natural Resources Canada indicates several avenues through which this participation aims to improve the quality of geospatial data and web services, including using the Open Geospatial Consortium Quality of Web Service Experience Domain Working Group and through sharing relevant discussion papers.[3] Natural Resources Canada also hosted a Data Work Committee of the Federal Geospatial Platform to provide advice and recommendations related to information management and new geospatial data investment to the FGP Board of Directors. The Committee met for the first time in April 2017. Together, this represents substantial progress, and this milestone is on schedule for completion.

For Milestone 13.3, Natural Resources Canada has developed several applications which use geospatial data, including the DFO Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure, [4] the Demonstration Application of Arctic Food Security Policy,[5] Clean Energy Resources and Projects (CERP) in Canada,[6] North American Cooperation on Energy Information (NACEI),[7] Ten years of Drought in Canada,[8] and the Crowdsourced Geographic Information Pilot Project.[9] This represents substantial progress, and the milestone is on track to be completed.

### Next Steps

There is a high potential impact going forward, provided this action area is recalibrated to fully harness the potential of Canada's open data experts. As an early leader in this area, Canada's research institutions have developed their own advanced expertise regarding best practices for collating, managing, delivering, and presenting diverse datasets. This will be particularly challenging considering the fundamental tension between processing data in a manner which allows it to be shared, manipulated, and centrally accessed while still preserving its original context, the latter being of fundamental importance to researchers.

Stakeholders, and in particular Dr. Tracey Lauriault, have noted that while this particular challenge is being addressed by researchers, and in particular those from Canada's geospatial research centres, the government's centralised open data portal is conspicuously weaker than systems established by other agencies. The IRM researcher recommends granting a stronger role to leading data institutions in the setting of standards and benchmarks, including those involved in this commitment. This will capitalise on work the institutions have already done and enable them to innovate new ways to package and deliver information. This echoes a recommendation which was made in the 2015 midterm assessment, which also noted the expertise of the geospatial community as a resource which could be better utilised.

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[1] Available at: http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset?q=&collection=fgp.
[2] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 13 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-13-increase-availability-and-usability-geospatial-data.
[3] "Ensuring Quality of Experience with OGC Web Services Discussion Paper", Open Geospatial Consortium, 30 June 2017. Available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/13DCBYBR7t7AaZlRBIlPHSidoqt6xGJ0AERlBT4I0rM0/edit. See also: "Spatial Data on the Web Best Practices", W3C Working Group, last edited 28 September 2017. Available at: https://www.w3.org/TR/2017/NOTE-sdw-bp-20170928/.
[4] See: http://msdi-idsm.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html.
[5] See: https://esrica-ncr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=c8633273d784445a97473d699e8b9aac.

[6] See: http://atlas.gc.ca/cerp-rpep/en/.

[7] See: http://geoappext.nrcan.gc.ca/GeoCanViz/map/nacei-cnaie/en/index.html.

[8] See: http://maps.canada.ca/journal/content-en.html?lang=en&appid=ec76e685b0fc41c69c566dd3a97f05bb&appidalt=08cf0944bfa84f7e9dba5614475e0d79.

[9] See: http://arcg.is/2sXaHHB.

## 14. Increase Openness of Federal Science Activities (Open Science)

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will take appropriate steps to make the science performed in support of Government of Canada programs and decision-making open and transparent to Canadians.*

**Milestones:**

*Science-based Departments and Agencies*
*14.1. Create a Chief Science Officer mandated to ensure that government science is fully available to the public, that scientists are able to speak freely about their work, and that scientific analyses are considered when the government makes decisions.*

*14.2. Increase the public availability of data and publications produced from federal Science and Technology (S&T) activities.*

*14.3. Increase engagement with Canadians on federal S&T activities, including, as appropriate:*
- *Enhanced communication of scientific participation opportunities in support of federal S&T activities; and*
- *Targeted consultations on best practices for increasing the impact of federal S&T activities.*

*14.4. Develop metrics to track collective federal progress on open science activities.*

*Granting Councils and Grants and Contributions*
*14.5. Develop and implement an open access policy for scientific research funded through grants and contributions.*

*14.6. Work toward the development of policies on digital data management for research funded through the Granting Councils.*

**Responsible institutions:** Environment and Climate Change Canada; Innovation, Science, and Economic Development

**Supporting institutions:** Science-based departments and agencies

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | OGP Value Relevance | Potential Impact | On Time? | Completion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 14.I. Chief Science Officer | | | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 14.2. Increase S&T data | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 14.3. Increase S&T engagement | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 14.4. Open science metrics | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 14.5. Open access for scientific grants | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | ✔ | | |
| 14.6. Digital data management | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |

## Context and Objectives

Under the previous government, there was widespread evidence of government scientists being "muzzled" by a strict communications policy.[1] This commitment marks the beginning of a shift away from this approach and aims to make it easier for Canadians to access scientific research produced by their government. This is an important thematic area of focus, as expressed by civil society stakeholders consulted in the preparation of this report and as noted during the 2015 IRM progress report.[2] The relatively low starting point, including a trajectory of regression leading into this action plan, and the importance of some of the milestones included here, particularly the appointment of a Chief Science Officer and the development of an open access policy for scientific research, lead to moderate potential for impact. However, Dr. Tracey Lauriault flagged some concerns regarding how scientific information is being consolidated through a single portal and cautioned that this had the potential to remove important context, "dumbing down the data."[3] Low specificity is another concern, in particular with regard to Milestone 14.2, which is difficult to objectively measure. Similarly, Milestone 14.6 would have been stronger had it committed to actually develop a policy on digital data management for research funded through the Granting Councils, rather than merely to "work toward" the development of this policy. This phrasing leaves it unclear whether the intended deliverable is a policy, a draft of a policy, a set of ideas which will feed into a policy-making process, or something even broader than that.

## Completion

The selection process for the Chief Science Officer (Milestone 14.1) was completed by June 2017, which led to the appointment of Mona Nemer to the position shortly after the assessment period concluded.[4]

Regarding Milestone 14.2, the Federal Science Library was launched in March 2017 and currently hosts research and resources from seven departmental libraries.[5] This milestone appears to be on track, though the lack of information regarding the number of datasets the government aims to make available makes it difficult to properly assess progress.

The lack of specificity for Milestone 14.3 also makes it difficult to assess, but in response to queries from the IRM researcher, Environment and Climate Change Canada provided an extensive list of engagement activities, including the use of social media by the AAFC Women in Science Network, a series of short articles published about agriculture,[6] a series of press briefings through the Science Media Centre,[7] and a new website dedicated to "citizen science."[8] This represents substantial progress, and the milestone is on track for completion.

In line with Milestone 14.4, a report on metrics was developed for Environment and Climate Change Canada by Kathleen Shearer in January 2017.[9] This puts the milestone on track, though it is unclear what level of further refinement is planned.

The government self-assessment reports limited progress on Milestone 14.5.[10] A scoping paper on the issue was developed for the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development in May 2017.[11] The government also reports that they have begun work on an inventory of grants and contributions. However, according to discussions with government representatives, full implementation within this action plan cycle may be challenging, as it requires developing consensus among federal departments and agencies on a harmonised approach.

For Milestone 14.6, the government self-assessment reports that consultations on the development of a Tri-Agency Policy on Research Data Management began in the spring of 2017 and remain ongoing. According to the self-assessment, the government plans to host an online consultation on the draft policy in fall 2017, with a target of spring 2018 for the final approval and publication.[12]

## Early Results

There is no question that the current government has had a significant positive impact on the openness of federal science activities. Several stakeholders who attended IRM focus groups, including Canadian Journalists for Free Expression and the Canadian Association of Journalists, noted the importance of the cultural change over the past year, and that the federal government has done an excellent job of connecting scientists and researchers to the media and the public.[13] It is too early to have seen dividends from the specific milestones in this commitment, though the announcements themselves seem to have contributed to an important cultural change among Canada's federal scientists, according to stakeholders who attended the IRM focus groups in Halifax and Toronto.

## Next Steps

By discontinuing their predecessor's problematic policies, Canada's current government was able to affect positive change. Civil society stakeholders who work with government scientists expressed strong relief that they could again access and converse with these officials freely. Without discounting the importance of this shift, there is still considerable room for improvement on this issue.

While some aspects of this commitment, particularly the appointment of a Chief Science Officer and the development of an open access system for grants, provide significant positive progress, other milestones, notably the second and third, are overly vague. The IRM researcher recommends carrying these initiatives forward with more clearly identifiable benchmarks in the next action plan.

As noted above in discussing the government's centralisation of information, Dr. Tracey Lauriault stated that, as a researcher, context is of paramount importance to data reliability.[14] She suggested that, for future action plans, the government consider the needs of researchers, journalists, and other high-end users, as well as consult more thoroughly with the real-time users to understand possible functionality gaps. These inputs tie in with broader statements on the need for the government to adopt a more consumer-centric approach to open data, which was expressed in some form at all four focus-group consultations carried out by the IRM researcher.

As the government moves toward tracking collective federal progress on open science activities, as developed under Milestone 14.4, it may also be worth considering how this assessment may overlap with the performance management framework for assessing open government more generally in Milestone 5.3.

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[1] See: http://www.pipsc.ca/portal/page/portal/website/issues/science/bigchill and https://evidencefordemocracy.ca/sites/default/files/reports/Can%20Scientists%20Speak_.pdf.

[2] Mary Francoli, "Canada Progress Report 2014-2015," Open Government Partnership Independent Reporting Mechanism. Available at: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/1.Canada14-15_English_Final_0_0.pdf.

[3] Interviewed in Ottawa on 18 September 2017.

[4] Ivan Semeniuk, "Ottawa researcher Mona Nemer named Canada's new science advisor," *Globe and Mail*, 26 September 2017. Available at: https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/mona-nemer-named-canadas-new-science-advisor/article36401427/.

[5] Available at: http://science-libraries.canada.ca/eng/home/.

[6] Discover Agriculture, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, last modified 14 September 2017. Available at: http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/about-us/publications/discover-agriculture/?id=1411999466585.

[7] See, for example, "SMCC Webinar: Water in a Changing Climate, Science Media Centre of Canada," 27 May 2017. Available at: sciencemediacentre.ca/site/?p=5441.

[8] "Become a citizen scientist," Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, 10 February 2017. Available at: https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/013.nsf/eng/00005.html.

[9] This is not available online, though a copy has been shared with the IRM reviewer.

[10] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 14 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-14-increase-openness-federal-science-activities-open-science.

[11] This is not available online, though a copy has been shared with the IRM reviewer.

[12] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 14 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-14-increase-openness-federal-science-activities-open-science.

[13] Toronto Consultation, 15 September 2017.

[14] Interviewed in Ottawa on 18 September 2017.

## 15. Stimulate Innovation through Canada's Open Data Exchange (ODX)

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will partner with the private sector to better understand how companies are using open data, and raise awareness of the possibilities that exist for Canadian entrepreneurs to take advantage of the value of open data.*

**Milestones:**
*15.1. Complete a comprehensive mapping of 150 Canadian companies that are using open data to launch new products and services, create commercial and non-profit ventures, optimize their business processes, conduct research, and/or make data-driven decisions.*

*15.2. Launch an online platform at www.opendata500.com/ca to showcase Canada's Open Data 150.*

*15.3. Establish a national network of open data users within industry to collaborate on the development of standards and practices in support of data commercialization.*

*15.4. Collaborate with private industry on three demonstration projects to illustrate the commercialization potential of open data in priority sectors.*

*15.5. Incubate 15 new data-driven companies by June 2018.*

**Responsible institution:** Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario in collaboration with Canada's Open Data Exchange

**Supporting institutions:** Communitech; Canadian Digital Media Network; OpenText; D2L; University of Waterloo

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 15. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 15.I. Map 150 companies | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | | ✔ |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **15.2. Online platform** | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ |
| **15.3. National open data network** | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | Yes | | ✔ | |
| **15.4. Three demonstration projects** | | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | Yes | | ✔ | |
| **15.5. 15 data-driven companies** | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | Yes | | ✔ | |

## Context and Objectives

This commitment seeks to support private sector utilisation of open data. As an ancillary goal, it is designed to bridge gaps in understanding how the private sector can extract value from open data, with the intended result of encouraging its use by Canadians. Although the milestones are written in a relatively clear and specific manner, it is worth noting that some of them appear to be continuations of milestones initiated under the previous action plan. Moreover, the milestones do not expand the availability or usability of information beyond the participant companies, though there may be potential wider impact as a result of ODX's broader activities. Nonetheless, the commitment's potential impact is assessed as moderate. Its limited scale, in terms of participation and impact, also restricts its relevance to the OGP value of civic participation, though it still qualifies as relevant.

## Completion

This commitment is on schedule to be completed.

Open Data Exchange (ODX) completed its mapping of Canadian companies (Milestone 15.1) by the end of June 2017 and launched the results on its website.[1] ODX also completed and launched the online platform to showcase this information, as required under Milestone 15.2.[2]

In order to network participants together, ODX carried out a national tour, and posted reports from Atlantic Canada,[3] Central Canada,[4] and Western Canada[5] on their website. Although it is difficult to directly connect this work to the level of progress made in establishing a national open data industry network, Milestone 15.3 should nonetheless be achievable within the action plan timeframe.

For Milestone 15.4, the self-assessment reports that the three demonstration projects are on schedule, and that ODX is considering expanding its program to include a fourth.[6]

In terms of Milestone 15.5, it is difficult to assess specific progress, since ODX's "incubation" activities can constitute a range of things, including expert advice, financial assistance, and technical services. According to the self-assessment, 64 companies have participated in its "data concierge" services,[7] eight companies in its "Communitech Data Hub,"[8] and eight companies engaged through ODX Ventures.[9] This represents substantial progress, though the endpoint remains somewhat uncertain, and it is tough to tell which of these counts as having been "incubated".

**Early Results**

ODX's programs continue to progress. One participant, representing ChillWall, told the IRM researcher that their business had been substantially helped by the program, both in terms of receiving financial support to carry their work forward and in terms of guidance and mentorship from the ODX team.[10]

**Next Steps**

Business development is an important benefit of open data, and the IRM researcher recommends carrying this commitment forward. However, several civil society stakeholders questioned the level of funds currently devoted to promoting private sector development, particularly in comparison to the relative lack of resources available for civil society organisations pursuing similar aims. The IRM researcher recommends creating a parallel structure for incubating civil society programs, particularly to utilise and foster Canadian NGOs who specialize in open data as a conduit and driver of engagement similar to the way ODX operates for the private sector. A parallel civil society voice is also important to balance the role that ODX has in engaging with data producers. If conversations with public authorities on the benefits and values of open data are dominated by private sector voices, this will inevitably shape the prioritisation and approach to disclosure that these officials adopt, which could reflect private sector needs more than those of civil society. The IRM researcher also recommends instituting better transparency structures for ODX itself, including publishing robust financial information and reporting on its website.

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[1] See: https://codx.ca/od150-results-of-150-canadian-companies-for-canada-day/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=OD150.
[2] See: http://canada.opendata500.com/.
[3] See: https://codx.ca/odx-cross-canada-trip-report-atlantic-canada/.
[4] See: https://codx.ca/odx-cross-canada-trip-report-central-canada/.
[5] See: https://codx.ca/odx-cross-canada-trip-report-western-canada/.
[6] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 15 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-15-stimulate-innovation-through-canadas-open-data-exchange-odx.
[7] See: https://codx.ca/services/concierge/.
[8] See: https://www.communitech.ca/how-we-help/workspace/communitech-data-hub/.
[9] See: https://codx.ca/odx-ventures/.
[10] Interview with Michael Campanelli, 5 October 2017.

## 16. Align Open Data across Canada (Open Data Canada)

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will expand collaboration with provincial, territorial, and municipal partners on further standardizing and harmonizing the delivery of open government data across jurisdictions.*

**Milestones:**
*16.1. Foster the adoption of common open data principles that are consistent with the International Open Data Charter by all levels of government.*

*16.2. Develop a list of high-value, priority datasets for release in collaboration with key jurisdictions to make it easier for Canadians to compare data across different governments.*

*16.3. Launch an online, federated, multi-jurisdictional open data search service in partnership with one or more provinces and territories to allow Canadians to search and access data from across jurisdictions, regardless of its origin.*

*16.4. Host a national Open Data Canada summit in 2017 to bring together federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal officials to collaborate on setting a national agenda for aligning and improving the delivery of open data across the country.*

**Responsible institution:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Supporting institutions:** Provinces, territories, municipalities, and Indigenous Peoples

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 16. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | No | | | ✔ | |
| 16.I. Common open data principles | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | | ✔ | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 16.2. Priority datasets | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | ✔ | | |
| 16.3. Online search service | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | No | | ✔ | | |

| 16.4. Open Data Canada | | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

## Context and Objectives

This commitment aims to mitigate the challenges that Canadians face in obtaining and comparing information from different jurisdictions by fostering common open data principles in line with the International Open Data Charter, developing a list of high-priority datasets for release, launching an online open-data search service, and hosting an Open Data Canada Summit in 2017. Some of the milestones, in particular 16.1 and 16.3, are continuations of action areas included in the previous action plan. However, as a federal system, whose governments at the national, provincial, territorial, and municipal levels have differing priorities and standards for collecting and publishing information, standardisation is a difficult problem to tackle. As Fred Vallance-Jones of the University of King's College, noted, it answers a strong need to "break down the balkanization" of the current system.[1] The milestones are reasonably clear and specific, except for the Milestone 16.2, which could be improved by defining how many datasets and how many collaborating jurisdictions will be involved. There is a substantial gap between the potential impact of the different milestones, but overall the commitment is reasonably ambitious. In particular, a move toward common data standards at every level of government in line with the International Open Data Charter would be game-changing for researchers or civil society organisations who work across jurisdictions.

## Completion

Over the course of the first year of implementation, the government's attempt to develop common open data principles (Milestone 16.1) was carried out in collaboration with Open North. Open North worked to develop a Do-it-Yourself (DIY) Open Data Toolkit for Canadian municipalities in consultation with fifteen Canadian municipalities, the federal government, and the International Open Data Charter group.[2] The Canadian Open Government Working Group has developed a draft plan for expanding open data activities going forward. The Open Government Working Group also shared actions on the adoption of the International Open Data Charter at 2017 Canadian Open Data Summit, and created a collaborative space for collecting Open Data Charter resources. The government reports substantial progress on their self-assessment, which seems accurate, though implementing this standard across the country's different levels of government will be a monumental task, which may be challenging to complete in the course of the current action plan.

The government's self-assessment reports limited progress on Milestone 16.2, which is currently being carried out in collaboration with the provinces of Quebec and Nova Scotia. A draft work plan has been developed, along with a criteria tool for identifying high value datasets for prioritization.[3] Although the low specificity of the milestone makes it difficult to assess, it seems likely that the datasets will be released by June 2018.

The Treasury Board Secretariat developed a draft work plan on a cross-jurisdiction federated search service (Milestone 16.3), which will be piloted by the provinces of Alberta, Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec.[4] The self-assessment notes that the deliverable is at risk of not being completed by the end of the action plan cycle, though this should be understood in the context of the complex and challenging nature of the project.

In line with Milestone 16.4, the Canadian Open Data Summit took place in Edmonton from 12-14 June 2017.[5] At that event, the Government of Canada hosted a meeting

of the Canadian Open Government Working Group on June 12 to discuss thematic areas of collaboration across the country. This milestone has been completed.

### Early Results
An early result from this commitment has been a change in tone among inter-jurisdictional working groups, along with an increase in collaboration and joint meetings, according to Open North.[6] This is important since, in a federal system, strong collaboration and open engagement among the different levels of government are essential pre-requisites for aligning open data practices.

### Next Steps
Canada's federal structure, and the inability of the national government to compel compliance among provincial and municipal counterparts, means that this action area is likely to be a long-term challenge. Implementing common open data standards will require ongoing federal leadership, as well as an important supporting role by civil society organisations like Open North.

In addition to working cross-jurisdictionally, the IRM researcher recommends that the government work to enhance implementation of strong open data standards across the federal government itself. Even within the current action plan, stakeholders noted that disclosures under Commitments 11 (information from grant recipients) and 17 (information from companies subject to the Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act) failed to meet best practices in terms of formatting and searchability. Indeed, in terms of standardisation challenges, Mike Gifford of OpenConcept Consulting noted that there are still differences across departments regarding the format of how dates are written.[7] In discussing this commitment, Open North also noted that Canada has yet to adopt the international open data charter, though the province of Ontario and the city of Edmonton have.[8] The IRM researcher recommends making this an area of priority for the next action plan.

As standardisation work progresses, Dr. Tracey Lauriault noted that it was important to maintain a parallel focus on integrating datasets, since both components are key to breaking down the jurisdictional boundaries that limit data use.[9]

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[1] Halifax consultation, 12 September 2017.
[2] See: http://open.canada.ca/en/blog/coming-soon-do-it-yourself-open-data-toolkit.
[3] The work plan is available for download at: https://gccollab.ca/file/view/71053/encogwg-work-plan-draft2017-06-19frcogwg-work-plan-draft2017-06-19 (registration required).
[4] The work plan is available for download at: http://pilot.open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/5cc8b7ea-1fb2-527c-a73f-824da6ef69a6.
[5] See: http://opendatasummit.ca/.
[6] Montreal Consultation, 20 September 2017.
[7] Interview by phone, 12 October 2017.
[8] See: https://opendatacharter.net/adopted-by-countries-and-cities/.
[9] Interviewed in Ottawa on 18 September 2017.

## 17. Implement the Extractives Sector Transparency Measures Act

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will implement the Extractive Sector Transparency Measures Act (ESTMA) that requires the reporting of certain payments made to governments related to the commercial development of oil, gas, and minerals.*

**Milestones:**
*17.1. Undertake outreach activities with reporting entities to ensure awareness and understanding of processes for publishing their reports based on a consistent template and format.*

*17.2. Improve public access to published reports through a common online window.*

*17.3. Seek broader alignment of ESTMA with other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world.*

**Responsible institution:** Natural Resources Canada

**Supporting institution(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 17. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 17.1. Outreach with reporting entities | | | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 17.2. Common online window | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 17.3. Align ESTMA across jurisdictions | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | ✔ | | |

## Context and Objectives

Canada passed the Extractive Industry Transparency Measures Act (ESTMA) in connection with its second action plan, and it came into force on 1 June 2015. This commitment aims to improve implementation of ESTMA and expand the utility and accessibility of ESTMA material through outreach to reporting entities, publishing reports through a common online window, and aligning ESTMA across jurisdictions. Although the milestones under this commitment are clear and target an important action area, Publish What You Pay-Canada, a leading civil society stakeholder on this issue, noted that the milestones set a relatively low bar, and that strong accessibility still required significant improvement beyond what the commitment promises.

## Completion

Natural Resources Canada carried out several outreach activities to promote awareness of ESTMA (Milestone 17.1), including developing a webinar on its website,[1] participating in events in Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and St. John's, and posting an article on Rock to Road, an industry publication.[2] Natural Resources Canada also created a survey of reporting challenges. The results are set to be analysed during the second year of implementation. Substantial progress has been made here, and the milestone is on time to be completed.

In terms of Milestone 17.2, Natural Resources Canada developed an online portal for ESTMA reports.[3] This is substantial progress, and the milestone is on time to be completed.

For Milestone 17.3, Natural Resources Canada reports that they have held bilateral meetings on ESTMA with Quebec, the United Kingdom and France, to align standards for reporting on payment categories, the definition of "payee", and similar values. This represents limited progress, and the milestone is on time to be completed.

## Early Results

Implementation of ESTMA has been moving forward, as evidenced by the reporting posted on Natural Resources Canada's online portal. In terms of civil society, Publish What You Pay-Canada has been utilising the information which has been uploaded, though they are also critical of the materials which are available, as outlined below.

## Next Steps

Several Canadian civil society organisations including, though not limited to, Publish What You Pay-Canada, are keenly interested in tracking more information about Canada's extractive industries, and have identified this as an important priority area going forward. However, in utilising Natural Resources Canada's online portal, Publish What You Pay-Canada noted that searchability is virtually non-existent and, even more problematic, reporting is not being done via machine-readable formats. The IRM researcher recommends bringing these disclosures in line with better practices for open data. This includes both building additional accessibility and searchability into the website and imposing better formatting standards for companies regarding their ESTMA disclosures to better facilitate scraping and reprocessing of this information.

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[1] Available at: http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/estma/18184#webinar.
[2] Available at: https://www.rocktoroad.com/news/everything-you-need-to-know-5131.
[3] At: http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/estma/18198.

## 18. Support Openness and Transparency Initiatives around the World

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will work with international partners to increase the transparency of international development funding, and to share skills and knowledge with developing countries to ensure that everyone can reap the benefits of open government.*

**Milestones:**
*18.1. Endorse the Open Government Partnership's Joint Declaration on Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and leverage Canada's participation in the OGP to help support the declaration's commitments.*

*18.2. Leverage Canada's role as chair of the International Aid Transparency Initiative to support international good practices on aid transparency and greater interoperability among data standards (e.g., aid, public procurement, public accounts, corporate identifiers) to enable greater accountability and improve the effectiveness of development finance.*

*18.3. Provide training and peer-learning to at least 500 open data leaders in government and civil society in developing countries, provide technical assistance to at least 10 developing countries, increasing the quality and ambition of their open data policies, and assess how capacity-building activities affect communities.*

*18.4. Work with international organizations and partners in developing countries to implement innovative open data projects with impact on anti-corruption, local governance, health, and education.*

*18.5. In support of Canada's role as a partner in the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN):*
- *Increase the amount of high-value, reusable agriculture and nutrition data made available to Canadians in open formats under the Government of Canada's open licence; and*
- *Participate in the planning of the GODAN Summit in September 2016 in order to support the global agenda for opening agriculture and nutrition data around the world.*

**Responsible institutions:** Global Affairs Canada; the International Development Research Centre; Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Supporting institutions:** Open Government Partnership; International Aid Transparency Initiative; Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition; Open Data for Development and associated networks

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. For Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 18. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 18.1. 2030 Agenda | | ✔ | | | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 18.2. Chair IATI | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 18.3. Global training | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 18.4. Global open data projects | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 18.5. Partner in GODAN | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | ✔ | | |

## Context and Objectives

The government's self-assessment states that the purpose of this commitment is to equip global governments and civil society with "the knowledge, tools, and expertise needed to support greater public access to open data and information."[1] Although international collaboration is a main feature of the Open Government Partnership, OGP action plans are typically meant to focus domestically, rather than building other countries' open government initiatives. Nonetheless, there are aspects of this commitment, particularly milestones 18.1 and 18.5, which have the potential to create a significant positive impact on Canada's own openness. Moreover, international collaborations, as described in milestones 18.2 and 18.4, can have an ancillary positive impact on Canada, by developing new skills in implementing transparency policies and spurring creative thinking in how to solve challenges to openness. The milestones are reasonably specific, including several tangible benchmarks for success, and listing specific initiatives that Canada will join. However, in assessing the commitment, stakeholders at the IRM Halifax consultation noted that it was relatively modest as far as government development initiatives go and encouraged the government to think more ambitiously if outward-facing commitments are included in future action plans.[2] Some examples cited by the participants were to consider a scale larger than just 500 open data leaders (a relatively modest footprint for a global project), and to export Canadian expertise on access to information, particularly through connecting developing country officials with staff at the Office of the Information Commissioner.

## Completion

For Milestone 18.1, consultation with the Treasury Board Secretariat's Open Government team indicated that they consider the action plan itself to be an endorsement of the Joint Declaration on Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, since the latter no longer includes a

formal mechanism for endorsement (this was confirmed with OGP staff). In terms of follow through, the Treasury Board cites ongoing support for the International Open Data Charter and work with Global Affairs Canada to integrate open government principles into Canada's implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reporting. This could be considered substantial progress given the relatively vague and open-ended nature of the milestone.

Canada was elected the chair of the International Aid Transparency Initiative in March 2016. Over the course of the first year of this action plan, there were several developments including recruiting the World Health Organization,[3] the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,[4] USAID,[5] the International Organization for Migration,[6] the Netherlands Enterprise Agency,[7] the International Finance Corporation,[8] Agence Française de Développement,[9] and the Republic of Korea.[10] Global Affairs Canada also launched a new Project Browser that provides access to its IATI data in a bilingual interface.[11] In September 2017, IATI expanded and improved its search portal.[12] This is substantial progress toward completion for Milestone 18.2.

Open Data for Development (OD4D) conducted a range of activities during the first year of implementation related to Milestone 18.3, including a series of trainings through the School of Data training program,[13] an Organization of American States training for 79 participants from 10 countries,[14] and additional leadership support activities as part of a broader project across the global south.[15] This represents substantial progress toward completion, though it is difficult to see positive impacts on open government in Canada flowing from the deliverable as it is being executed.

Regarding Milestone 18.4, the Treasury Board and the International Development Research Centre cite several projects, including the Edo AgriHub in Nigeria,[16] the Agriculture Open Data Package,[17] the Open Data Charter's Open Up Guide for Corruption,[18] and a document on open data for climate change.[19] This represents substantial progress toward this milestone's completion, though again it is difficult to see direct benefits for Canadian openness as a result of this work.

For Milestone 18.5, according to the government's self-assessment, 58 new datasets from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada were released onto the open data portal.[20] Open Data for Development, supported by International Development Research Centre, presented a session at the GODAN Summit, though this does not quite align with the milestone of participating in the Summit's planning. As a result, the IRM researcher assesses progress toward implementation as limited, rather than substantial.

Overall, the commitment is on schedule to be completed.

### Next Steps
There are many excellent projects which have occurred because of Canada's support for Open Data for Development; these projects have had a strong impact on open data across the global south. However, there remains a question as to whether externally-focused work should be included in Canada's action plan, since impact on open government in Canada will be negligible. This is an appropriate approach to Canada's foreign aid planning, which should target external goals rather than prioritising projects which benefit Canadians. However, it is unclear whether this is the right approach for an open government action plan commitment.

Without discouraging this programming, if the government seeks to cite it in future OGP action plans, the IRM researcher recommends that projects have a more

tangible connection to Canada with participation of Canadian agencies beyond the IDRC's funding and oversight role. For example, Milestone 18.5 includes active collaboration with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. In response to queries from the IRM researcher, IDRC provided a list of projects they funded which included the integration of a role for Canadian government entities, including the ConDatos event in Costa Rica[21] and Red GEALC, a Network of e-Government Leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean.[22]

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[1] Canada's Third Biennial Plan to the Open Government Partnership 2016-2018 Mid-term Self-assessment Report, September 2017, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_Mid-Term_Self-Assessment_2016-2018_EN.pdf, pg. 56.

[2] This consultation took place on 12 September 2017.

[3] See: http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/world-health-organization-becomes-a-new-iati-publisher.

[4] See: http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/fao-publishes-to-iati.

[5] See: http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/usaid.

[6] See: http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/international-organization-for-migration-joins-iati.

[7] See: http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/netherlands-enterprise-agency-becomes-an-iati-member.

[8] See: http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/ifc-joins-iati.

[9] See: http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/agence-francaise-de-developpement-becomes-a-member-of-iati.

[10] See: http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/republic-of-korea-becomes-iatis-latest-publisher.

[11] See: http://w05.international.gc.ca/projectbrowser-banqueprojets/?lang=eng.

[12] See: http://www.aidtransparency.net/news/new-d-portal-search-features-to-improve-data-use.

[13] Reporting for the trainings is available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_DxOK_q_jdweWwzamhRR3RxQ0E/view.

[14] Reporting available (in Spanish) at: http://od4d.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/OAS-Jan-2017-Informe-Tecnico-Final-F.pdf.

[15] Reporting available at: http://od4d.net/result/odi-final-technical-report-2016-strengthening-southern-open-data-leadership/.

[16] "Impact Series: Using Open Data for Economic Impact in Nigeria," Open Data for Development, 7 June 2017. Available at: od4d.net/impact-series-using-open-data-for-economic-impact-in-nigeria/.

[17] "Result - Introducing the Agriculture Open Data Package – BETA version," Open Data for Development, 24 April 2017. Available at: od4d.net/result/introducing-the-agriculture-open-data-package-beta-version/.

[18] "Open Up Guide: Using Open Data to Combat Corruption," Open Data Charter, 18 May 2017. Available at: https://opendatacharter.net/resource/open-guide-using-open-data-combat-corruption/.

[19] Available at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D_Hz7o4h4ZyHxJpCgZ54UUM-BcM-YSM-zxb0JIW9h2Y/edit.

[20] See: http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset?organization=aafc-aac.

[21] See: https://condatos.org/.

[22] See: http://www.redgealc.net/ (in Spanish).

## Theme IV: Engaging Canadians and the World

## 19. Engage Civil Society on Open Government

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will create ongoing mechanisms for strengthening dialogue with civil society in support of open government activities.*

**Milestones:**
*19.1. Develop and maintain a renewed mechanism for ongoing, meaningful dialogue between the Government of Canada and civil society organizations on open government issues across the country.*

*19.2. Undertake targeted engagement activities to discuss open government issues in specific domains with key civil society stakeholders.*

**Responsible institution:** Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Supporting institutions:** Civil society partners

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. For Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 19. Overall | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 19.I. Multi-stakeholder mechanism | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 19.2. Targeted engagement activities | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |

### Context and Objectives

This commitment seeks to remedy weaknesses around civil society consultation that occurred during Canada's first two action plans. Engagement with civil society is a core aspect of participation in the OGP. The 2015 midterm assessment by the IRM included, among its five main "SMART" recommendations, a call to overhaul the

existing Advisory Committee to make it an active, permanent dialogue mechanism.[1] The importance of improving consultation, and specifically of developing a co-creation mechanism, was also brought up at each of the four IRM focus groups, in Halifax, Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. Because of its importance, the potential impact of this commitment, and in particular Milestone 19.1, borders between moderate and transformative. However, the potential impact of Milestone 19.2 is somewhat less than 19.1, particularly as it seems to overlap significantly with mandatory OGP activities. Although the milestones themselves are reasonably clear, Publish What You Pay-Canada noted that ambiguities exist regarding how this mechanism will work, and expressed a strong need for a robust co-creation structure.[2] In addition, in focus group consultations, civil society stakeholders involved in establishing the mechanism noted that the initiative came mainly from civil society, rather than government, which played a reactive rather than a proactive role in the mechanism's development.[3]

## Completion

For Milestone 19.1, over the course of the first year of implementation, discussions between the Treasury Board Secretariat and civil society stakeholders resulted in draft terms of reference to establish a permanent consultation mechanism. A nomination process for representatives is planned for the fall, with a formal launch of the forum planned for late 2017.[4] There has been substantial progress in completing this milestone, which is on schedule.

Regarding Milestone 19.2, various agencies have carried out consultations connected to their OGP commitments, including a consultation by the Canada Revenue Agency on rules governing charities' political activities (Commitment 22)[5] and a cross-Canada tour by the Open Data Exchange (Commitment 15).[6] In addition, several stakeholders, including Open North and Powered By Data, reported that consultations continued with government agencies over the implementation of their OGP commitments.[7] This may be viewed as substantial progress for completing this milestone, though it is also somewhat duplicative of existing consultation responsibilities which attach to OGP participant countries.

## Early Results

Civil society representatives who participated in focus groups connected to the preparation of this report noted almost universally that engagement and consultation had substantially improved since the current government took power and that they have increasing access to government officials. It would be inaccurate to characterise these changes as flowing directly from the milestones in this commitment, since the changes predate the commencement of this action plan, shortly after the election. Nonetheless, the milestones are a part of this broader change, making them relevant.

## Next Steps

Although stakeholders consulted for this report were generally positive about the establishment of a multi-stakeholder consultation mechanism, they were also hesitant about ascribing too much credit for the initiative as it currently stands. Publish What You Pay-Canada noted that scepticism from previous processes still lingered, and they were waiting to see what level of impact the mechanism would have on policy-making, and in particular whether it would follow a proper co-creation model.[8] The Centre for Law and Democracy noted that, in developing the terms of reference, government representatives had pushed back against a co-creation model for the body.[9] In discussing the development of the new mechanism, Dr. Teresa Scassa noted that the previous advisory panel on open government had never formally been disbanded, and expressed hope that the new mechanism would be

more organised.[10] Powered By Data was more positive and emphasised that the government was making progress in engagement and consultation.[11] Nonetheless, they acknowledged further room for improvement. In particular, they noted that current consultation strategies were unlikely to capture new voices, beyond the relatively small community of experts that are already engaged.

Civil society consultation is an essential aspect of the OGP, and the importance of this commitment to the government's overall progress cannot be overstated. The IRM researcher recommends continuing to push forward on this commitment, both by expanding the scope of civil society consultations, and by pushing toward a stronger standard of co-creation in the development and execution of action plans.

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[1] Mary Francoli, "Canada Progress Report 2014-2015," Open Government Partnership Independent Reporting Mechanism. Available at: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/1.Canada14-15_English_Final_0_0.pdf.

[2] This was expressed at a consultation in Ottawa on 18 September 2017, though again it echoes sentiments expressed by a variety of stakeholders.

[3] This notion was first expressed by the Centre for Law and Democracy at a consultation in Halifax on 12 September 2017, but the sentiment was echoed by other stakeholders in follow up conversations.

[4] The call for nominations is posted at: www.opengovdialogue.ca/en/apply-multistakeholder-forum.html.

[5] See details of the consultation at: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/resources-charities-donors/resources-charities-about-political-activities/canada-revenue-agency-registered-charities-political-activities-consultations.html.

[6] Notes from which are available at: codx.ca/?s=cross+canada+tour.

[7] Representatives from both organisations attended a consultation in Montreal on 20 September 2017.

[8] Expressed at the Ottawa consultation, 18 September 2017.

[9] Expressed at the Halifax consultation, 12 September 2017.

[10] Expressed at the Ottawa consultation, 18 September 2017.

[11] Interviewed by phone, 29 September 2017.

## 20. Enable Open Dialogue and Open Policy Making

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will foster enhanced citizen participation through greater collaboration and co-creation with the public and stakeholders within and across government initiatives.*

**Milestones:**
*20.1. Promote common principles for Open Dialogue and common practices across the Government of Canada to enable the use of new methods for consulting and engaging Canadians.*

- *Engage with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis to ensure that these principles and practices support meaningful engagement and reflect the renewed nation-to-nation/Inuit-to-Crown/government-to-government relationships.*

*20.2. Identify necessary supports (e.g. skills development, resourcing, technological innovation) needed to deliver on the full potential of engaging with stakeholders.*

*20.3. Identify and support participatory processes undertaken by departments to share lessons learned and demonstrate the value of including stakeholders and members of the public throughout the policy, program or service design and implementation.*

*20.4. Develop, implement the measurement of, and promote indicators for open government to support benchmarking and continuous improvement.*

**Responsible institution:** Privy Council Office; Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Supporting institutions:** Public servants, public engagement practitioners, civil society, civic tech, citizens.

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. For Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 20. Overall | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **20.1. Promote Open Dialogue** | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | ✔ | | |
| **20.2. Identify supports** | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | Yes | | ✔ |
| **20.3. Identify best practices** | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | ✔ | |
| **20.4. Open government indicators** | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | ✔ |

### Context and Objectives

This commitment aims to improve public engagement by training public officials and instituting new technical solutions to facilitate communication with the public. Of particular note is Milestone 20.1, which addresses engagement with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. This reflects a prominent campaign promise made by the current government in the last election.[1] It also reflects a major human rights priority, as assessed in Canada's most recent Universal Periodic Review by the United Nations Human Rights Council.[2] Although this commitment addresses an important thematic area, several of the milestones are vague with unclear benchmarks or even final deliverables. This limits the potential impact for this commitment to moderate. During consultations, First Nations stakeholders similarly assessed that the process had been marked by a lack of clarity and expressed frustration at the slow pace of change.[3]

### Completion

Building on workshops that were held at the Open Dialogue Forum and at GovMaker 2016, the Privy Council Office in collaboration with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat developed and posted a set of draft principles for Consultations and Public Engagement (Milestone 20.1).[4] To improve engagement with Indigenous Peoples, the Privy Council Office arranged workshops for civil servants that dealt with engagement strategies, and facilitated a workshop with First Nations leaders at the Canadian Open Data Summit.[5] The government's self-assessment reports limited progress on this milestone, but that it is on schedule for completion. This assessment seems accurate, partly due to the lack of specificity in defining completion for this milestone.

Regarding Milestone 20.2, the Privy Council Office fostered discussions at the Canadian Open Data Summit and the Civic Tech Ottawa workshops to improve online consultation tools and has developed an eRegulations pilot.[6] They also carried out training sessions for 135 participants, and well as two trainings for trainers. Substantial progress has been made on implementing this milestone, and it is on schedule.

Regarding Milestone 20.3, the Privy Council Office commissioned a study by EKOS to assess public views on engagement and the government.[7] The Privy Council Office also added material to the Consulting with Canadians website, incorporating information on engagement efforts across different government departments.[8] The government self-assessment reports limited progress for implementing this milestone, but that the commitment is on schedule to be completed, which seems accurate.[9]

The government self-assessment reports substantial progress on implementing Milestone 20.4, because of work to develop open government indicators in Commitment 5.[10] This seems accurate, though it is worth noting that this makes the milestone fairly duplicative of Milestone 5.3.

### Next Steps

Promoting civic participation is a core aspect of the OGP. Given that the milestones in this commitment mostly target long-term improvements, this is a good area to continue. In particular, engagement with First Nations is essential as Canada seeks to establish nation-to-nation relationships after centuries-long abuse and mistrust. This process is further complicated by the diversity of the indigenous nations represented across Canada, each of which has its own unique culture and values that must be reflected in the dialogue process. Nonetheless, the status and circumstance of Canada's First Nations are probably the gravest human rights challenge that the country faces,[11] and engagement and civic participation are essential prerequisites to progress here.

The IRM researcher recommends working with First Nations governments to help build their own capacity for civic engagement and participation among their constituents. While this would need to respect First Nations' autonomy in handling their own affairs, offers of technical assistance in establishing consultation mechanisms, in line with the work Canada's government is doing to develop these processes itself, could be a valuable addition.

[1] A New Nation-to-Nation Process, Liberal Party of Canada. Available at: https://www.liberal.ca/realchange/a-new-nation-to-nation-process/.
[2] National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21: Canada, 8 February 2013, UN doc, A /HRC/WG.6/16/CAN/1. Available at: https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G13/108/44/PDF/G1310844.pdf?OpenElement.
[3] Ottawa consultation, 18 September 2017.
[4] These are available at: github.com/canada-ca/welcome/wiki/Draft-Guiding-Principles-for-Consultations-and-Public-Engagement.
[5] See: http://opendatasummit.ca/.
[6] See: Lisa Fast, "A Government Minimum Viable Product – Learning from small successes & small failures," LinkedIn, 15 August 2017. Available at: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/government-minimum-viable-product-learning-from-small-lisa-fast/.
[7] "Rethinking Citizen Engagement 2017," EKOS, 31 March 2017. Available at: www.ekospolitics.com/index.php/2017/03/rethinking-citizen-engagement-2017/.
[8] See: https://www1.canada.ca/consultingcanadians/.
[9] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 20 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-20-enable-open-dialogue-and-open-policy-making.
[10] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 20 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-20-enable-open-dialogue-and-open-policy-making.
[11] In addition to the prominence of First Nations issues in Canada's Universal Periodic Review, see Human Rights Watch's latest country chapter on Canada at: https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/canada.

## 21. Promote Open Government Globally

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will work with international partners to promote the principles of open government around the world.*

**Milestones:**

*21.1. Participate in key forums internationally to learn from other countries and share our challenges and successes.*

*21.2. Strengthen the capacity to deliver open data in Francophone Africa through support to locally-led, multi-stakeholder processes and international conferences.*

*21.3. Promote the principles of the International Open Data Charter, participate in the development of enabling resources and tools for the Charter, and support the development of the World Wide Web Foundation's Open Data Barometer through the Open Data for Development (OD4D) network to measure the Charter's implementation by governments around the world.*

**Responsible institutions:** Global Affairs Canada; Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat; the International Development Research Centre

**Supporting institutions:** Open Government Partnership; Open Data Charter; La Francophonie

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. For Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 21. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 21.1. International forums | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 21.2. Open data in Francophone Africa | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | | ✔ | |

| 21.3. Support international instruments | | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |

## Context and Objectives

This commitment is externally facing and designed to foster Canada's engagement and leadership on global open data issues by participating in international forums on open government challenges, strengthening open data in Francophone Africa, and supporting international instruments for open data. Insofar as governments around the world face common challenges in implementing open data systems, this engagement presents a valuable opportunity for mutual learning.[1] In line with milestones 21.1 and 21.3, the 2015 IRM midterm progress report recommended that Canada expand its OD4D network, and that it add specificity to the goals of the network going forward. While Milestone 21.2 seems more targeted at promoting improvements in the global south than in Canada, it has the potential to also produce a positive impact domestically, and can led to knowledge creation around open data in Canada as well as in recipient countries. Although Milestone 21.1 is relatively vague, providing no details as to which forums Canada will participate in and at what level, milestones 21.2 and 21.3 provide greater specificity, creating a reasonable level of clarity overall.

## Completion

For Milestone 21.1, the self-assessment cites several forums which the government participated in at various levels, including the International Open Data Conference in Madrid in October 2016,[2] the OGP Global Summit in Paris in December 2016,[3] further engagement with the Open Data for Development program, and initiatives of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Inter-American Development Bank which included components connected to open data. Substantial progress has been made on this commitment, and it seems to be on schedule to be implemented.

Regarding Milestone 21.2, Open Data for Development co-hosted a regional stakeholders' meeting to commence work on a Francophone Africa open data hub, the "Conférence d'Afrique Francophone sur les Données Ouvertes."[4] In response to queries by the IRM researcher, IDRC reported that as of October 2017, a host for the hub had been selected and they anticipated the project to be complete by June 2018. Substantial progress has been made on this commitment, and it is on schedule to be completed.

Regarding Milestone 21.3, the self-assessment points to the International Development Research Centre's ongoing support of the Open Data Barometer, the fourth edition of which was launched in early 2017.[5] Work during this action plan cycle includes translation of the Barometer into French and Spanish, and the development of regional reports. In the beginning of 2017 Canada assumed a role as a lead steward of the Open Data Charter.[6] Substantial progress has been made on this commitment, and it is on schedule to be completed.

**Early Results**

In response to queries from the IRM researcher, the Treasury Board Secretariat reports significant capacity development as a result of the international engagement in the first milestone, including support for generating future action plan commitments.

**Next Steps**

International engagement is a core component of OGP as it facilitates mutual support and the transfer of best practices among participating governments. However, the IRM researcher recommends that the intended nature and results of this engagement be more detailed to provide a clearer roadmap for tracking success.

As noted in Commitment 18, it would be optimal if milestones related to international development contained a parallel focus on building skills within Canada or an express mechanism within the programming to ensure that government, civil society and business stakeholders were well positioned to take advantage of the ideas and expertise generated.

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[1] It is worth noting that peer learning is mentioned in the Open Government Declaration. The Declaration is available at: www.opengovpartnership.org/open-government-declaration.
[2] See: http://opendatacon.org/.
[3] See: https://en.ogpsummit.org/osem/conference/ogp-summit/attendeelist.
[4] See: http://cafdo.org/.
[5] See: http://opendatabarometer.org/4thedition/acknowledgements/.
[6] See: http://opendatabarometer.org/?_year=2016&indicator=ODB and https://opendatacharter.net/who-we-are/.

## 22. Engage Canadians to improve key Canada Revenue Agency services

**Commitment Text:**
*The Government of Canada will undertake public consultations and engagement to support improved access to high-value, statistical tax data and publications, increased fairness of the rules governing charities' political activities, and better understanding of factors affecting the low rates of benefit uptake.*

**Milestones:**
*22.1. Complete an online consultation with Canadians to measure public satisfaction with, and interest in, statistical tax publications and related data.*

*22.2. Engage with registered charities, the public, and other stakeholders in the charitable sector to help clarify rules governing charities' political activities:*
- *Conduct online and in-person consultations sessions on what information is needed, what form any future rules should take, and how best to communicate them to stakeholders and the general public.*

*22.3. Engage with indigenous Canadians to better understand the issues, root causes, and data gaps that may be preventing eligible individuals from accessing benefits.*

**Responsible institution:** Canada Revenue Agency

**Supporting institution(s):** N/A

**Start date:** Not specified

**End date:** Not specified

**Editorial Note:** The text of the commitment was abridged for formatting reasons. For full commitment text, visit:
http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Canada_AP3.pdf.

| Commitment Overview | Specificity | | | | OGP Value Relevance | | | | Potential Impact | | | | On Time? | Completion | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Low | Medium | High | Access to Information | Civic Participation | Public Accountability | Tech. and Innov. for Transparency and Accountability | None | Minor | Moderate | Transformative | | Not Started | Limited | Substantial | Complete |
| 22. Overall | | | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | ✔ | |
| 22.1. Tax statistics consultation | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | | | ✔ | | | Yes | | ✔ | | |
| 22.2. Clarify charities rules | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | | | | | ✔ | Yes | | | ✔ | |

| 22.3. Indigenous benefits consultation | | | ✔ | | ✔ | | | ✔ | | Yes | | | | ✔ |

## Context and Objectives

Among the most controversial activities of the previous government was its practice of carrying out tax audits of charities engaged in political activities, particularly since these were widely seen as having targeted their political opponents, Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) described the audits as "a direct assault on freedom of expression."[1] The current government ordered a stop to these audits and, more importantly, pledged to undertake a series of reforms to prevent such abuses from taking place in the future as well as improve the Canada Revenue Agency's engagement with Canadians. This commitment addresses this important priority area. The milestones are crafted relatively clearly and specifically, although Milestone 22.3 gives relatively little detail on how a potentially large and diverse consultation will take place. However, other than in the specific context of Canada Revenue Agency audits on charities, these milestones are only tangentially connected to the OGP values. Because the audits posed a major threat to civic engagement, reforming the charity rules (Milestone 22.2) could have a transformative potential impact. However, the low impact and relevance of milestones 22.1 and 22.3, make the overall potential impact moderate.

## Completion

For Milestone 22.1, the Canada Revenue Agency published an online survey on opinions toward statistical tax data in August 2016.[2] However, the government's self-assessment indicates that participation has been too low to generate sufficient data.[3] In response to queries from the IRM researcher, the Canada Revenue Agency said that the format is being improved to try and remedy this, with an anticipated relaunch in December 2017 and preliminary reporting of these results in June 2018. This is scored as representing limited progress in implementation, though the Canada Revenue Agency expressed confidence that the milestone would be completed on time, which seems realistic.

For Milestone 22.2, the government conducted a robust series of consultations on clarifying the rules around charities and political engagement, and received almost 20,000 written submissions.[4] Civil society stakeholders who participated in the process, including the Centre for Law and Democracy,[5] generally spoke positively about the consultation as well as the resulting recommendations for reform.[6] The government self-assessment scores this as completed, however it is difficult to assess that the rules have actually been "clarified" since the consultation has not yet had any impact on the problematic CRA rules themselves. However, given that the consultation generated strong recommendations for reform, this should be easy to achieve within the current action plan cycle.

For Milestone 22.3, the Canada Revenue Agency carried out public opinion research with indigenous communities and vulnerable populations, including urban Indigenous Canadians, in Spring 2017.[7] This milestone has been completed, though the self-assessment reports that a project team is still processing the gathered information to determine how to apply these findings.[8]

## Early Results

There are no indications of early impacts from milestones 22.1 and 22.3. In terms of Milestone 22.2, the civic space has improved considerably as a result of the

suspension of tax audits.[9] These not only had a major negative impact on the charities being audited, but had a chilling effect on the non-profit sector's speech and political engagement.[10] This situation has certainly improved now that the immediate threat is gone, though whether changes will be implemented to prevent potential future use of the CRA to target political opponents remains to be seen.

**Next Steps**

This commitment, and in particular the milestone related to charities' political activities, is an attempt to turn the page on a particularly challenging time for civic engagement in Canada. However, Publish What You Pay-Canada, the Canadian Unitarian Council, and the Centre for Law and Democracy all noted that the real test will be whether the consultation leads to substantive reforms of rules impacting charities.[11] If these are not complete by the end of this action plan cycle, the IRM researcher recommends addressing this important priority in Canada's next action plan.

Both Fred Vallance-Jones and Canadian Journalists for Free Expression expressed that the government could also examine their approach to funding of journalism, and consider whether that should be included among charitable activities.

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[1] As expressed during the IRM Toronto Consultation, on 15 September 2017.
[2] The survey is available at: https://sondages.outsidesoft.com/Engine/Default.aspx?surveyID=90870edd-0d52-4cd9-b03d-11f7bcb8b6e8&ds=6E&idlang=EN&respondent=dbd35b7a-247c-40f6-bbe2-dc2fa163464d.
[3] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 22 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-22-engage-canadians-improve-key-canada-revenue-agency-services.
[4] "The Canada Revenue Agency's online consultation on charities' political activities," Canada Revenue Agency, 20 December 2016. Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/whats-new/canada-revenue-agencys-online-consultation-on-charities-political-activities.html.
[5] Halifax Consultation, 12 September 2017.
[6] "Report of the Consultation Panel on the Political Activities of Charities," Consultation Panel on the Political Activities of Charities, 31 March 2017. Available at:https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/resources-charities-donors/resources-charities-about-political-activities/report-consultation-panel-on-political-activities-charities.html.
[7] "Qualitative Research: The Experiences of Indigenous Communities with Tax Filing," Prepared by Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. for the Canada Revenue Agency, June 2017. Available at: epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/canada_revenue_agency/2017/040-16-e/report.pdf. "Barriers Associated with Tax Filing in Vulnerable Populations Qualitative Research", Canada Revenue Agency, 24 March 2017. Available at: epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsgc/por-ef/canada_revenue_agency/2017/103-16-e/vulnerable_report_en_codes.html.
[8] The draft self-assessment for Commitment 22 is available at: http://open.canada.ca/en/mtsar/commitment-22-engage-canadians-improve-key-canada-revenue-agency-services.
[9] Bruce Campion-Smith and Alex Ballingall, "Liberals suspend tax audits of political charities," *Toronto Star*, 4 May 2017. Available at: https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/05/04/ottawa-urged-to-give-charities-more-freedom-to-speak-out.html.
[10] Canadian Unitarian Council, Toronto consultation, 15 September 2017.
[11] Expressed at the Ottawa consultation on 18 September 2017, the Toronto consultation on 15 September 2017, and the Halifax consultation on 12 September 2017, respectively.

# V. General Recommendations

Civil society stakeholders expressed a desire for stronger consultations and greater follow through on commitments regarding access to information, regulation of the civic space, and engagement with First Nations. The need to dedicate specific funding for OGP commitments remains an important priority. In consultations, researchers and civil society expressed a common unease about the impact of consolidating open data on accessibility, suggesting that integration of existing databases may be a better solution than current efforts to homogenise open data.

This section aims to inform development of the next action plan and guide completion of the current action plan. It is divided into two sections: 1) civil society and government priorities identified while researching this report and 2) the recommendations of the IRM.

## 5.1 Stakeholder Priorities

As with previous IRM consultations, civil society cited reform of the Access to Information Act as a major priority for both the remainder of this action plan and looking forward to the next one, mainly because the legislative changes that have been introduced thus far fell far short of what was expected, and what is needed. Civil society also expressed a desire for follow through on reforms to the tax rules impacting charities, in line with Commitment 22, as well as continuing work to improve engagement with First Nations, in line with Commitment 20.

Looking ahead, civil society commonly expressed a need for more robust consultation for the next action plan, with a specific call to establish a co-creation model. The multi-stakeholder mechanism is a good first step in that regard, though much depends on how the mechanism is actually implemented. Consultations with civil society stakeholders also revealed a broader concern with the government's open data strategy. Specifically, that consolidating material into the government's central open data portal removes the data's functionality, usability and context which are essential to researchers. This consolidation could be regressive for information hosted by agencies, such as Statistics Canada and Natural Resources Canada, which have independently developed solutions which provide superior presentation and delivery than the consolidated portal.

## 5.2 IRM Recommendations

### Embrace Co-creation for the Next Action Plan

A foundational recommendation for the next action plan development is to improve the consultation, including building towards a robust co-creation process, in line with the OGP's Participation & Co-creation standards.[1] Although most of the civil society stakeholders interviewed while developing this report participated in the consultation process to develop Canada's current action plan, there was a common feeling that the government had entered the consultation with a fairly clear idea of the commitments they sought to include and, at best, the civil society participants could offer minor tweaks to these plans. The Centre for Law and Democracy suggests a longer period of consultation when developing the proposals, with a particularly strong need for more substantive discussion around the draft once it has been published.[2] The Centre for Law and Democracy also suggested that, at a minimum, there needed to be a strong mechanism for civil society to reject, or express their disapproval, of a commitment via the multi-stakeholder mechanism.

A related idea which is currently under discussion by the Treasury Board Secretariat, and which is worth pursuing, is to appoint civil society "champions" for each commitment, who can serve as points of contact for ongoing assessment and engagement.

**Expand Beyond the Usual Suspects**

Increasing participation beyond the relatively small open data and transparency community is another important challenge for the next consultation process. While this can be difficult, an avenue to expand the reach of these events could be to designate organisational responsibilities to partners who are based in the target regions, funding them to arrange consultations, rather than centrally managing each event. This approach could be particularly valuable as an avenue toward expanded participation among francophone and First Nations stakeholders, who may be wary of participating in an event that is seen to be "owned" by Ottawa.

**Develop Clear and Specific Milestones**

Another important recommendation is to craft specific, measurable and verifiable milestones. Presently, many of the action plan's deliverables are devoted to "enhancing" or "improving" systems, with no clear benchmarks beyond these broad terms. This makes scoring progress and potential impact difficult and, more importantly, robs the action plan of much of its direction and vision. Specificity carries risks – namely an increased risk of failure if the action plan spells out its deliverables in clear and unequivocal terms. But this level of precision is also necessary for strong progress in line with the ambitious breadth of Canada's latest action plan.

**Earmark Specific Resources for OGP Commitments**

In the 2015 IRM report, one of the SMART recommendations was to ensure that commitments in future action plans are supported by proper resources to facilitate the work of the public servants responsible for implementing the plan. This remains an issue. Canada's OGP progress would substantially improve if the government earmarked a specific budget for OGP implementation. In the absence of direct funding, government departments are forced to either craft their commitments in an overly vague manner to account for uncertainty as to their own level of resources they might be able to commit, or to develop the action plan commitments based on areas that they have already secured funding for, thereby negating the possibility of having any kind of substantive civil society consultations.

**Pass Robust Reforms to the Access to Information Act**

Calls to update Canada's Access to Information Act have been a perennial feature of open government conversations for years. Although hopes were raised by the inclusion of access to information as the very first commitment in the current action plan, that appears to have been a false dawn as, despite another round of studies and commentary, robust improvements still have not materialized. Access to information is a central pillar of open government, such that Canada's lack of progress on this critical indicator is beginning to overshadow the excellent work being done elsewhere. Repeated consultations and studies have arrived at basically identical conclusions about the minimum changes that need to be made: expand the right of filing access requests to the Cabinet and Prime Ministers' offices, create a duty to document for officials, create binding timelines for responding to requests, reduce or eliminate fees for access (partially achieved by a May 2016 Interim Directive, but still awaiting formalisation), narrow overbroad exceptions, and test the exceptions for harm with a mandatory public interest override. Canada's current action plan concludes with another review of the Access to Information Act in 2018. Canada's next action plan should commit to specific reforms that will finally bring the law into the 21st century.

**Engage with Canada's First Nations to Promote Openness**
Among the most difficult, and most important, challenges that Canada's government faces is in rebuilding relationships with Canada's indigenous peoples. Although this is directly included in Commitment 20 of the current action plan, there is no question that it also represents a broader and ongoing challenge that will extend far beyond the timeline, and indeed beyond the scale, of Canada's current action plan cycle.

There are specific challenges to Canada's relationship with First Nations when viewed through the lens of openness. First Nations stakeholders consulted during the preparation of this report spoke unequivocally of the need for data sovereignty, and to assert local control over information collected by and about First Nations communities. However, there is a potential tension between this idea and the broader push for openness across Canada's governmental structures. With Canada's government instituting broad openness initiatives, information transferred back to First Nations control may become less accessible. Moving forward requires a careful consideration of the rights of First Nations in the context of the broad public interest, both in Canada as a whole and specifically among First Nations peoples, of free and open access to information. The IRM researcher recommends that Canada pursue a solution which recognises and facilitates data sovereignty, but which also establishes mechanisms to ensure that the information remains open and accessible under its new stewards.

First Nations' information governance is another important priority area going forward. The right to information is a human right, and it is a right that First Nations peoples are unequivocally entitled to, particularly regarding their own leadership structures. At the same time, any push for transparency in First Nations governance structures can only originate from within First Nations communities. There are obvious reasons why Canada's history precludes the imposition of openness measures, even if openness is to the benefit of everyone. Therefore, open data champions from within First Nations communities are an important stakeholder group to foster and empower through direct support, training in data management and right to information standards, etc. In this context, the co-creation principles outlined above are particularly important. Canada could consider instituting a special process for engagement with First Nations, ideally to work toward fostering cooperative plans on open data as part of the next action plan.

Conversations with both First Nations stakeholders and with officials active in this engagement area confirm a mutual belief (as expressed) that cooperation going forward must be carried out on a nation-to-nation basis. However, at the grassroots level, Canada nonetheless has a role in making the case for the benefits of openness, and to help train and equip open data champions from First Nations communities with the resources to pursue progressive openness policies.

**Focus on Accessibility and Usability**
In IRM consultations across the country, complaints about Canada's open data progress focused less on the total volume of information which was being published and more on the accessibility, usability and contextualization of the material which was put out. A major part of Canada's response to this has been through the centralisation of material into a single web portal at open.canada.ca.

While centralisation can simplify access, there are concerns. In particular, stakeholders reported that this centralisation could strip data of its original context, and that the original dissemination protocols, as designed by the creators of the information, might have been more user-friendly and of higher quality. There are also

concerns that a push for uniformity might restrict the ability of more advanced departments to innovate.

Under this thinking, the Treasury Board should focus on breaking down departmental silos to integrate publishing schemes from different departments, and push for common standards and improvements to the culture of how data is managed, rather than pushing for broader uniformity and consolidation.

Table 5.1: Five Key Recommendations

| 1 | Improve consultations for the next action plan, including co-creation standards |
|---|---|
| 2 | Earmark specific resources for the implementation of OGP commitments |
| 3 | Work with Canada's First Nations to develop mutual commitments for improving openness, engagement and transparency |
| 4 | Pass robust reforms of the Access to Information Act |
| 5 | Harness Canada's existing open data expertise to boost the accessibility and usability of published information |

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[1] Available at: http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/OGP_Participation-Cocreation-Standards20170207.pdf.
[2] Expressed at the Halifax IRM consultation, 12 September 2017.

# VI. Methodology and Sources

The IRM progress report is written by researchers based in each OGP-participating country. All IRM reports undergo a process of quality control to ensure that the highest standards of research and due diligence have been applied.

Analysis of progress on OGP action plans is a combination of interviews, desk research, and feedback from nongovernmental stakeholder meetings. The IRM report builds on the findings of the government's own self-assessment report and any other assessments of progress put out by civil society, the private sector, or international organisations.

Each IRM researcher carries out stakeholder meetings to ensure an accurate portrayal of events. Given budgetary and calendar constraints, the IRM cannot consult all interested or affected parties. Consequently, the IRM strives for methodological transparency and therefore, where possible, makes public the process of stakeholder engagement in research (detailed later in this section.) Some contexts require anonymity of interviewees and the IRM reviews the right to remove personal identifying information of these participants. Due to the necessary limitations of the method, the IRM strongly encourages commentary on public drafts of each report.

Each report undergoes a four-step review and quality-control process:

1. Staff review: IRM staff reviews the report for grammar, readability, content, and adherence to IRM methodology.

2. International Experts Panel (IEP) review: IEP reviews the content of the report for rigorous evidence to support findings, evaluates the extent to which the action plan applies OGP values, and provides technical recommendations for improving the implementation of commitments and realization of OGP values through the action plan as a whole. (See below for IEP membership.)

3. Prepublication review: Government and select civil society organisations are invited to provide comments on content of the draft IRM report.

4. Public comment period: The public is invited to provide comments on the content of the draft IRM report.

This review process, including the procedure for incorporating comments received, is outlined in greater detail in Section III of the Procedures Manual.[1]

## Interviews and Focus Groups

Each IRM researcher is required to hold at least one public information-gathering event. Researchers should make a genuine effort to invite stakeholders outside of the "usual suspects" list of invitees already participating in existing processes. Supplementary means may be needed to gather the inputs of stakeholders in a more meaningful way (e.g., online surveys, written responses, follow-up interviews). Additionally, researchers perform specific interviews with responsible agencies when the commitments require more information than is provided in the self-assessment or is accessible online.

For the preparation of this report, the IRM researcher held a series of four focus-group consultations with participants from civil society and academia. The first took place in Halifax on 12 September 2017 and was attended by participants from the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation and Centre for Law and Democracy, as well as Fred Vallance-Jones of the University of King's College. The second occurred in Toronto on 15 September 2017 and was attended by participants from Canadian

Journalists for Free Expression, the Canadian Association of Journalists and the Canadian Unitarian Council. The third took place in Ottawa on 18 September 2017 and was attended by participants from the First Nations Information Governance Centre, Canarie, Publish What You Pay-Canada, and Evidence for Democracy, as well as Dr. Teresa Scassa of the University of Ottawa and Ernie Boyko, an open data expert. The fourth took place in Montreal on 20 September 2017 and was attended by participants from Powered by Data and Open North, as well as Josée Plamondon, a digital librarian. At each consultation, participants were first asked about their thoughts on the government's engagement, outreach and consultation efforts. This was followed by a targeted discussion of the action plan, with a particular focus on the commitments that were most directly relevant to the participants' specialisations.

In addition to the focus groups, individual interviews were carried out with Dr. Mary Francoli and with Dr. Tracey Lauriault of Carleton University on 19 September. The IRM researcher also carried out short interviews with Camille Callison, an Indigenous Services Librarian, and Paul Whitney, an expert on library and data management issues; these occurred on the sidelines of a meeting of the Sectoral Commissions of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO on 2 October.

Supplementing these direct engagements, the IRM researcher conducted phone interviews with Michael Lenczner of Powered By Data on 29 September, Jean-Noé Landry of Open North on 3 October, Michael Campanelli of ChillWall on 4 October, Leslie Fournier-Dupelle of the Office of the Privacy Commissioner on 5 October, Bonnie Healy of the Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre on 11 October, Mike Gifford of OpenConcept Consulting Inc. on 12 October, Gwen Phillips of the British Columbia First Nations Data Governance Initiative on 13 October, and Kevin Tuer of the Waterloo Data Hub on 13 October.

On the government side, the IRM researcher connected in person with staff from the Treasury Board Secretariat on 18 September 2017 in Ottawa to discuss the general operational landscape for Canada's OGP implementation. Based on this conversation, as well as the contact list provided by the Treasury Board Secretariat, he connected via email with other commitment leads from the Treasury Board, as well as officials from the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, the Office of the Comptroller General, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Statistics Canada, the Canada School of Public Service, Global Affairs Canada, the Department of Finance, the Privy Council Office, the International Development Research Centre, the Department of Canadian Heritage, and Natural Resources Canada. He also connected by phone with officials from the Privy Council Office, the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and Natural Resources Canada.

## About the Independent Reporting Mechanism

The IRM is a key means by which government, civil society, and the private sector can track government development and implementation of OGP action plans on an annual basis. The design of research and quality control of such reports is carried out by the International Experts Panel, comprised of experts in transparency, participation, accountability, and social science research methods.

The current membership of the International Experts Panel is

- César Cruz-Rubio
- Hazel Feigenblatt
- Mary Francoli
- Brendan Halloran
- Hille Hinsberg
- Anuradha Joshi

- Jeff Lovitt
- Fredline M'Cormack-Hale
- Showers Mawowa
- Ernesto Velasco

A small staff based in Washington, DC, shepherds reports through the IRM process in close coordination with the researchers. Questions and comments about this report can be directed to the staff at irm@opengovpartnership.org.

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[1] IRM Procedures Manual, V.3: https://www.opengovpartnership.org/documents/irm-procedures-manual.

# VII. Eligibility Requirements Annex

The OGP Support Unit collates eligibility criteria on an annual basis. These scores are presented below.[1] When appropriate, the IRM reports will discuss the context surrounding progress or regress on specific criteria in the Country Context section.

In September 2012, OGP officially encouraged governments to adopt ambitious commitments that relate to eligibility.

Table 7.1: Eligibility Annex for Canada

| Criteria | 2011 | Current | Change | Explanation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Budget Transparency[2] | N/A | N/A | No change | 4 = Executive's Budget Proposal and Audit Report published<br>2 = One of two published<br>0 = Neither published |
| Access to Information[3] | 4 | 4 | No change | 4 = Access to information (ATI) Law<br>3 = Constitutional ATI provision<br>1 = Draft ATI law<br>0 = No ATI law |
| Asset Declaration[4] | 4 | 4 | No change | 4 = Asset disclosure law, data public<br>2 = Asset disclosure law, no public data<br>0 = No law |
| Citizen Engagement (Raw score) | 4 (10.00)[5] | 4 (10.00)[6] | No change | *EIU Citizen Engagement Index* raw score:<br>1 > 0<br>2 > 2.5<br>3 > 5<br>4 > 7.5 |
| Total / Possible (Percent) | 12/12 (100%) | 12/12 (100%) | No change | 75% of possible points to be eligible |

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1 For more information, see http://www.opengovpartnership.org/how-it-works/eligibility-criteria.

2 For more information, see Table 1 in http://internationalbudget.org/what-we-do/open-budget-survey/. For up-to-date assessments, see http://www.obstracker.org/.

3 The two databases used are Constitutional Provisions at http://www.right2info.org/constitutional-protections and Laws and draft laws at http://www.right2info.org/access-to-information-laws.

4 Simeon Djankov, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer, "Disclosure by Politicians," (Tuck School of Business Working Paper 2009-60, 2009), http://bit.ly/19nDEfK; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), "Types of Information Decision Makers Are Required to Formally Disclose, and Level Of Transparency," in Government at a Glance 2009, (OECD, 2009), http://bit.ly/13vGtqS; Ricard Messick, "Income and Asset Disclosure by World Bank Client Countries" (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009), http://bit.ly/1cIokyf. For more recent information, see http://publicofficialsfinancialdisclosure.worldbank.org. In 2014, the OGP Steering Committee approved a change in the asset disclosure measurement. The existence of a law and de facto public access to the disclosed information replaced the old measures of disclosure by politicians and disclosure of high-level officials. For additional information, see the guidance note on 2014 OGP Eligibility Requirements at http://bit.ly/1EjLJ4Y.

5 "Democracy Index 2010: Democracy in Retreat," The Economist Intelligence Unit (London: Economist, 2010), http://bit.ly/eLC1rE.

6 "Democracy Index 2014: Democracy and its Discontents," The Economist Intelligence Unit (London: Economist, 2014), http://bit.ly/18kEzCt.