Canada's Action Plan on Open Government

2014–16

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Table of Contents

I.   Introduction

As part of the global open government movement, governments seek to broaden access to data and information, ensure transparency and accountability, and strengthen citizen engagement in the activities of government and in the democratic process. Canada has a longstanding commitment to openness and accountability as a cornerstone of a strong, modern democracy. From the passing of access to information legislation over 30 years ago to current open government and proactive disclosure activities, the Government of Canada has worked to ensure transparency on federal operations to enable Canadians to hold their government accountable.

Canada joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in April 2012, and remains committed to the principles of the OGP's Open Government Declaration. Canada's membership in the OGP provides key opportunities to advance our open government agenda, share and learn from international best practices, and collaborate with our OGP colleagues on solutions that benefit citizens globally. As co-chair of the OGP's Open Data Working Group, Canada works with governments and civil society organizations on defining shared principles for open data, including the use of common standards that will help align open data services offered around the world.

International leadership on open government is a priority for the Government of Canada. In June 2013, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the other G8 leaders adopted the G8 Open Data Charter, which established open data principles for all member countries, and called for specific commitments to release core public sector data. The Sunlight Foundation, a key non-profit organization that advocates for open government globally, has ranked Canada's plan for implementing the G8 Open Data Charter highest among G8 countries.

In its second Action Plan on Open Government, Canada is pledging to expand its open government activities to include a wide-ranging set of initiatives on open information and open dialogue, in addition to its groundbreaking work on open data. These activities will help set the tone for open government in Canada moving forward.

The OGP requires that member countries consult with citizens and civil society organizations on the development of a national Action Plan with commitments to be implemented over a two-year period aimed at addressing one or more of the following grand challenges:

▸ **Improving Public Services:** Measures that address the full spectrum of citizen services by fostering public service improvement or private sector innovation;

▸ **Increasing Public Integrity:** Measures that address corruption and public ethics, access to information, campaign finance reform, and media and civil society freedom;

▸ **More Effectively Managing Public Resources:** Measures that address budgets, procurement, natural resources and foreign assistance;

- **Creating Safer Communities:** Measures that address public safety, the security sector, disaster and crisis response, and environmental threats; and
- **Increasing Corporate Accountability:** Measures that address corporate responsibility on issues such as the environment, anti-corruption, consumer protection, and community engagement.

In addition, the Government of Canada will report regularly on the implementation of its Action Plan, as required by the OGP, including by publishing a self-assessment report and participating in the OGP's independent review process. Through these important processes, Canadians will be able to monitor progress being made on Canada's open government commitments.

The Government of Canada is proud of its membership in the OGP and of its open government efforts to date to increase transparency, accountability, civic engagement, and trust in government. The 12 commitments in our second Action Plan on Open Government target a range of initiatives to improve access to open data, open information, and open dialogue for Canadians.

II. Achievements to Date

Canada's first Action Plan on Open Government was launched at the 2012 OGP Annual Summit in Brazil. Over the last two years, significant progress has been made on a broad range of initiatives to increase access to open data, open information, and open dialogue. This has established a strong foundation on which future open government activities can be built, including new government-wide policy on the release of open data and information, and modern, state-of-the-art platforms to enable public access to government information and engagement opportunities. Key accomplishments include the following:

▸ **Next-Generation Open Data:** The Government of Canada's next-generation open data portal (data.gc.ca) was launched in June 2013. This new discovery portal was built based on broad public consultations with users to define new capabilities, and enhancements were made to expand the availability of high-value data, improve data integrity, enrich the usability of the site, facilitate intuitive discovery of data, and increase user engagement.

▸ **Modernization of Access to Information (ATI) Services:** Enhanced online services were launched in 2013 to enable Canadians to search completed ATI requests across all federal departments through a single search interface, and to submit new ATI requests via the Web.

▸ **Open Government Licence (OGL):** In 2013, the Government of Canada issued a new open government licence for all levels of government in order to remove barriers to the reuse of published government data and information regardless of origin. This licence has been adopted not only by the Government of Canada, but also by several provincial governments and municipalities across the country.

▸ **Canada.ca:** Late last year, the federal government introduced its new government-wide web portal at Canada.ca that provides intuitive navigation features to help Canadians find the information they need more quickly and easily. The portal enables users to quickly complete tasks, and features government-wide search capabilities, better use of social media, and optimized content for mobile devices.

▸ **Canadian Open Data Experience (CODE):** In February 2014, the Government of Canada held the largest competitive open data hackathon in Canadian history, bringing together more than 900 developers, students, and open data enthusiasts from across Canada to develop over 100 innovative applications using federal data.

III. Developing Canada's Action Plan 2.0

Canada has developed its new national Action Plan in consultation with citizens, civil society organizations, and the private sector. Our multi-phase consultation approach has served to increase public awareness of Canada's open government initiatives, of specific consultation activities, and of the OGP. More importantly, these consultations have enabled us to tap into the views of Canadians on how best to advance open government priorities over the next two years.

Major consultation activities included the following:

1. **Public Consultation Planning (April 2014):** Citizens and civil society organizations were able to review a proposed draft consultation plan posted on data.gc.ca, as well as receive advance notice of all planned online and in-person opportunities to participate in the development of the Action Plan. During this first phase of consultations, we asked Canadians to provide ideas on how to strengthen our consultation plan in order to maximize public input into the development of the Action Plan.

2. **Generating Ideas (May to August 2014):** During this second phase of consultations, a variety of mechanisms were used to support public generation of ideas, new and old, for potential inclusion in Action Plan 2.0. Citizens and civil society organizations were invited to participate in a series of public workshops and discussion panels in cities across the country to brainstorm on new open government commitments. Online consultations sought additional ideas for which the public could add their vote of support.

3. **Proposing Activities (August to September 2014):** During this critical phase of consultations, proposed activities for the Action Plan that were informed by ideas generated by the public were posted online for review and comments. A series of in-person events during this phase provided a public forum for discussion of these activities and initiatives, and sought feedback on what could be accomplished within the time frame of the Action Plan.

4. **Full Review of Action Plan (October 2014):** As a last phase of consultations prior to finalizing our commitments, we posted a full draft of Action Plan 2.0 on data.gc.ca for public review and comments.

Canadians and civil society were engaged at each stage of the development of the Action Plan with feedback being sought from the public, and from open government experts from civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector. A final Consultation Report will be published that includes detailed information on the results of public consultations, as well as key lessons learned throughout the process.

In October 2013, the Government of Canada published its report on the implementation of Canada's first Action Plan. Progress was also assessed under the OGP's independent reporting process earlier this year. As with all of our public consultations, feedback and recommendations obtained through these reviews helped guide the development of our second Action Plan on Open Government. In particular, the OGP's independent review highlighted the need to improve our approach to consulting with citizens and civil society organizations on the development and implementation of open government commitments.

Accordingly, the Government of Canada has taken the important steps outlined above to improve its approach to public consultation in support of the development of Canada's second Action Plan. We look forward to continuing to explore opportunities to collaborate and engage with Canadian citizens and civil society organizations on the implementation of our Action Plan moving forward.

IV. Canada's Action Plan 2.0 Commitments

Canada's second Action Plan on Open Government consists of 12 commitments that will advance open government principles in Canada over the next two years and beyond. The *Directive on Open Government* will provide new policy direction to federal departments and agencies on open government, and foundational support for each of the additional commitments which fall under three streams: Open Data, Open Information, and Open Dialogue.
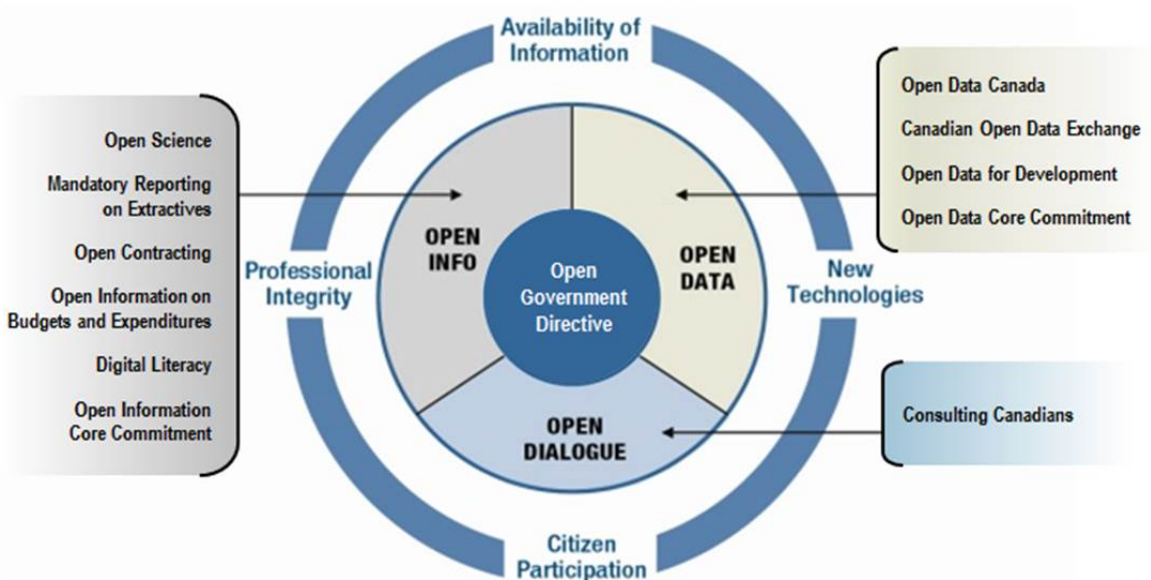
In addition to advancing OGP principles for transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement, each of our commitments provides support for one or more of the five OGP grand challenges:

▸ GC1 – Improving Public Services;

▸ GC2 – Increasing Public Integrity;

▸ GC3 – Effectively Managing Public Resources;

▸ GC4 – Creating Safer Communities; and

▸ GC5 – Increasing Corporate Accountability.

A.   Open Government Foundations – Open by Default

Increasingly, governments around the world have come to recognize that free and open access to government data and information are of significant value to society and the economy. The key challenge for governments is how to shift to an environment where data and information are released openly to the public by default while respecting privacy, security, and confidentiality restrictions.

> ### What We Heard From Canadians
>
> "Embed Open Government responsibilities in the institutional structure of government departments, and hold departments accountable for meeting citizen-stated needs."
>
> "Need to see 'Open by Default' emerging at the international level, and being incorporated as part of specific policy instruments for the Government of Canada."

Such an environment represents a fundamental change in government culture that requires government-wide direction to drive the release of federal information and advance overall objectives for transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement.

Implement the *Directive on Open Government*

> The Government of Canada will issue mandatory policy requiring federal government departments and agencies to maximize the release of data and information of business value subject to applicable restrictions related to privacy, confidentiality, and security. Eligible data and information will be released in standardized, open formats, free of charge, and without restrictions on reuse.

The proactive release of data and information is the starting point for all other open government activity. It is the foundation on which all other aspects of Canada's Action Plan are based. Accordingly, the Government of Canada will firmly establish an "open by default" position in its mandatory policy framework by issuing a new *Directive on Open Government*.

The *Directive on Open Government* will provide clear and mandatory requirements to government departments aimed squarely at ensuring the availability of eligible government information and data of business value while respecting any restrictions related to privacy, security, and confidentiality. Business value takes on a broad definition in this context, including data and information that document the business of government, decision making in support of programs, services and ongoing operations, as well as departmental reporting. Furthermore, the directive will support broader accountability and transparency, and ensure that open government requirements are considered in the development and implementation of all federal programs and services. Departments and agencies will also be required to develop inventories of their data and information, plan for the release of eligible holdings, and lay out a schedule for their release.

Maximizing the release of data and information will enable Canadians to better engage with their government and hold it accountable, creating an environment that supports meaningful civic engagement and drives social and economic benefits through the innovative reuse of data and information.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

▸ Issue a new *Directive on Open Government* to require federal departments and agencies to maximize the release of eligible government data and information of business value subject to applicable restrictions related to privacy, confidentiality, and security.

▸ Require federal departments and agencies to publish open government implementation plans that describe planned activities to meet the requirements of the directive, including the following:

  – Establishing and maintaining inventories of data and information holdings;

  – Prioritizing the publication of data and information based on public demand;

  – Publishing data and information in accessible and open formats on federal open government websites under an open and unrestrictive licence; and

  – Reporting annually on progress made.

▸ Establish tools and guidance for the publication of departmental data inventories, subject to privacy, security and confidentiality requirements.

Lead: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Grand challenges: GC1, GC2, GC3

B.   Open Data – Open Data Without Borders

In its June 2014 report entitled *Open Data: The Way of the Future*, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates indicated that open data has become the "raw material for the digital age," and encouraged the federal government to continue to "innovate and develop its vision for open data in Canada."

> **What We Heard From Canadians**
>
> "Ensure portals are easy to use, data is easy to discover, and datasets are readable for all individuals, not just those with an extremely high level of data literacy."
>
> "Work to integrate Open Government accountability mechanisms and Open Data access across federal, provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions."

Building on the strong foundation of open data efforts to date, Canada's Action Plan on Open Government includes four specific commitments to unlock the innovation potential of open data over the next two years.

The first two open data commitments focus on deepening the collaboration on open data between Canadian governments at all levels, and with the private sector. The objective of these commitments is to harmonize open data services in Canada and encourage the reuse and commercialization of open data. The third commitment supports open data activities internationally in order to encourage the continued growth of the global open data movement, and reinforce Canada's role as an international leader for open government. Finally, the fourth commitment lays out improvements to be made to ongoing core open data activities.

1) Open Data Canada

> The Government of Canada will work with provinces, territories, and municipalities to break down barriers to integrated, pan-Canadian open data services through the establishment of common principles, standards, and licensing across all levels of government.

As announced at the OGP Annual Summit in October 2013, the pan-Canadian, Open Data Canada strategy will remove existing jurisdictional barriers to realizing the full potential of open data in Canada. By harmonizing and integrating the diverse range of open data activities happening at all levels of government across Canada, we will facilitate a "no wrong door" approach to open government data, regardless of which government owns it.

This is a challenging prospect given that Canada is a decentralized federation in which government programs and services cut across multiple jurisdictions. Health, transportation, and agriculture are just a few examples of government activities that have municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal involvement.

Our consultations with citizens and civil society organizations have reinforced how important it is that users be able to combine data from multiple jurisdictions in spite of any challenges that stand in the way. Such challenges include data ownership, search and discovery barriers, licensing, cataloguing, and significant differences across jurisdictions with regard to capacity. As part of our commitment to open data in Canada, we will address these challenges head-on.

Work on these activities will be governed by a national Open Data Canada Steering Committee with representation from all levels of government. The end result will provide unprecedented access to comprehensive open data from across Canada to spur innovation, increase productivity, and ultimately improve the lives of Canadians.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:
‣ Establish common open data principles for adoption by governments across Canada.
‣ Facilitate the adoption of a common or compatible open government licence by all Canadian governments to enable the release and reuse of open data and information.

- ‣ Establish or identify common open data standards (e.g., metadata, data formats) that align with existing international standards for adoption by governments across Canada.

- ‣ Develop a federated open data search service with provinces and municipalities to provide users with a "no wrong door" approach to accessing open data, so that data can be easily found and downloaded regardless of which government open data portal is used.

- ‣ Expand and deliver a national appathon event, the Canadian Open Data Experience (CODE), to promote access to, and reuse of, multi-jurisdictional data to develop new and innovative tools and services for Canadians.

Lead: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat working with provinces, territories, and municipalities.

Grand challenges: GC1

2) Canadian Open Data Exchange (ODX)

> The Government of Canada will establish an open data institute to support collaboration with the private sector, civil society, academia, and other levels of government to promote the commercialization of open data.

The global movement of technology and social media is generating massive amounts of information. Capitalizing on data offers $1.3 trillion in possible economic development in North America alone (McKinsey & Company: "Open data: Unlocking innovation and performance with liquid information"). This type of opportunity is leading public sector institutions in Canada at all levels to undertake open data initiatives. In response to the tremendous commercial opportunity represented by open data, the Government of Canada has announced an investment of $3 million over three years to launch a new institute on open data: the Canadian Open Data Exchange (ODX).

While governments collect much of the world's data, they do not always share it in ways that support ease of discoverability, access, use, or understanding by the public. Today, citizens expect to be able to access information and services electronically when and how they choose to do so. The creation of an information economy has motivated government to release vast amounts of public data, but there remain real challenges to accessing that data in a way that can generate insights, ideas, and services to truly benefit society.

ODX will work with governments, the private sector, civil society, and academia to help realize the full potential of open data for the economic and social benefit of Canada. ODX will bring together all of the pieces that support a sustainable, market-driven, open-data ecosystem whose success is measured by commercialization outcomes, such as the creation of jobs, companies, and wealth.

The vision for ODX is that by creating a platform and toolsets to help commercial actors use available data, new products and companies may be launched to meet market needs, social challenges will be addressed to improve the quality of life for Canadians, and, above all, new jobs will be created.

ODX will develop industry standards for open data, build a national marketplace where commercialization of open data can flourish, and support a pan-Canadian open data innovation community that will help incubate the next generation of data-driven companies. Through ODX, Canadians will be able to see the measurable economic benefits of open data in the form of job creation, investment in data-driven companies, and the establishment of a national hub for the commercialization of open data.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

▸ Establish an open data institute in Canada (the Canadian Open Data Exchange, or ODX), as a national marketplace that includes an online community for those engaged in the commercialization of open data. ODX will undertake the following in collaboration with governments, civil society organizations, and private industry:

  – Developing new tools and applications that access and manipulate government data;

  – Establishing a framework for open data standards, including the articulation of industry standards for presenting, and providing access to open data for key sectors;

  – Consulting with industry champions on the development of demonstration projects for the commercialization of open data in priority sectors;

  – Launching a national outreach program, including events, workshops, hackathons, and student contest opportunities nationwide; and

  – Incubating new data-driven companies.

Lead: Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario

Grand challenges: GC1

3) Open Data for Development

The Government of Canada will work together with developing countries to harness the potential of open data to enhance accountability, create new solutions for delivery of public services, and create new economic opportunities around the world.

Open data holds an enormous potential to enhance development efforts around the world. As co-chair for the OGP Open Data Working Group, Canada is committed to strengthening a truly global open data movement and exploring ways to use collaboration and technology to strengthen democracy and build prosperity. As noted in the OGP's Four-Year Strategy (2015–18), national action plans are meant to provide an organizing framework for international networking. The OGP is in many ways a global platform for connecting, empowering, and supporting open government reform across member countries.

In recent years, Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) has supported initiatives in developing countries to better use open data for development, establishing a global network of partners around the Open Data for Development (OD4D) initiative. The OD4D initiative aims to support the global and regional efforts of governments, civil society organizations, and entrepreneurs harnessing open data to achieve development outcomes, and enrich the international sharing of open data solutions and best practices.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

▸ Build the capacity of the open data initiatives in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia, and establish important partnerships with the open data movement in Canada:

   – Support developing countries to plan and execute national open data initiatives;

   – Develop international data standards and solution-driven networks that can help to bring about social and economic innovation; and

   – Measure and evaluate the relationship between open data initiatives and socioeconomic development, informing the quality and reach of future open data initiatives.

▸ Host an International Open Data Conference in 2015 to bring together experts from around the world to share knowledge and experience to strengthen international collaboration on open government issues.

Lead: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Grand challenges: GC1, GC2, GC3

4) Open Data Core Commitment

The Government of Canada will continue to unlock the potential of open data through a series of innovative and forward-looking projects that drive government-wide progress on open data and prioritize easy access to high-value federal data.

Having launched its next-generation portal for federal open data, and released the Open Government Licence under Canada's first Action Plan, the Government of Canada is now focused on continuing to raise the bar on ensuring high-quality open data services for Canadians.

Through its open data initiatives to date, the Government of Canada is providing Canadians with access to timely, comprehensive, high-value data in open, reusable formats. More than 40 departments and agencies have already made available over 200,000 datasets on everything from weather and border wait times to product recalls and Canada's vast collection of maps and geospatial data. Moving forward, we will accelerate the release of high-value data, and continue to enhance and improve our open data platforms and services. By driving the proactive release of open data, we will increase government transparency, drive innovation, and maximize Canadians' potential reuse of federal data.

In 2014, the first Canadian Open Data Experience (CODE) was piloted to challenge innovators across the country to test their talent and liberate the data available on data.gc.ca. From February 28 to March 2, more than 900 participants raced against the clock to code an open data application in the largest hackathon in Canadian history. Over the next two years under Action Plan 2.0, the Government of Canada will work with partners, other levels of government, and the private sector to expand this flagship activity to further engage open data users across the country to promote the availability and reuse potential of federal open data.

In addition, we will continue our efforts to increase the transparency of Canada's international development assistance through open data, which contributes to greater aid effectiveness and increases the ability of citizens in partner countries to hold their governments to account on development progress.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:
‣ Continue to prioritize and expand the release of open data from federal departments and agencies under a single Open Government Licence.
‣ Complete public consultations with Canadians and civil society organizations in support of the prioritization of open data releases.
‣ Launch a new government-wide open government portal (open.canada.ca) with expanded open data services:
  – Interactive, thematic open data communities (e.g., health and safety) and enhanced consultation functionality and online forums;
  – Directory of open data services across Canada;
  – Expanded developers' tools to support reuse of federal data;
  – Enhanced data discovery; and
  – Standardized release procedures, formats, and metadata.

- Expand and deliver the Canadian Open Data Experience (CODE) as the premier national open data competition to drive creative and ambitious innovation in Canada:
  - Increase promotion of CODE activities and events;
  - Expand the use of regional hubs to increase participation in all areas of Canada; and
  - Create sub-themes to focus application development on everyday challenges facing Canadians.

- Consolidate the management of federal geospatial data across the Government of Canada to make this information more accessible and reusable via federal open government websites.

- Broaden adoption of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard in the Government of Canada, and encourage other Canadian actors to publish their own data, in particular, civil society organizations.

Lead: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Grand challenges: GC1, GC3

C. Open Information – Transparency and Accountability

The Government of Canada, like all modern governments, possesses a vast wealth of information about our country and its citizens. From program and policy-related information and scientific and research data, to financial and expenditure information and historical archives, the breadth and depth of government information can be overwhelming.

> ### What We Heard From Canadians
> "Implementing mandatory payment reporting standards for Canada's mining, oil and gas companies is a tremendous opportunity for Canadian leadership."
>
> "Improve digital literacy in Canada, promote better learning about and understanding of data and its reuse."

Improved awareness and access to this information for both the public and government officials is an essential element of open government. As the OGP notes, "governments collect and hold information on behalf of people, and citizens have a right to seek information about governmental activities." Put into the hands of the public, this information can lead to greater accountability and a stronger civil society.

Canada's new Action Plan on Open Government places a strong emphasis on providing Canadians with access to open information, and includes six specific commitments to advance activities in this area over the next two years. New commitments focus on improving access to scientific research and data, legislating mandatory reporting standards to improve the transparency of extractive industries in Canada, and broadening open information on government contracts, budgets, and expenditures. In addition, Canada will work to improve Canadians' skills as consumers of digital data and information.

Finally, enhancements to core open information activities initiated in Canada's first Action Plan will be expanded. These include efforts to modernize the administration of Access to Information services, development of new online tools to enable Canadians to access government documents and publications, and establishment of the Government of Canada's new government-wide web presence (Canada.ca). Together, these activities will provide Canadians with unprecedented ease of discovery and access to a wealth of Canadian federal government information.

1) Open Science

> The Government of Canada will maximize access to federally funded scientific research to encourage greater collaboration and engagement with the scientific community, the private sector, and the public.

The Government of Canada makes significant investments in scientific research. As a result, Canada has become a world leader in a number of important scientific research areas, and continues to support leading-edge research by some of the world's best scientific minds. Increasing public access to government-funded scientific research data and information has the potential to further drive innovation and discovery across the broader scientific community.

On June 12, 2013, the Honourable Gary Goodyear, Minister of State for Science and Technology, signed the G8 Science Ministers Statement on behalf of the Government of Canada to promote policies that increase access to the results of publicly funded research to spur scientific discovery, enable better international collaboration and coordination of research, enhance the engagement of society and help support economic prosperity. Accordingly, the Government of Canada will establish a government-wide approach to open science to increase access to federally funded scientific publications and data.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

‣ Develop and publish a government-wide Open Science Implementation Plan with specific activities and milestones, including the following:

– Public consultations on the implementation of open science;

– Launch of open access to publications and data resulting from federally funded scientific activities;

– Development and adoption of policies, guidelines and tools to support effective stewardship of scientific data; and

– Promotion of the adoption of open science standards in Canada.

‣ Establish an online service to enable a one-stop search for publications and data resulting from federal scientific activities.

- Develop inventories of federal scientific data and initiate the public release of data.
- Publish and maintain a consolidated online list of peer-reviewed articles by Government of Canada scientists dating back to 2012.

Leads: Environment Canada, Industry Canada

Grand Challenges: GC1, GC3

2) Mandatory Reporting on Extractives

The Government of Canada will introduce legislation on mandatory reporting standards for the extractive sector that require the reporting of certain payments made to governments related to the commercial development of oil, gas, and minerals.

As a country with abundant natural resource wealth, Canada understands the necessity of openness and accountability in resource development both at home and abroad. Responsible development attracts investment, helps enhance the reputation of Canada's extractive firms, and strengthens international partnerships.

In 2013, G8 leaders noted that in many developing countries there is huge potential for economic growth based on abundant natural resource reserves. The Government of Canada is meeting its international commitment to establish mandatory reporting standards by 2015 for the extractive sector and doing its part to contribute to raising global standards of transparency. Raising global standards of transparency will improve accountability in the sector and reduce corruption and other illicit activities.

The Government of Canada will establish reporting standards for the extractive sector, requiring extractive entities to report on certain payments made to governments in Canada. Extractive entities are often required to make such payments to cover licence fees, rental and entry fees, royalties, and other costs. Mandatory reporting standards will increase Canadians' awareness about how extractive companies' revenues are spent, which supports transparency and social responsibility and helps to combat corruption.

By creating an open reporting environment, with clear and understandable information made available to the public, greater transparency and accountability in resource development can be achieved everywhere Canadian extractive firms operate.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

▸ Introduce new legislation that will require extractive entities to implement mandatory reporting standards and report annually on payments to all levels of government, domestically and internationally.

▸ Ensure stakeholder engagement on the establishment and implementation of these mandatory reporting standards.

▸ Require extractive entities to publish data on the payments they make to governments in Canada and around the world.

Lead: Natural Resources Canada

Grand challenges: GC1, GC2, GC3, GC5

3) Open Contracting

> The Government of Canada will coordinate single-window access to a broad range of open contracting information from across federal departments.

The federal government spends millions of dollars every year on procurement activities, and Canadians need to understand how this money is spent and what is being received in return. Access to this information is essential to ensuring accountability for the stewardship of public money. In addition, parties involved in public contracts must understand that open, proactive disclosure of contracting data is a condition of doing business with the Government of Canada.

The Government of Canada has demonstrated global leadership in this area through its robust disclosure regime for contracting data. Since 2004, federal departments and agencies have been required to proactively disclose information on contracts awarded over $10,000 on their websites. Furthermore, the Government of Canada's buyandsell.gc.ca website for procurement data has been influential in the design of the Open Contracting Partnership's (OCP's) draft international *Open Contracting Data Standard*. Canada supports the steps taken by the OCP to strengthen the openness and transparency of procurement processes in the international community through the establishment of Open Contracting Global Principles.

By improving upon the disclosure of contracting data, the Government of Canada will strengthen the openness and transparency of its procurement processes and increase Canadians' knowledge of how their tax dollars are being spent.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

‣ Release data on all contracts over $10,000 via a centralized, machine-readable database available to the public.

‣ Increase the level of detail disclosed on government contracts over $10,000.

‣ Provide guidance to federal departments and agencies to increase consistency in open contracting.

‣ Pilot the *Open Contracting Data Standard – 0.3.3* on the BuyandSell.gc.ca website for federal contracts awarded by Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Lead: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Public Works and Government Services Canada

Grand challenges: GC1

4) Open Information on Budgets and Expenditures

The Government of Canada will publish expanded information and data on federal spending to help Canadians understand, and hold government accountable for, the use of public monies.

One of the most important things Canadians want from their government is information on how their tax dollars are being spent. The budget and expenditures process can often be unclear to citizens, and it is the government's responsibility to make every effort to ensure that taxpayers understand how their money is being spent.

Canada has demonstrated clear leadership in providing Canadians with access to information on government expenditures. Since 2003, federal departments and agencies have proactively disclosed information about government operations on their websites (e.g., travel, contracts, hospitality expenditures) to allow Canadians and Parliament to better hold the government and public sector officials to account. Proactively disclosed information is currently fragmented, since it is published on more than a hundred individual departmental websites. Under our new Action Plan, Canadians will be provided with single-window access for searching and comparing this information across government.

To ensure that Canadians have the information they need on government finances and expenditures, we will provide enhanced online tools that give a clear picture of the financial expenditures of federal organizations. These tools will provide innovative visualizations of data, interactive infographics, and public reports released as interactive documents. Using these tools, Canadians will be able to track government spending by departments and agencies over time, and more effectively compare and contrast expenditures across departments.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

▸ Launch a new interactive online service that enables Canadians to review and visualize federal spending broken down by department, and to compare expenditures across departments. Consultations with Canadians will be completed to test and ensure the effectiveness of this new online service.

▸ Provide single-window, searchable access to information that is proactively disclosed by departments and agencies (e.g., travel and hospitality, contracts, grants and contributions).

– Standardize procedures for publishing mandatory proactive disclosure information by federal departments and agencies.

▸ Make all data from charts and tables in Budget 2015 available in machine-readable formats to facilitate analysis by citizens and parliamentarians.

Lead: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Grand challenges: GC1, GC2, GC3

5) Digital Literacy

> The Government of Canada will support the development of tools, training resources, and other initiatives to help Canadians acquire the essential skills needed to access, understand, and use digital information and new technologies.

Increasingly, Canadians are required to use technology to access, use, and create digital information in their work and other daily activities. Similarly, digital literacy skills are needed to take full advantage of the benefits of open data, information, and dialogue. The potential reach and impact of Canada's open government activities can be significantly augmented by efforts to ensure citizens understand how to make use of the technologies that enable open government.

In order to target these activities more effectively, initiatives will be undertaken to better understand the relationship between digital skills and labour market and social outcomes. To this end, the Government of Canada will develop tools, training resources, and other initiatives to support digital skills development by Canadians.

The Government of Canada will work with partners in the private sector, civil society, and academia to ensure that federal digital skills initiatives are aligned with non-governmental efforts being undertaken in this domain.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

‣ Sponsor projects to increase understanding of the relationship between digital skills and relevant labour market and social outcomes, including building a profile of Canadians' digital skills competencies by region and by demographic group.

‣ Develop online tools, training materials, and other resources to enable individual Canadians to assess and improve their digital skills.

‣ Fund private sector and civil society initiatives aimed at improving the digital skills of Canadians (e.g., digital skills in rural small business, essential skills for Northern youth, business technology management accreditation).

Lead: Employment and Social Development Canada

Grand challenges: GC1, GC2, GC3

6) Open Information Core Commitment

The Government of Canada will expand the proactive release of information on government activities, programs, policies, and services, making information easier to find, access, and use.

Digital technologies have made it far easier for governments to create, repurpose and disseminate information than ever before. Robust information management and next-generation search and discovery services will significantly improve the sharing of government information in support of government transparency and accountability. At the same time, public access to government research and analysis will open the door to the unlimited reuse of this information in new and innovative ways.

Throughout public consultations, Canadians have expressed a desire to see the Government of Canada expand its open information activities and facilitate easier access to published federal information. The Government of Canada will continue to take bold steps to make government information more widely available. This involves a range of activities, including ensuring more effective records management across all federal departments and agencies as the foundation of transparency and accountability; developing new public-facing open government resources such as a new online virtual library to preserve and improve access to historical and archival records; and providing better and more efficient access to information services to Canadians.

Providing open information will help to build a more engaged and informed citizenry, promote informed policy making, and enable better management of public resources.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

▶ Modernize the administration of Access to Information and Privacy (ATIP) services across the federal government, including the following:

 – Expansion of online ATI request-and-pay services to additional federal departments and agencies across government;

 – Access to a searchable database of all completed ATI requests, and the ability to request the released documents;

 – Publication of statistical information on extensions and consultations related to access requests;

 – Development of standardized, whole-of-government services and solutions to expedite ATIP requests and enable Canadians to track the status of their ATIP requests; and

 – Establishment of an expanded whole-of-government training strategy to help government officials understand and manage their responsibilities under ATIP legislation.

▶ Develop and launch a virtual library on the new government-wide open government portal (open.canada.ca). This new service will provide access to federal publications through an online, searchable repository of published federal documents of all kinds.

 – Complete public consultations with citizens and civil society to support development of the virtual library service.

 – Establish a government-wide system and web architecture for the release of government information assets.

 – Standardize release procedures, formats, and metadata.

▶ Improve the management and accessibility of government records, and facilitate faster responses to requests for information through the roll-out of GCDOCS, a government-wide records management solution for the federal government.

▶ Increase Canadians' access to federal records by removing access restrictions on archived federal documents held by Library and Archives Canada.

▶ Develop and pilot a single online discovery and access platform for federal science library services and collections.

▶ Provide consolidated, searchable access to regulatory information from federal departments and agencies involved in regulatory activities.

▶ Improve access to all online Government of Canada information through the new whole-of-government Canada.ca website:

 – Intuitive user-centric design based on government-wide web standards;

- Whole-of-government search functionality; and
- Faster access to frequently used services and information.

Leads: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Library and Archives Canada, National Research Council Canada

Grand challenges: GC1, GC2, GC3

D.   Open Dialogue – Consult, Engage, Empower

Open dialogue between governments and citizens is critical for building trust. Through better engagement with citizens and civil society organizations, the Government of Canada intends to ensure that programs and services are designed and delivered to meet the needs and priorities of Canadians. Open dialogue begins by enhancing the availability of data and information to inform

> **What We Heard From Canadians**
>
> "The government should move forward to develop a set of principles and standards for all consultation processes."
>
> "Engage with thematic communities based on important Open Government themes, work to prioritize datasets across Government of Canada departments."

active civic participation. It matures when citizens and civil society organizations are empowered to voice their insights and opinions, and when governments demonstrate their willingness to meaningfully incorporate that public feedback as part of decision-making processes.

In its new Action Plan on Open Government, the Government of Canada's open dialogue activities focus on creating an environment that encourages and enables departments and agencies to regularly consult with Canadian citizens and civil society organizations.

Consulting Canadians

> The Government of Canada will provide direction and next-generation tools and resources to enable federal departments and agencies to consult more broadly with citizens and civil society in support of the development and delivery of government policies and programs.

Modern technology has enabled governments to connect faster and more easily with citizens. Given Canada's geographic diversity, federal departments and agencies often face a challenge in conducting wide-ranging consultations with Canadians from diverse areas of the country and backgrounds. Evolving technological solutions can help government departments and agencies better consult with citizens and civil society organizations on a wide range of policy, program, and regulatory issues. The result will be a more informed society on government programs and direction, and improved policy development for the government.

To meet this challenge, the Government of Canada will develop new and innovative approaches and solutions to enable Canadians to more easily take part in federal consultations of interest to them. The government will also develop a set of principles and procedures to guide consultation processes in order to increase the consistency and effectiveness of public consultations across government. As a result, Canadians will be more aware of the opportunities to engage with their government, will have consistent, advance notice of government consultations, and will have access to easy-to-use solutions for providing their ideas on federal programs and services.

Deliverables to be completed in 2014–16:

▸ Improve the existing Consulting With Canadians website to facilitate easier access to information on federal consultation activities for citizens.

▸ Develop and launch a new government-wide consultation portal to promote opportunities for public participation, host online consultations, and share findings from completed consultations.

▸ Expand the use of social media across government to enable departments and programs to connect to Canadians in innovative ways and enhance engagement in support of citizen-centric services.

▸ Develop a set of principles and standards for public consultations in discussion with citizens and civil society (e.g., advance notice and promotion of consultations, best practices for in-person and online engagement, effective use of social media, reporting on results), including setting out minimum benchmarks for consultations.

▸ Conduct targeted consultations on open government themes with key groups in Canada (e.g., youth, Aboriginal populations).

Leads: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Privy Council Office

Grand challenges: GC1

V.   Conclusion

The Government of Canada continues to be committed to open government and its role as a dedicated member of the Open Government Partnership (OGP). We support the principles of the OGP, which we believe will propel innovation, economic opportunity, and deeper democratic engagement worldwide.

Canada's Action Plan on Open Government will provide real opportunities to accelerate the transformation of the public service and the Government of Canada through a fundamental commitment to transparency, accountability, and civic engagement. Our success will be measured by the impact our activities have on the engagement of Canadians and their use of open data, open information, and open dialogue services moving forward.

> "The sky is truly the limit — and we are proud to play an important role in leading our citizens into the next stage of the global information age."
>
> The Honourable Tony Clement,
> President of the Treasury Board