GOVERNMENT OF CANADA POLICY ON CONSULTING AND ENGAGING CANADIANS

Draft for Discussion

September, 2001

Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy of the Government of Canada

(Publié aussi en français sous le titre *Politique du gouvernement du Canada sur la consultation et la participation des citoyens.*)

Table of Contents

Effective Date

This policy takes effect on (date to be determined) and replaces the *Consultation Guidelines for Managers in the Federal Public Service* published in 1992 by the Privy Council Office.

Preface

The Government of Canada recognizes that its central purpose is to serve Canadians and that a citizen focus must therefore be built into its policies, programs, services and initiatives. This policy on consultation and citizen engagement builds on the Government of Canada's commitment to involve Canadians in the development, review and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives, and its related obligation to ensure that appropriate mechanisms and resources are in place to fully realize this commitment. Perhaps most importantly, the policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of ministers, deputy ministers and officials in building a culture of consultation and citizen engagement throughout the government.

Providing institutions with direction and guidance on ways to make consultation and citizen engagement more inclusive, the policy includes provisions for participant funding to ensure balanced representation and broad public access (see *Appendix E*). It addresses the need to evaluate the effectiveness of an institution's consultation processes in order to learn, improve and make adjustments as needed (*Appendix D*). Incorporating the use of new communication technologies to engage citizens in policy-making and program development, the policy offers advice on the design and implementation of online consultations (*Appendix C*). It also provides guidance on consultation activities that may involve or have implications for other levels of government (*Appendix B*), and includes general guidelines for planning and managing consultation and citizen engagement processes (*Appendix A*).

Institutions are encouraged to integrate public consultation more systematically into their management processes. The policy recognizes that developing new and more effective mechanisms for engaging citizens in governance is critical to the legitimacy of public institutions, the quality of public policy, and the responsiveness of public services.

Context

Traditionally, three sources have reflected the views of citizens in the policy-making process:

1. ***Parliamentary institutions*** are the cornerstone of democratic representation for Canadians. Members of Parliament, who interact regularly with their constituents and other citizens, translate that principle into reality. They represent the views of citizens on a daily basis in a range of forums from political party caucuses to debates in the House of Commons and the consideration of legislation and statutory regulations in House committees. Members of Parliament have applied innovative techniques for canvassing the views of the citizens they represent, such as town hall

meetings, surveys, Web sites and roundtables, as well as through their work on parliamentary committees.

2. ***Voluntary organizations and stakeholder groups***, including business associations, professional bodies and trade unions, are important voices in civic discourse and often represent citizens' views in the public policy process. Parliament and the government frequently consult stakeholder and voluntary groups, and Aboriginal organizations. Such groups use a variety of mechanisms to obtain the views of their members, supporters and others, and are often consulted on legislative or public policy issues.

3. ***Government consultation and citizen engagement processes involving groups and individuals*** – the focus of this policy – complement the first two avenues of public involvement. This is done by ensuring that a wide range of citizens are involved, and an equally wide range of views has been canvassed (or that statistically valid representative tools have been used) in the development, review or evaluation of public policies, programs, services and initiatives. Consultation and citizen engagement processes undertaken by the government and its institutions often involve ministers, Members of Parliament, voluntary organizations and stakeholder groups.

Every year, government institutions organize hundreds of public consultations for a variety of purposes: to obtain views and information needed for policy making; to design and evaluate programs and services; to explore future broad directions and initiatives; and to meet legislative requirements such as conducting public reviews of statutory regulations or completing environmental assessments (as required by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*). Advisory committees, task forces, roundtables and conferences are among the many forums through which public institutions consult and engage citizens.

Over time, government consultations have become more sophisticated, making greater use of new technologies and methodologies, such as Web-based consultation. Evolving into more effective forums for involving citizens in governance, consultation increasingly has become part of standard practice. The importance of public participation is reflected in the *Social Union Framework Agreement*, for example, an intergovernmental accord (established in 1999) that recognizes the need to "ensure appropriate opportunities for Canadians to have meaningful input into social policies and programs."

Greater emphasis on consultation and citizen engagement corresponds to growing expectations from Canadians for more accessible, responsive and accountable governance. Canadians generally want to be consulted by their government. Increasingly, they would like to discuss the values that underlie program and policy options and the trade-offs and choices facing decision-makers. Citizen engagement processes that involve in-depth deliberation, reflection and learning to achieve common ground are helping to address the expectations of Canadians.

New information technologies, notably the Internet, are providing further opportunities through which to engage citizens and to enhance public access and involvement. Such vehicles are changing the relationship between governments and citizens. For their part, citizens are using new technologies to access data in ways that are ‘democratizing’ information. Some seek to mobilize communities of like-minded groups and individuals on particular issues via the Internet, whether locally, nationally or internationally. Similarly, governments are seeking ways to use new technologies to foster dialogue and interaction with citizens on public issues.

Canada is uniquely positioned to use new technologies in this way – its citizens are among the most electronically connected in the world. Canadians generally agree that it would be useful to be able to register their views on government matters via the Internet. Many have expressed the view that using new technologies can improve democracy in Canada. Youth, in particular, are using the Internet to participate in online discussions and register their opinions via Web sites.

Canadians’ relationship with government via the Internet continues to evolve. As more and more Canadians access government information and services online, their expectations of being able to influence government decisions will likely increase as well. The government has an obligation to provide a range of options for citizens to express their views. The Internet is but one option.

More traditional means of consulting the public will continue to be used in order to provide a broad range of options for citizen involvement. Canadians who do not have access to new technologies such as the Internet must have opportunities to be involved in policy, program and service development as well.

Whether using online tools or more traditional methods, actively consulting and engaging citizens in a spirit of trust, transparency, assured listening and accountability – fundamental principles for all forms of consultation and citizen engagement – will contribute to stronger government-citizen connections.

To become engaged, citizens will need to extend their civic responsibilities beyond the simple act of voting – learning, discussing and thinking more deeply about the complex social, economic and political issues that impact their daily lives. As information technology continues to drive the pace of change in our society, in the foreseeable future at least, governments and citizens will need to determine how best to harness this technology to strengthen and support democracy.

Scope

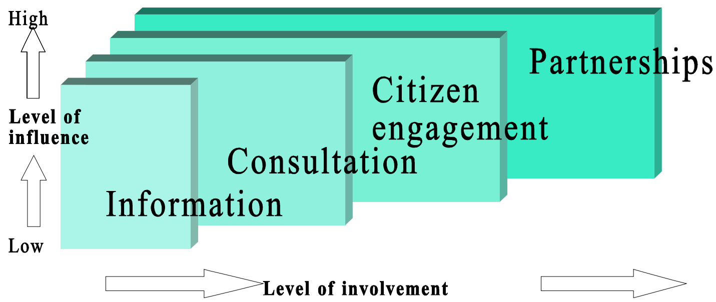
There is a spectrum of approaches – illustrated in the figure below – by which government institutions can provide opportunities for Canadians to become involved in policy-making and the development of programs, services and initiatives. At one end of the spectrum, the provision of accurate, objective and timely **information** (including reporting to citizens on the results of government activities) promotes transparency and accountability. It also better enables citizens to participate in the public policy process.

Further along the continuum, **consultation and citizen engagement** processes invite greater citizen involvement in the development of policies, programs, services and initiatives. At the farthest end of the spectrum, shared decision-making through

partnerships provides the greatest degree of involvement. As the degree of involvement increases, the degree of influence grows.

These approaches to public involvement often overlap, and each is employed according to the issue and context. While the provision of information and partnerships are important elements of good governance, this policy focuses on consultation and citizen engagement.

Spectrum of Public Involvement



Definitions

Consultation involves processes that seek the views of individuals or groups on policies, programs, services or initiatives that affect them directly or in which they have a significant interest. Consultation is a two-way exchange that can occur at various points in the process of developing and managing policies and programs. It can be used to help frame an issue, to identify or assess options, and to evaluate ongoing activities. Advisory committees, program or policy conferences, public meetings, 1-800 lines, Web sites, polling and focus groups are among the many forums through which consultations are conducted.

Consultation processes are used most often to:

- draw on outside expertise and experience to inform the development of policies, programs, services and initiatives, particularly from stakeholder groups and voluntary organizations;
- obtain views from individual citizens, stakeholder groups and voluntary organizations on different options for improving existing policies, programs, services and initiatives, and for establishing new ones, including their potential impact; and
- seek input into the review or evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives.

Citizen engagement involves in-depth deliberation, usually in the formative stages of policy or program design, focused on the goals and underlying values and principles of a policy, program, service or initiative. Citizen engagement, which more often involves citizens as individuals rather than as members of organized groups, may be approached through various processes, including study circles, deliberative polling, citizen juries, public conventions, correspondence, debate and dialogue.

Citizen engagement differs qualitatively from consultation since it places greater emphasis on bringing together people with differing views in a process of deliberation and dialogue that seeks common ground among all participants. Citizen engagement generally requires a greater commitment of time and often includes a goal of building civic capacity for policy, program and service development.

Citizen engagement processes may be most appropriate when:

- considering policy, program or service directions that are expected to have a broad or major impact on citizens;
- addressing issues that involve conflicts in values or require difficult choices or trade-offs;
- exploring emerging issues that require considerable learning, both on the part of government and citizens; and
- building common ground by reconciling competing interests.

Many undertakings that seek public input will involve elements of both consultation and citizen engagement. This policy is intended to apply to the full range of processes available to decision-makers, depending on the dimensions of the issue and the objectives of the consultation or citizen engagement activity. It recognizes that institutions must be selective in identifying issues on which they will consult and, in particular, engage citizens.

Institutions, for the purpose of this policy, include all departments, agencies, boards, councils, commissions and other bodies of the Government of Canada identified in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the *Financial Administration Act*.

Policy Objective

The purpose of this policy is to foster and support a consultative culture throughout the Public Service of Canada, and to ensure that institutions of the Government of Canada maintain effective, well-managed processes for consulting and engaging the public in the development, review and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives.

Policy Statement

Consulting citizens on issues that affect their lives is a fundamental principle of responsible government in a parliamentary democracy. Citizens must have meaningful opportunities to participate in the development of government policies, programs, services and initiatives, and in reviewing outcomes.

Government must facilitate the contributions of citizens in shaping or improving public policies, programs, services and initiatives. Public officials have an obligation to listen carefully to the views and concerns of citizens and to take full account of them when making decisions.

It is the policy of the Government of Canada to involve Canadians in the development and evaluation of public policies, programs, services and initiatives through consultation and citizen engagement processes that are transparent, accessible and accountable, and that reflect Canada's diversity. The government is committed to reporting to Canadians on how their views have been considered in policy formulation and in program and service development.

In support of this policy, the Government of Canada will strengthen the culture of consultation throughout the Public Service by ensuring that:

- consultation and citizen engagement strategies or initiatives form an integral part of business planning, resource allocation and management processes for the development, implementation and review of public policies, programs, services and initiatives;

- institutions allocate appropriate resources for effective and accountable management of the consultation and citizen engagement function;

- consultation and citizen engagement processes are well co-ordinated within, between and among institutions;

- institutions maintain their capacity to adjust and improve consultation and citizen engagement processes by evaluating performance and measuring results;

- institutions invest in training and development to increase the knowledge and skills of public service managers and employees in planning, conducting and managing consultation and citizen engagement processes; and

- ongoing research and development is undertaken to help inform policy reviews, to enhance policy development and to promote continuous learning in this area.

Application and Authority

This policy is issued under the authority of the *Financial Administration Act* (*FAA*), Section 7(1)(a), and applies to all institutions of the Government of Canada identified in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the *Act*. All other public institutions subject to the *FAA*, particularly those identified in Schedule III (Parts 1 and 2), are encouraged to become familiar with this policy and to apply its principles to their own management processes.

Policy Requirements

1. Planning and Management

In planning, organizing and implementing processes for consulting and engaging citizens, institutions must ensure that there is:

(a) commitment at all levels of the institution both to the process and to integrating consultation results into official recommendations or decisions;

(b) commitment to participate in good faith and to ensure that adequate resources and time are allocated to the process;

(c) understanding among all participants of the purpose and process;

(d) respect for the legitimacy and views of all participants;

(e) inclusiveness in the process so that it involves the broadest possible range of groups or individuals who may be affected by a government decision, or who can make a meaningful contribution to the discussion;

(f) accessibility to the process, regardless of a participant's official language, regional, ethno-cultural or socio-economic background, physical capabilities or literacy (see *Requirement 6* for policy direction on participant funding);

(g) transparency throughout the process based on open lines of communication and the provision of timely, accurate, clear and objective information (see *Requirement 9* for further direction on communications);

(h) active listening by officials to assure that the views of citizens are carefully considered in decision-making; and

(i) provision of feedback to participants that reports on the full range of views expressed and on how those views have been considered in the decision-making process – to reflect active listening and to ensure public accountability.

(See *Appendix A* for general guidelines on planning and implementing consultation and citizen engagement processes, including a manager's checklist.)

2. Integration

Institutions must ensure that processes for consulting and engaging citizens are incorporated into the design, management and evaluation of public policies, programs, services and initiatives.

Institutions must integrate consultation and citizen engagement planning and implementation into their management processes, including annual business planning and budgetary cycles.

3. Memoranda to Cabinet

Institutions must ensure that planned consultation and citizen engagement activities and associated resources are indicated in Memoranda to Cabinet, and that on issues for which they have been undertaken, the outcomes of these activities are described in the *Consultation Perspectives* section of the Ministerial Recommendations.

4. Co-ordination and Collaboration

Many policy or program issues have implications for more than one department or agency of the government. Therefore, consultation or citizen engagement processes often require institutions to co-ordinate their efforts, to avoid duplication and to work collaboratively on overlapping issues.

Institutions must contribute to the effective horizontal co-ordination of consultation and citizen engagement by:

(a) determining before initiating such processes the existence of any related past, current or planned processes and identifying possible areas for collaboration, with advice from the Privy Council Office;

(b) ensuring that all departments and agencies involved in a policy or program area are informed about planned initiatives, consulted on them and given the opportunity to participate in them;

(c) ensuring that public service managers and employees are consulted on issues and developments affecting the policies, programs, services and initiatives they help to administer; and

(d) participating in interdepartmental meetings and other activities intended to support horizontal co-ordination, such as government-wide databases and Web sites.

(See *Appendix B* for guidance on consultation and citizen engagement activities that have implications for, or may require involvement or co-ordination with, other levels of government.)

5. Regional Operations

Officials, including senior managers and staff, responsible for an institution's regional operations support consultation and citizen engagement initiatives locally. They facilitate liaison with regional contacts outside government, including representatives of the official language minority community, and with their provincial counterparts.

Regional officials must be informed of consultation or citizen engagement initiatives planned by their institution's headquarters that may involve participants from, or issues related to, the regions such officials represent. Similarly, regional officials must co-ordinate locally initiated consultation and citizen engagement activities with officials in their institution's head office.

6. Inclusiveness and Accessibility

Inclusiveness and accessibility to citizens of diverse backgrounds are key principles of this policy. Institutions must ensure support is available to groups and individuals whose input would be beneficial to policy formulation, or to program and service development, but who lack the resources to participate in a consultation or citizen engagement process.

While facilitating public participation in consultation and citizen engagement initiatives, institutions must be mindful of their responsibilities for the effective management of public funds. Discretion must be used when deciding whom to fund, what to fund, and how to provide support. (See *Appendix E*, which provides guidance to managers and financial officers on participant funding.)

7. Aboriginal Peoples

This policy also applies to the involvement of Aboriginal peoples in Government of Canada consultation and citizen engagement processes. The government and its institutions have legal obligations to consult on matters that may have an impact on Aboriginal or treaty rights, or that could infringe upon Aboriginal government jurisdiction. Institutions must take special measures to ensure Aboriginal peoples are consulted on such matters as well as on:

(a) the development of Aboriginal-specific policies, programs, services and initiatives; and

(b) the development of policies, programs, services or initiatives that are not specific to Aboriginal peoples but that may have a significant or unique impact on them.

For more specific guidance on consulting Aboriginal peoples, institutions may refer to the following publications available from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada: *Fiduciary Relationship of the Crown with Aboriginal Peoples – A Guide for Managers* (first published in 1995) and *Gathering Strength – Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan* (first published in 1998).

8. Official Languages

In all consultation and citizen engagement processes, institutions or third parties acting on their behalf must respect the equality of status of English and French as established by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, in the circumstances where the *Official Languages Act* and *Regulations* so prescribe. Equality of status includes the linguistic quality of the communication and simultaneous dissemination (publication, advertisements, Internet sites, etc.) in both official languages.

When consulting the public on any issue, or when inviting its participation, an institution must communicate in English or in French, according to the language preference of the target public, as stipulated in the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*. Also, if the consultation concerns questions that may affect the public or service to the public in both official languages, institutions must ensure that the official language minority community in the region affected is consulted as well.

Institutions must comply with the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program* concerning the visual presentation of the official languages in information or communication materials produced and disseminated for purposes of consultation or citizen engagement.

For further information about language requirements, institutions must consult the Treasury Board's *Official Language Policies* – particularly *Communications with the Public,* and *Using the Official Languages on Electronic Networks* – or the person responsible for official languages within their institution.

9. Communications and Corporate Identity

Open and responsive communications are integral to the success of consultation and citizen engagement processes. Communication plans and strategies must be prepared to support such processes.

Institutions must adhere to the requirements of the *Government Communications Policy* when undertaking a consultation or citizen engagement exercise. Communication or information materials prepared for consultative purposes must be well-identified as being from the Government of Canada, according to the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program*.

Institutions must inform the public about opportunities to participate in consultation and citizen engagement initiatives. This may be done through Web sites, letters of invitation, notices to the media, paid advertising, and other vehicles normally used by institutions to communicate with the public.

Institutions may also publish general notifications or open invitations in the *Canada Gazette*, which is the Government of Canada's official instrument for notifying Canadians of appointments, the legislative agenda and opportunities to participate in public consultations. Public Works and Government Services Canada provides a common service co-ordination role to government institutions required by statute to publish notices in the *Gazette*.

10. Internet and Online Consultation

The Internet, Web sites, email and other forms of electronic communication are important new tools for consultation and citizen engagement. They facilitate interactive communication and provide opportunities to consult and engage Canadians directly on a range of issues.

Institutions determine how and when online tools are used as part of a consultation or citizen engagement process (see *Appendix C* for guidance). Online tools normally complement more traditional means of consulting and engaging citizens.

Since it is critical that the views of citizens be reflected in policy, program and service development, institutions must address the needs of those who do not use or have access to new technology. Institutions must provide a range of opportunities for Canadians to participate in consultation and citizen engagement initiatives, both online and in more traditional ways.

Institutions must ensure that new technologies advance their ability to connect with Canadians in efficient and practical ways – fostering greater citizen engagement and dialogue in policy and program development and service delivery. Institutions must advance Government of Canada online initiatives aimed at improving service, connecting and interacting with citizens, expanding public access, and fostering dialogue with the public.

When conducting consultation or citizen engagement initiatives online – over the Internet by email or on Web sites – institutions must:

(a) comply with the Treasury Board's *Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines*;

(b) ensure that online information and services are well-identified as being from the Government of Canada according to the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program*;

(c) ensure all electronic consultations conform to the requirements of the *Official Languages Act and Regulations*, the *Privacy Act*, the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, and the *Access to Information Act*; and

(d) abide by the Treasury Board *Policy on the Use of Electronic Networks*, the *Policy on Using the Official Languages on Electronic Networks,* and the *Management of Information Technology Policy*.

11. Privacy and Information Management

Institutions must ensure that the privacy rights of individuals who participate in consultation and citizen engagement processes are respected at all times. An institution's access to information and privacy co-ordinator(s) provides advice in this regard.

Discussion papers, reports, documents and other materials in any form prepared for, or resulting from, a consultation or citizen engagement process must be securely maintained and properly archived as determined by law and government policy.

Institutions must ensure that:

(a) they abide by the requirements of the *Privacy Act*, the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* and the *Access to Information Act*;

(b) information records and institutional archives are maintained in compliance with the *National Archives Act*; and

(c) all requirements of the Treasury Board *Privacy and Data Protection Policy, Security Policy of the Government of Canada, Access to Information Policy*, and *Management of Government Information Holdings Policy* are met.

12. Risk Management

Institutions must identify and assess risks to policy and program administration, to public health and safety, and to the environment. Strategies for addressing and managing risk must be developed. Consultation and citizen engagement processes may be used to help identify and assess risk, and to ensure effective risk management.

Institutions must facilitate consultation and the interactive exchange of information on risk and risk-related factors among interested parties within and outside of their institution. Institutions must follow Treasury Board policy direction on risk management in the delivery of programs and services, and consult Treasury Board guidance on the subject, which includes the *Integrated Risk Management Framework*.

In risk management, consultation and citizen engagement processes are most appropriate when:

(a) identifying and assessing risks to programs or services that could have a broad or major impact on citizens;

(b) addressing issues that involve conflicts in values or require difficult choices or trade-offs;

(c) exploring potential or emerging risks that require considerable learning, both on the part of government and citizens; or

(d) working to build common ground by reconciling competing interests.

13. Contracting and Common Services

Institutions may use the services of facilitators, consultants, researchers, other professionals and external groups to help manage and facilitate consultation and citizen engagement initiatives. Institutions must comply with the requirements of the Treasury Board *Contracting Policy* in the procurement of such services.

In contracting the services of others to consult or engage the public on an institution's behalf, institutions must ensure that all official language requirements are met, as prescribed by the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*. Third parties acting on an institution's behalf must communicate with the public in both official languages in cases where the institution would be required to do so if it were holding the consultation itself.

Institutions also must abide by the Treasury Board *Common Services Policy* when undertaking public opinion research as part of any consultation or citizen engagement process. Like the *Government Communications Policy*, it requires institutions to co-ordinate the planning and contracting of public opinion research with Public Works and Government Services Canada and the Canada Information Office.

14. Relevant Policies and Legislation

Institutions must ensure that all relevant legislation and policies are adhered to in the planning, design and implementation of consultation and citizen engagement processes. Legislation and policies of particular importance to consultation and citizen engagement are listed in the *References* section of this policy.

15. Evaluation

The effectiveness and impact of consultation and citizen engagement activities must be assessed to ensure objectives are being met, to identify areas for improvement and to adjust processes if needed, based on evaluation findings.

Institutions determine the frequency and focus of evaluations. Consultation managers work collaboratively with their institution's evaluation specialists, as well as with outside experts, when identifying and planning evaluation requirements. Evaluations are usually carried out by experts in evaluation.

Normally, an evaluation is conducted and documented for every major consultation and citizen engagement initiative (i.e. those addressing a topic of significant public interest or which concern a priority matter to the government or institution).

Evaluations usually involve the participants of a consultation or citizen engagement exercise; evaluation reports are distributed to them.

Institutions must periodically evaluate the degree to which their management practices comply with the requirements of this policy. (See *Monitoring* section for additional policy direction, particularly concerning performance indicators and criteria for measuring success. See *Appendix D* for evaluation guidelines.)

Evaluation and internal audit reports that address, in whole or in part, consultation and citizen engagement must be forwarded to the Treasury Board Secretariat on request for monitoring purposes. This also helps to ensure that lessons learned are shared with other institutions and integrated into future initiatives and possible revisions of this policy.

Evaluations or internal audits related to consultation and citizen engagement must comply with the requirements of the Treasury Board *Internal Audit Policy* and *Evaluation Policy*.

16. Training and Professional Development

Supporting a consultative culture throughout the Public Service, and improving the overall effectiveness of consultation and citizen engagement processes, means building capacity in this area and ensuring ongoing integration of new information about emerging tools and techniques.

Institutions must develop and enhance the skills and capacity of managers and employees in consultation and citizen engagement by:

(a) identifying training needs and learning opportunities; and

(b) allocating resources for staff training and development.

Roles and Responsibilities

Building and sustaining a culture of consultation and citizen engagement throughout the Government of Canada is a shared responsibility involving a variety of individuals and organizations that have either a direct or facilitative role in supporting and implementing this policy.

1. Ministers

Ministers, often in consultation with other Members of Parliament, provide leadership by identifying priority issues for consultation and citizen engagement, directly participating in these processes, and considering their outcomes when making decisions. Together with their respective deputy heads, ministers determine the objectives and priorities of the consultation and citizen engagement processes of the institutions they head.

2. Treasury Board of Canada and Secretariat

The Treasury Board of Canada is the Cabinet committee responsible for approving and promulgating general administrative policy for the Government of Canada, in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act (FAA)*. Institutions subject to the *FAA* are responsible, and their deputy heads are accountable, for meeting the requirements of Treasury Board policies.

The Treasury Board Secretariat advises and supports the Board and its President in the development, implementation and management of administrative policy. The Secretariat has key responsibilities for the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy of the Government of Canada,* which include:

- advising institutions on policy interpretation and application;

- developing government-wide consultation and citizen engagement policy, including guidelines and procedures as required;

- assessing performance and results, and ensuring effective resource and expenditure management related to consultation and citizen engagement;

- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this policy and Cabinet direction on consultation and citizen engagement; and

- designating, in collaboration with the Privy Council Office, lead institutions to develop, for the approval of the Treasury Board as necessary, requirements, guidelines and procedures for consulting and engaging Canadians.

The Treasury Board Secretariat contributes to consultation and citizen engagement through its responsibility for public reporting on the results of government programs. Information in these reports enables citizens to evaluate existing policies, programs and services and to contribute to the discussion and development of new ones. The Secretariat also has key responsibilities for the *Government Communications Policy*, which complements and supports the government's commitment to consultation and citizen engagement.

3. Privy Council Office

The Privy Council Office has a central role in the management and co-ordination of government consultation and citizen engagement processes and for supporting a consultative culture throughout the Public Service of Canada. Specifically, it is responsible for:

– advising Cabinet on government consultation and citizen engagement plans and strategies;

– supporting and co-ordinating government-wide implementation of Cabinet decisions related to consultation or citizen engagement;

– co-ordinating and supporting the organization and implementation of horizontal or government-wide consultation and citizen engagement efforts by designating lead institutions and assigning special responsibilities as directed by Cabinet;

– advising institutions on processes for consulting and engaging citizens, including Aboriginal peoples and their representative organizations, in the development, management and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives;

– advising institutions on consultation and citizen engagement initiatives involving federal, provincial or territorial governments, notably in the context of the *Social Union Framework Agreement;*

– facilitating the exchange of information among institutions concerning consultation and citizen engagement processes and results;

– helping to identify and promote best practices, and contributing to the development of the government's capacity in this area;

– co-ordinating research, collecting and analyzing information on consultation and citizen engagement activities throughout government in order to advise the Prime Minister, ministers and institutions on the management of public issues; and

– providing, in collaboration with the Treasury Board Secretariat, government-wide leadership for the ongoing development of a consultative culture throughout the Public Service of Canada.

4. Deputy Heads

For the purpose of this policy, deputy heads include all deputy ministers appointed to the government departments listed in Schedule I, and the appointed heads of all institutions listed in Schedules I.1 and II, of the *Financial Administration Act*.

Deputy heads are responsible for advising ministers on when to consult or engage citizens, and for ensuring that consultation and citizen engagement processes are an integral part of the design, delivery and evaluation of the policies, programs, services and initiatives of the institutions they lead. They are accountable for the effective implementation of these processes, and the promotion of a consultative culture, within their institutions.

Deputy heads:

– establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability within their institutions for managing consultation and citizen engagement processes;

– integrate consultation and citizen engagement into their institution's management processes, including business planning and budgetary cycles;

– ensure that internal consultations form an integral part of decision-making processes for policy development, program design and service delivery;

– ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for consulting and engaging Canadians in the development, management and evaluation of public policies, programs, services and initiatives;

– ensure that managers and employees have opportunities to receive training in consultation and citizen engagement so they may carry out their responsibilities effectively under this policy;

– ensure their institution works closely with other institutions to co-ordinate consultation and citizen engagement on issues of mutual concern and interest;

– ensure that the outcomes of public involvement processes are carefully considered and reflected in policy formulation and in the development of programs, services and initiatives; and

– ensure that major consultation and citizen engagement initiatives undertaken by their institutions are evaluated, and that evaluation reports are shared with the Treasury Board Secretariat and other Government of Canada institutions on request.

5. Officials

Institutional officials, including senior managers and staff responsible for policies, programs, services and initiatives, have key responsibilities for planning, conducting and evaluating consultation and citizen engagement initiatives. They are responsible for supporting and contributing to the effective co-ordination of consultation and citizen engagement, both within and across institutions.

While institutions may use external groups or consultants to help manage and facilitate consultation and citizen engagement processes, the direct participation of officials fosters public confidence in 'assured listening' by decision-makers.

Officials responsible for an institution's regional operations support consultation and citizen engagement initiatives locally, as well as facilitate liaison with regional contacts outside the government and with their provincial counterparts.

Communications staff, including the head of communications, support and advise officials on all communication matters related to consultations and citizen engagement. They are responsible for the preparation of communication plans and strategies for consultation or citizen engagement initiatives.

An institution's evaluation specialists advise on relevant tools and strategies for measuring performance, and help to assess the results and effectiveness of consultation and citizen engagement processes. Specialists in information technology provide advice and support for online consultations. Access to information and privacy co-ordinators advise managers and employees on privacy and access issues; while specialists in the official languages provide advice and guidance on all matters related to the official languages or languages to be used in consultation and citizen engagement processes.

6. Public Service Commission

The Public Service Commission of Canada is responsible for the development and application of standards for the recruitment, selection and evaluation of qualified personnel to meet the requirements of the consultation and citizen engagement function. It advises institutions on the identification and assessment of employment qualifications to ensure that competent staff are hired and promoted at all levels of the Public Service of Canada, including the executive group. The Commission also offers training and development courses in consultation and citizen engagement for Public Service employees at all levels.

7. Canadian Centre for Management Development

The Canadian Centre for Management Development is responsible for assessing required core competencies and offering learning opportunities for institutions to build knowledge and capacity in consultation and citizen engagement principles, processes and tools.

Monitoring

The Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) works with institutions to promote adherence to this policy. TBS will monitor the policy's implementation throughout the Government of Canada. In doing so, it will take direction from the Treasury Board *Policy on Active Monitoring,* to which institutions also must adhere.

Evaluations will be conducted by TBS to assess the effectiveness of institutions in adhering to the policy and to assess the effectiveness of the policy in assisting institutions to meet its objectives. Evaluation findings will contribute to a formal review of this policy to take place within five years of its effective date.

Institutions periodically, or at least every three years, must evaluate the degree to which their management practises comply with the requirements of this policy (*per Requirement 12*). Evaluations of the consultation and citizen engagement processes managed by institutions will provide valuable input to the development of best practices in this area. Evaluation reports must be submitted to the Treasury Board Secretariat on request.

The following outcomes, measured by the indicators described below, will be monitored and evaluated to help determine the effectiveness of this policy and to identify opportunities for improvement:

- Increased involvement of citizens in the development of policies, programs, services and initiatives, to be measured by the frequency and scope of consultation and citizen engagement activities undertaken by institutions from year to year, the number of citizens involved, and the range of traditional and electronic mechanisms used.

- Increased inclusion in consultation and citizen engagement processes, to be measured by the diversity of representation in these processes, and the degree to which participants are satisfied with the outcome of their involvement.

- An enhanced consultative culture within institutions, to be measured by clear lines of responsibility for public consultation and citizen engagement functions, the resources allocated to consultation and citizen engagement functions, the number of staff trained in these processes, and the number of staff whose performance appraisals include involvement in consultation and engagement activities.

- Better integration of the results of consultation and citizen engagement processes in policy-making, program development and service delivery, to be measured through the feedback provided to participants in these processes and direct references to the outcomes of consultation processes in Memoranda to Cabinet and in announcements of government policies, programs, services and initiatives.

- Better informed decision-making and more responsive policies, programs, services and initiatives, to be measured through the formal evaluation of the impact of consultation and citizen engagement processes.

Guidelines

Guidelines to assist institutions in applying this policy and in adopting best practices in consultation and citizen engagement are appended. Institutions must familiarize themselves with these guidelines – see Appendix A, B, C, D and E.

References

1. Legislation

This policy must be read and applied in accordance with the laws of Canada. Legislation of particular importance to consultation and citizen engagement includes the:

Access to Information Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
Copyright Act
Financial Administration Act
National Archives Act
Official Languages Act and Regulations
Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act
Privacy Act

2. Related Policies

This policy must be read and applied in conjunction with the following administrative policies of the Government of Canada issued by the Treasury Board:

Access to Information Policy
Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines
Common Services Policy
Government Communications Policy
Contracting Policy
Evaluation Policy
Federal Identity Program
Internal Audit Policy
Management of Government Information Holdings Policy
Management of Information Technology Policy
Official Languages Policies
Policy on Active Monitoring
Policy on the Use of Electronic Networks
Policy on Using the Official Languages on Electronic Networks
Privacy and Data Protection Policy
Security Policy of the Government of Canada

Enquiries

Questions about this policy must be directed to an institution's deputy head or to a responsible manager designated by the deputy head. Deputy heads or their designated manager(s) may contact the Treasury Board Secretariat concerning application and interpretation of this policy.

Appendix A: Consultation and Citizen Engagement Guidelines and Checklist

The following guidelines provide an *overview* of practical advice on the planning and implementation of consultation and citizen engagement processes, organized according to five stages: preparation, design, implementation, feedback and follow-up, and final evaluation and integration. A one-page checklist at the end of this section summarizes the guidelines in an easy reference format.

STAGE 1: PREPARATION

- ***Assess the internal and external environments.*** Before deciding whether and how to engage the public in a particular issue, assess both the internal and external environments. For example, within the Government, what degree of commitment exists to address the issue? How do other government initiatives impact on the issue? What are the implications of *not* involving the public? Examine these opportunities and challenges realistically to help determine whether and how to proceed.

  Likewise, a review of the external environment – including public opinion, popular interest, recent trends, media coverage, related activity in other sectors, the positions and relationships of key players and other governments – will help to map a strategy that builds on the existing environment. Use environmental analysis to identify opportunities and channels for encouraging greater public awareness and engagement in the process.

- ***Confer with senior officials and ministers*** (and their offices) during the early planning stages, as ministerial commitment to the objectives and parameters of a consultation or engagement initiative is critical to the credibility of the process.

- ***Develop clear objectives and desired outcomes***, preferably in collaboration with participants.

- ***Develop an evaluation plan to assess progress at critical points in the process.*** At the beginning of the process, establish performance indicators for evaluating the success of the consultation or engagement *process,* as well as the *outcome.* Involve participants in developing potential indicators of success and in the assessment itself to significantly enhance the credibility of the process. Assess, on an ongoing basis, the success of completed efforts, and make adaptations where required. (For more detailed guidance, see *Appendix D: Evaluation Guidelines and Checklist for Consultation and Citizen Engagement Processes*.)

- ***Identify other relevant processes and co-ordinate*** where possible. Determine whether there are recent or planned processes in related issue areas, including those sponsored by other governments (see *Appendix B* for guidance on activities with intergovernmental considerations). Assess whether the other exercises affect the need for further input on the issue, or whether the focus of the new activity should be refined. Inform those responsible that other related work has been undertaken, and identify potential issues and "best practices."

Where relevant, co-ordinate the planning and implementation of new consultation activities with other departments and agencies and share results on cross-cutting issues.

STAGE 2: DESIGN

- ***Ensure inclusive and representative participation.*** Actively seek the involvement of all parties directly affected by the issue, consciously moving beyond those usually consulted to ensure a credible process and to bring new perspectives to the discussion. Take care to ensure that the views of all regions are appropriately taken into account, and that regional and rural representatives are involved in discussions of national issues.

- ***Engage participants early in the process.*** Provide meaningful opportunities for Canadians to influence decisions, rather than simply validate decisions already made. To the extent possible, involve participants in shaping or, at the very least, reviewing the process and parameters of the issue as early as possible.

- ***Allow adequate time for meaningful participation.*** The amount of time allotted to a process should depend on the complexity of the issue and the nature of the process. Allow sufficient time for groups and individuals to become informed, examine issues, debate/dialogue, consult within their organizations and develop a considered response to a document or proposal. Build flexibility into the schedule, allowing time for unexpected requirements or events.

- ***Tailor the process to the context.*** The choice of approach, tools, participants and resources depends on the context. Important considerations include:

  – Should a consultation process be used, or is a more deliberative citizen engagement process called for? A more deliberative process should be considered in the formative stages of policy, program or service development, as well as when:

    – a deeper understanding of underlying or changing values is needed, or the identification of common ground is an objective;
    – the government needs to better understand citizen concerns and opinions;
    – the government needs citizen commitment to address a complex challenge (such as climate change);
    – an issue is sufficiently controversial that its true dimensions need to be better understood (such as genetically modified food);
    – potential trade-offs need to be explored (between environmental and economic considerations, for example);
    – a minister or the government has not yet taken a firm position on the matter and open discussion of options is desired.

  – Is the issue to be addressed local, regional, national or international in scope?

- Does it have implications for a specific sector (youth, for example) or for the population as a whole?

- Are there established stakeholder or voluntary organizations that represent and articulate the interests of affected or interested constituencies?

- Is a significant level of learning on the part of the public and/or the government required for informed discussion to take place?

- At what stage is the policy, program, service or initiative? (For example, in early development, discussion of specific options, or evaluation and review?)

- What is the level of computer access and literacy of the participants? Would an Internet-based consultation be appropriate as a primary approach or as one of a number of options? (See *Appendix C: Guidelines and Checklist for Online Consultation and Engagement* for more detailed guidance.)

- Given the nature of the issue and in-house capacity, would the process be more effectively managed internally or outside the government (for example, by a neutral third party)?

* ***Consider using a variety of public involvement techniques.*** Especially where the issues at stake are complex, multi-faceted or national in scope, consider using a variety of public involvement techniques. For instance, where broad input on an issue of national significance is required, consultation approaches may include an advisory group of technical experts, face-to-face dialogue sessions with citizens, written comments via tools such as workbooks and Internet-based discussion. Likewise, different approaches may be used at different stages of the process.

* ***Develop accessible information.*** Access to timely, accurate and objective information is a prerequisite to effective consultation and engagement. Consider a range of information tools, tailored to the needs of participants. In all cases, use clear language that is factual and sensitive to the information requirements of participants. Where feasible, focus-test background information and other materials to ensure they are neutral and user-friendly. Present several perspectives on the issue(s) to encourage discussion of the values and trade-offs inherent in the issue(s).

* ***Distribute consultation materials well in advance.*** Participants should receive consultation materials, including contact names and numbers for those seeking information or clarification, well before any meetings or processes take place so that they have time to familiarize themselves with the issues at hand.

* ***Specify feedback processes and mechanisms.*** From the very beginning, specify clearly how participants' views will be considered, by whom and when they can expect feedback.

* ***Maintain a tracking document of participant input*** on key issues at specific stages

of the process as the basis of a consultation report to be distributed to participants, reflecting how their views have been documented and considered.

- ***Respect both official languages.*** Respect the equality of the two official languages as established by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act*, particularly regarding the availability and quality of consultation tools and materials in both English and French.

- ***Reach out to a diverse audience.*** Make special efforts to communicate with persons who are visually or hearing impaired and with members of ethno-cultural and Aboriginal communities.

- ***Ensure that adequate resources are available.*** Carefully plan and allocate financial and human resources. Budgets should correspond to the significance of the issue and to the expectations of potential participants. Keep in mind:

  – the need to prepare information in accessible formats, including discussion documents and other background materials;

  – the need to engage contractors for the preparation and translation of written materials, facilitation, interpretation, data analysis and evaluation of both traditional and online processes;

  – participant funding costs, where these will be provided (see *Appendix E: Participant Funding Guidelines* for more detailed guidance);

  – the cost of notifying potential participants or the public of upcoming events;

  – honoraria, expenses or professional fees for consultants, facilitators, panel members or organizers; and

  – accessible facilities, equipment rental and transportation costs.

- ***Communicate the stages and outcome of the process.*** Work with communications professionals to develop a communications strategy and materials which clearly link the consultation process to any decisions that are made. Ensure that materials are neutral and support informed discussion. Engage the media to support a process of informed dialogue, focussing on areas of common ground, rather than conflict or controversy.

STAGE 3: IMPLEMENTATION

- ***Implement the process*** based on the work done in the preparation and design stages. Refer back to the objectives and desired outcomes to ensure the process is on track, and adapt if required.

- ***Participant funding.*** Consider providing resources to groups and individuals to enable their participation, particularly if they might otherwise be under-represented, e.g., women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, youth and others. (See *Appendix E: Participant Funding Guidelines* for more detailed guidance.)

- ***Clarify roles, timeframe and time commitment.*** Be clear with participants about their role, and the time frame for public involvement and the decision-making process, from the outset. Provide a realistic estimate of the time participants will be asked to contribute during the process and be sensitive to the availability of some participants during certain times of the year or day.

  Whenever possible, share the consultation or engagement time frame with senior officials and the responsible Minister(s) to ensure their availability for participation in the process, where relevant, and to co-ordinate with other departmental initiatives.

STAGE 4: FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW UP

- ***Give feedback in at least three areas***: what was heard (for example, providing meeting notes); what was done with what was heard (for example, sharing recommendations); and what decisions were made and why.

- ***Distribute the consultation report to participants***, reflecting how their views have been documented and considered.

- ***Follow up.*** Send timely thank you letters and copies of final consultation reports as an important sign of respect and accountability. Post final consultation reports and other consultation documentation on the appropriate Web site(s). Inform government partners (and others, as appropriate) about the results of the consultation or engagement process and next steps.

STAGE 5: FINAL EVALUATION AND INTEGRATION

- ***Evaluate the process on an ongoing basis.*** Evaluate both the consultation *process* and *outcomes* based on the criteria and performance indicators established during the preparation stage. Note adaptations that were made or could be made in future processes. (See *Appendix D: Evaluation Guidelines and Checklist for Consultation and Citizen Engagement Processes* for more detailed guidance.)

- ***Involve participants in the evaluation and assessment stage***, to benefit from their perspectives and to enhance the credibility of the process. If the evaluation is being conducted at the end of a particular event or stage of an ongoing process, encourage participants to suggest next steps in the process and/or areas where they would like to see change. Distribute evaluation results broadly as a basis for continuous learning.

- ***Document lessons and best practices.*** Document lessons learned from consultation and evaluation processes to preserve this knowledge and to share it within institutions and across the government. Ensure that current and future processes are informed by past experience through roundtable seminars, case studies, and articles in newsletters, among other means.

Consultation and Citizen Engagement Checklist

STAGE 1: PREPARATION
✓ Assess internal and external environments. ✓ Confer with senior officials and minister(s). ✓ Develop clear objectives and desired outcomes. ✓ Establish evaluation plan with performance indicators for assessing processes and outcomes. ✓ Co-ordinate activities and collaborate with other public institutions.
STAGE 2: DESIGN
✓ Identify an appropriate mix of participants. ✓ Involve participants in shaping the process and framing the issues. ✓ Allow enough time for meaningful participation. ✓ Choose an approach, tools and resources that are appropriate to the issue and context. ✓ Use a variety of public involvement techniques. ✓ Ensure materials are neutral, user-friendly and distributed well in advance. ✓ Respect the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act*. ✓ Ensure that adequate human and financial resources are available. ✓ Specify feedback processes and mechanisms clearly, including the timing of any feedback. ✓ Maintain a tracking document of participant input as the basis of a consultation report. ✓ Develop a communications strategy that clearly links the process to decisions.
STAGE 3: IMPLEMENTATION
✓ Implement the process based on the work done in the preparation and design stages. ✓ Refer back to the objectives and desired outcomes to ensure the process is on track. ✓ Make adjustments to the process as required, in keeping with objectives and desired outcomes. ✓ Consider providing resources to groups and individuals to enable their participation. ✓ Be clear with participants about their role and how their input will be used.
STAGE 4: FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW UP
✓ Give feedback on what was heard, how that input was used and the impact of the input. ✓ Send timely letters of thanks and copies of final consultation reports to all participants. ✓ Post final consultation reports and other relevant documents on the appropriate Web site(s). ✓ Brief federal partners (and others) about the results and next steps. ✓ Provide participants with information about next steps, if appropriate.
STAGE 5: FINAL EVALUATION AND INTEGRATION
✓ Evaluate the process and the outcome, using the established performance indicators. ✓ Involve participants in the evaluation and assessment stage. ✓ Document and share lessons from the consultation and evaluation processes.

Appendix B: Guidelines for Consultation and Citizen Engagement Activities with Intergovernmental Considerations

Intergovernmental processes address a wide range of important public policy issues. The dynamics of negotiation and compromise among first ministers, ministers and senior government officials mean that broadening public involvement presents particular challenges.

The 1999 *Social Union Framework Agreement* (SUFA) commits governments to public involvement in the social policy field, notably by building mechanisms for Canadians "to participate in developing social priorities and reviewing outcomes." It also commits governments to "work with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada to find practical solutions to address their pressing needs."

SUFA applies to health and health care, social services and social assistance, post-secondary education, training and labour market development. For these areas, and others involving significant intergovernmental considerations, officials should follow the guidelines below.

Jointly sponsored and parallel consultation or citizen engagement initiatives

Consultation and citizen engagement activities that involve federal, provincial and territorial governments may take several forms. These include jointly sponsored initiatives (with or without opportunities for governments to launch additional activities) and separate but parallel activities based on agreed frameworks or principles. Collaboration is not only required in setting objectives at the outset, but also for a variety of other activities. In light of this, officials, in consultation with their counterparts in other governments as appropriate, should:

- define secretariat roles and responsibilities, funding or cost-sharing criteria and decision approval processes;
- agree on target groups, selection of participants and location of activities;
- take into account any jurisdiction's legislative requirements that prescribe particular processes, time lines or rules for intervenor funding;
- allow sufficient flexibility to respond to political direction, both from individual governments and joint bodies (for example, ministerial councils);
- agree on the content of public documents and the timing of their release; and
- consider how the respective jurisdictions will respond to media inquiries or comment on the process, options being considered and outcomes.

Consultation and engagement initiatives sponsored by the Government of Canada

When the Government of Canada sponsors, on its own, consultation and citizen engagement activities in policy fields that fall under SUFA or have significant intergovernmental dimensions, officials should take into account other governments' recent, ongoing or planned activities in the policy field. In addition, it will often be beneficial to have open communications with provincial and/or territorial officials.

Accordingly, officials should:

- inform other governments of the consultation plans of the Government of Canada before public involvement activities are launched in areas covered by SUFA;
- offer opportunities to comment on the proposed Government of Canada process and to co-ordinate with the activities of other governments;
- consider inviting provincial and/or territorial officials as participants or observers throughout the consultation or engagement process, or at particular events that are part of the exercise;
- share research findings, reports and other documents that may assist other governments in their own consideration of the issue(s);
- exchange summaries and reports of views expressed and observations about the process; and
- share lessons and assessments of consultation and engagement exercises to encourage ongoing improvement of such processes.

Appendix C: Guidelines and Checklist for Online Consultation and Citizen Engagement

Given the rapid evolution of technology and continuing changes in the online government environment, the guidelines in this Appendix of the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy of the Government of Canada* are to be viewed as a work-in-progress.

Their purpose is to support public service managers in the use of new information technologies for consulting and engaging Canadians. Intended primarily for policy, program and service managers – though they also apply to managers of information technology – the guidelines are organized in four parts:

1. The first section outlines operating principles and key considerations for the planning and implementation of online consultation and citizen engagement processes.

2. Section two describes the five stages of an online consultation or citizen engagement process and provides an easy reference checklist that summarizes the critical tasks for each stage. (Note: This section is to be read in conjunction with the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Guidelines and Checklist* provided in *Appendix A* of this policy.)

3. Section three, an assessment of online tools and their application, provides guidance on selecting the right technology to address specific online consultation or engagement objectives.

4. The fourth section provides an overview of legislation and Government of Canada policies and guidelines related to online activities. Examples of online consultation and citizen engagement practices from Canada and abroad, as well as other reference materials, complete this section.

The guidelines reflect the growing impact of new information technologies on the relationship between government and citizens, particularly in the involvement of citizens and stakeholder organizations in the development of public policies, programs, services and initiatives. New information technologies will continue to influence the nature of government-citizen relations. And while they hold much promise, such technologies should be viewed as *enablers,* not as substitutes for good governance.

Electronic consultation and engagement tools are still in the early developmental stages within the Government of Canada and thus are generally considered a *complement* to other more traditional and ‘offline’ approaches. The guidelines that follow are meant to encourage and support further development and activity in this area – to help build knowledge and capacity throughout the Public Service.

1. Operating Principles and Key Considerations

Online consultation – for the purpose of these guidelines – refers to a process by which the government creates opportunities for citizens to provide feedback and input on a particular issue, using the Internet. Inviting public input using an online form, responding to questions in an online poll, or submitting questions or concerns via email are examples of online consultation.

Online engagement refers to a process by which the government provides opportunities for citizens to engage in an interactive *dialogue* on a particular policy or issue. Unlike the one-way direction of feedback in online consultations, online citizen engagement provides opportunities for the public, or selected representatives from particular interests or communities, to join a dialogue, share ideas, collaborate on projects and build relationships through electronic communication. Online engagement exercises utilize Internet-based discussion tools, including Email Lists, Live Chat, Bulletin Boards, Web Forums and/or Group Collaboration applications. A more detailed description of these tools is included in Section 3.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for online consultations are similar to those for all consultation and engagement processes, as outlined in Appendix A of the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy of the Government of Canada*. Whatever the forum, successful government consultations are built on commitment, clarity, transparency, inclusiveness, accessibility, mutual respect, responsibility and accountability. The following principles apply more specifically to the online environment:

- **Transparency.** As online venues lack the verbal and visual cues necessary for building trust, additional sensitivity and clarity are required in terms of the degree to which activities are open and how the content will be used.

- **Inclusiveness.** The Internet extends the ability to include the broadest possible range of citizens to participate on their own time, at their own discretion and in the official language they prefer.

- **Responsiveness.** Acknowledge and respond to postings or queries in discussion areas or upon submission of a survey, email or form in a timely way. Discretion should guide the use of auto-response tools given the large volume of messages they can generate. No direct question or request should be left unattended even if the response is merely an acknowledgement. Generally accepted timeframes are four (4) hours for an acknowledgement and twenty-four (24) hours for a response.

- **Simplicity.** Whenever possible, err on the side of simplicity in planning online communities or engagement venues. Test user interfaces for intuitive language and navigation.

- **Value the distributed nature of the Internet.** Where multiple parties are involved, work with the distributed nature of the Internet to share involvement and openly demonstrate partnerships. Following this principle should also support accessibility.

- **Innovate only when the time frame permits.** Limit exposure of participants to the first-time use of a tool, particularly if it has not been tested to meet user-friendly standards. Consider using a new tool only when there is time to test the application with a group that is willing to provide feedback on problems and areas for improvement, and you are prepared to act on the feedback.

- **Build on success and learning.** Share best practices and lessons learned. Commit to a common means of sharing customization work, tools of choice and related support documents.

Choosing and customizing the right tools, sharing the right information

The majority of individual Internet users across Canada currently access the World Wide Web with low-speed access and/or older computers. In this context, unless a consultation is specifically targeted to a technologically advanced audience, online tools should be designed for the ‘lowest common denominator.’

Online workspaces need to function in a way that is familiar or straightforward to users. In general, the tool should be designed using simple language, allowing users to work in either official language, providing shortcuts for experienced users and detailed help for inexperienced ones, and having a clear and convenient navigation system.

A good discussion tool should, at minimum, include functions that allow users to:

- post links to other Web sites,
- post a follow-up message,
- follow a discussion thread, and
- attach a document in a universally acceptable format.

Section 3 below provides more detailed information on assessing and selecting online tools.

Reliability of the technical infrastructure

Both the online tool and the technical infrastructure that supports it should be tested, since both are key to successful online engagement. Seamless upgrades and 24-hour, seven-day-a-week reliability should be the goal. Technical staff should be informed of established best practices. Protocols for system upgrades and problem notifications should also be discussed and established in advance. (Section 3 outlines some of the key considerations to bear in mind when assessing technology and software needs.)

Translation and interpretation

Under the requirements of the *Official Languages Act,* information posted on Government of Canada Internet sites (including responses to questions raised during online consultations) must appear in both official languages. Likewise, all messages of an official nature, or which are system-generated as help or text-based error messages, must meet the criteria of the *Official Languages Act*. Exceptions are numeric error messages generated by software.

The decision to translate incoming information from the public is at the discretion of the manager, as long as the approach selected is clearly documented. For example, the "incoming comments" page could include the following instructions to participants: "*You are encouraged to provide comments in the language of your choice.*" It might also include a disclaimer, such as: "*These comments are provided in the language of choice of each participant and their content solely represents the participant's point of view.*"

Refer to the Treasury Board *Policy on the Use of Official Languages on Electronic Networks,* as well as the *Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines* and the *Copyright Act* for additional guidance in this area. (See Section 4 for references.)

Planning and resource implications

Similar to offline efforts, online consultation and engagement processes require planning, management and the allocation of adequate human and financial resources. The following should be taken into account:

Human Resources: Above all, online consultations require staff time. Having a dedicated person or multidisciplinary team responsible for an online consultation is critical to its success. The following should be considered when dedicating human resources to an online process:

- ***Staff Capacity:*** The skills required to manage a good online consultation include: content expertise, consultation and citizen engagement process expertise, information technology expertise, project management skills, and online facilitation skills. Where technical limitations exist or there is a lack of familiarity with online communication, staff should be trained in making the transition to working online and to communicating in a text-based capacity.

- ***Online Facilitation:*** Certain skills are specific to the online environment, and whether the consultation is interactive, discussion-based or one-way polling, a key competency is online facilitation. Online facilitation involves attending to the social processes impacting participants, both internally and in the public environment.

  Unlike more traditional or face-to-face facilitation, the online facilitator deals with an added dimension – the unique qualities of Internet communication, which lacks the traditional visual cues for facilitators. Online facilitators are trained to test silence, respond to disruptive behaviour, and clarify unintended typing errors or other problems related to online dialogue.

  Just as for offline consultations, it is generally recommended that the online facilitation role be contracted to a neutral third party.

Financial Resources: While it is obvious that software, installation and hosting costs will vary, it is worthwhile to briefly outline the areas in which financial resources will need to be allocated to ensure a successful online consultation. These areas include:

- ***Staffing:*** At least one full-time senior level staff person directly involved in the issues being discussed and with experience in offline consultation processes should be assigned to manage, monitor and provide the content for online consultation and engagement processes. Also, assigning a bilingual resource could reduce translation costs.

- ***Online Facilitation:*** As previously mentioned, contracting the online facilitation role to an experienced, neutral third party is highly recommended.

- ***Outreach:*** An appropriate outreach strategy (including direct mail invitation, telephone outreach, press releases, email notification and targeted community-based media advertising) should be implemented before and throughout the project life cycle to encourage citizens to participate.

- ***Technical Web Design and HTML Content:*** To be responsive to participants' needs and to create an informed and productive dialogue, the Web site that hosts the online consultation should be updated regularly and contain dynamic and relevant content. Facilitators should be able to rely on the services of qualified Web developers to publish content as needed on an ongoing basis.

Time frames and implications for planning

While Internet technology can increase the speed of work, and reduce costs, it does not necessarily reduce the amount of planning and effort required to ensure success. Throughout all stages of the process, realistic activities with clear timeframes and budgets contribute to the quality of the exercise and the contributions received.

Planning cycles can be **short** (a matter of a few weeks or months), **medium** (a period of 6-12 months) or **long** (a year or more) and will vary according to the issue and context. Translation needs can also affect timing. As experience and expertise is gained online, the time required for planning and tool selection should be substantially reduced. However, the time needed to realistically engage and support participants can be more significant than in some offline processes, such as roundtables or focus groups.

Managers responsible for conducting online consultations should consider adjusting their staffing and resource allocation to accommodate the posted hours of operation of the online consultation. In some cases, this could mean 24 hours a day, seven days a week, given the nature of Internet communication. When appropriate, online facilitators should have remote access to the discussion area in the evening and on weekends, in order to edit, delete or respond to postings.

Security, Privacy and Authentication

Online consultations present specific challenges with respect to security, privacy and authentication. In an informal online chat or Web-based discussion, for example, interested participants can post information or opinions with relative anonymity. In smaller, member-based online forums, access can be managed, which can help to allay concerns about the authenticity of the participants or about who's listening online.

Consultations conducted on departmental Web sites need to create an online environment that is consistent, secure and comfortable for participants. Creating these conditions involves addressing a series of key challenges in the planning and launch of the online consultation such as:

- **Rules of Conduct or Acceptable Use Policy** for the online space. The purpose of the consultation, who has been invited, what constitutes unacceptable or inflammatory postings, and how facilitators will deal with problematic content should be specified.

- **Authenticity.** A registration and confirmation process for participants' contact information should be devised to encourage authenticity and to facilitate the exclusion of users who have violated the posted rules of conduct of the online space.

- **Participation of ministers and senior officials.** In the event that an elected official or sponsoring Minister of an online consultation posts information or makes themselves available online to respond to citizen questions, clear protocols for authentication and security measures to edit or delete content should be posted, distributed and enforced in a timely and consistent manner.

Managing the Volume of Input

Generally speaking, the *real* work of online consultation is not in controlling or limiting the number of responses, but in enabling, promoting and responding to the relatively limited, but growing number of Canadians willing to share their concerns online. Volume can be managed with some use of automated responses as an initial acknowledgement. If an issue is anticipated to solicit a very high volume of response, additional staff should be available to review, analyze and respond to enquiries. In addition, qualified technical staff should review the online tools to ensure that they are "scaleable" and can be enhanced quickly to accommodate increased demand and expectations, as needed.

Relevant Policies, Legislation and Guidelines

A number of policies, legislation and guidelines are relevant to the Government of Canada's use of online consultation and engagement tools. While some of these have direct application to the online environment (e.g. *Common Look and Feel for the Internet* and *Policy on the Use of Official Languages on Electronic Networks*) others are more generic to all forms of public interaction (e.g. *Access to Information Act, Official Languages Act,* and *Government Communications Policy*). A brief description of the various laws, policies and guidelines that apply to online activities is provided in Section 4 of this Appendix.

2. Stages of an Online Consultation or Engagement Process

The process of undertaking a consultation or citizen engagement activity online follows the same five stages outlined in *Appendix A* of the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy of the Government of Canada*. These include preparation, design, implementation, feedback and follow-up, and final evaluation and integration.

The guidelines presented here are to be used in conjunction with the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Guidelines and Checklist* provided in *Appendix A*. The following complements, and does not replace, those guidelines.

The online effort, whether used to complement an offline consultation or carried out exclusively, requires additional planning. The activities involved in undertaking an online consultation or engagement process are described in detail below and are summarized in a checklist at the end of this section.

STAGE ONE: PREPARATION

- ***Assess the state of readiness to engage or consult online.*** Determine whether the department or program area has the infrastructure and technical capacity to use the Internet as a platform for public consultation or engagement. For instance, find out if there have been previous effective experiences in this area, whether there are staff familiar with managing an Internet-based project, or what the current practice is for contracting these aspects of the planned activity.

- ***Determine human resource requirements. Establish a team with clear roles.*** Determine requirements for internal staff, external consultants or a combined team approach to support the effort. Identify any training or other support the staff or team will require to carry out the consultation successfully. Establish clear roles and responsibilities for all team members.

- ***Establish performance indicators and criteria for success.*** Similar to offline consultation or engagement processes, start with objectives that are clear and easily measurable. Identify performance indicators that will assist the staff to measure efficiency, effectiveness and impact. Criteria for success in online venues should cover technical, staffing and resource elements. Seek agreement early as to the details of each of these so they can be reviewed and modified over time.

- ***Consider use of online participant feedback forms*** to capture qualitative input on the effort.

- ***Document process lessons*** as you go to share with colleagues as needed.

STAGE TWO: DESIGN

- ***Identify participants.*** Participation in online venues can range from authenticated secure invitees to broader open public input via a public Web-based form. In every instance, planning should reflect the context of each consultation or engagement activity. To identify participants, consider the scope and expected impact of the planned activity.

- ***Participation by invitation.*** When inviting representative groups to participate in an online consultation (e.g. an advisory committee), the use of passwords and other authentication tools can help to ensure reliability, i.e., that information received was provided by bona fide invitees.

- ***Open participation*** (as appropriate). Those planning public engagement or consultation activities of interest to specific population groups (e.g. seniors, women or youth) or communities of interest (e.g. environment, the arts, science and academia) may issue open invitations to participate through existing online venues. Planning the outreach and invitation process and strategically placing announcements and invitations over a lead-in period can be an effective way of attracting participants. In general, the broader the activity, the greater the participation will be.

- ***Fit the tool to the activity.*** The consultation or engagement tool chosen should reflect the objectives and desired results of the process, as well as the needs and preferences of those being consulted or engaged. (Refer to the online application tables in Section 3 for more on choosing the appropriate tool.)

- ***Customize when necessary.*** A dialogue-based engagement activity may require the customization of a Web-based discussion tool and the creation of an online area for sharing supporting documents or background research. (Again, tool choice is discussed in Section 3.)

- ***Test carefully.*** Test the tools and supporting technical infrastructure carefully for bugs or small setting changes that could affect the process. Ensure that project team members are familiar with the tools and their features prior to launch day.

- ***Identify all content and postings needed for launch in both official languages.*** Ensure that official language requirements are met in full.

- ***Prepare participant guidelines and support materials.*** To assist participants in feeling comfortable using the tools chosen, whether they involve completing a survey form or entering a discussion, clear support materials and guidelines for participation are key. Support materials should detail:

  - timeframes,
  - expectations and pace of work,
  - disclaimers,
  - roles and responsibilities, and
  - rules for discussion-based participation.

- ***Take account of special considerations for dialogue-based engagement or consultation activities.*** Active support of a dialogue-based discussion area requires trained facilitators and knowledge of the topic being discussed. Do not underestimate the resources required to carry out this type of activity. The following should be undertaken when designing a dialogue-based consultation or engagement:

- Train facilitators and determine if messages will be moderated (screened prior to posting).
- Prepare summary and synthesis materials to craft updates of the work underway, and use these to promote the activity if needed.
- Plan an outreach strategy to actively promote the online venue and be ready with lead-in activities for early arrivals.
- Define the timeframe for the engagement work and lay out weekly or monthly tasks to establish a clear pace and expectation of work to the participants.
- Prepare a work plan to co-ordinate staff, technical support, outreach and communications activity and contractors, as needed.
- Identify the relationship between online and offline activities, plan to integrate or co-ordinate them.
- Let participants know how they can find out more about other engagement activities related to the subject at hand.
- Plan the feedback and summary work up front and keep to schedule.
- Agree on contingency plans if the online discussion tool becomes temporarily unavailable, such as a means to contact all participants by email, fax or phone.
- Co-ordinate plans with the larger technical support team to ensure routine upgrades or other technical activities will not interfere with the launch or the project's ongoing schedule.

• ***Develop outreach and communications plans*** that include online resources. Broad public engagement activities on a popular topic should attract participants by open invitation via email, announcements on Web sites and the use of offline tools such as direct mail, telephone outreach and broader promotion in key media (print, television, radio).

• ***Co-ordinate outreach activities*** with communications staff involved in the engagement planning work and ensure online references are correct in other media. Review all final print-ready materials to ensure that design features have not affected the online references.

STAGE THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

- ***Establish an inclusive tone to the discussion****,* especially if there is a mix of highly knowledgeable professionals and members of the general public who may feel intimidated by language or jargon.

- ***Respond to inquiries in a timely manner.*** Generally this means four hours for acknowledgement and 24 hours for response.

- ***Update support materials online****.* Clarify meanings and routinely link to related resources online. Complete routine updates to keep materials current.

- ***Obtain user feedback.*** Monitor the pace of activity and modify the process if necessary based on user feedback.

- ***Reflect back what people are saying.*** This helps to test summary work and to more actively engage participants in working collaboratively.

- ***Determine next steps*** and post them online to keep participants informed.

STAGE FOUR: FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW-UP

- ***Inform participants of how their contributions will be used.*** Participants should be given contact information so they may follow-up on findings or recommendations.

- ***Tell participants how long the discussion area will remain open.*** Also let them know where and how the space will be archived (for example, the space may remain open, but people will not be allowed to post information).

STAGE FIVE: FINAL EVALUATION AND INTEGRATION

- ***Collect data and information related to identified criteria for success.*** This should be done at all stages as the work proceeds and, when possible, such data should be reflected back to the group online. It may be appropriate, for example, to let participants know how many people are participating or how many online surveys have been received.

- ***Co-ordinate online and offline evaluation activities****.* Data should be collected only once from each participant.

- ***Work with technical staff*** to determine which Web-based statistics will be useful. User sessions can be more indicative of participation online than hits, for example.

- ***Document and share experiences, lessons and best practices****.* To promote good practice and to contribute to the ongoing improvement and effectiveness of online consultation and engagement, lessons and experiences should be documented and shared with colleagues as much as possible.

Online Checklist

Note: This checklist should be used in conjunction with the "Consultation and Citizen Engagement Checklist" provided in *Appendix A*.

STAGE 1: PREPARATION

- ✓ Assess the state of readiness to engage or consult online.
- ✓ Determine resource requirements (human and financial).
- ✓ Establish performance indicators and criteria for evaluating success (both process and outcome).

STAGE 2: DESIGN

- ✓ Identify participants.
- ✓ Choose an approach, tools and resources that are appropriate to the issue and context.
- ✓ Customize tool choices when necessary.
- ✓ Test chosen tool(s) and supporting technical infrastructure carefully.
- ✓ Prepare participation guidelines and support materials for online activity.
- ✓ Clearly define roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Co-ordinate and build linkages between the online and offline consultation activities.
- ✓ Develop outreach and communications plans that include online resources.

STAGE 3: IMPLEMENTATION

- ✓ Establish an inclusive tone.
- ✓ Respond to inquiries in a timely manner.
- ✓ Update support materials and link to related online resources.
- ✓ Modify pace in response to user feedback.
- ✓ Regularly reflect back to participants to verify input.
- ✓ Establish links to next steps and post them online.

STAGE 4: FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW UP

- ✓ Synthesize input from both online and offline processes.
- ✓ Clearly indicate how participant input will be used.
- ✓ Indicate how long the consultation site will remain open and where information will be archived.
- ✓ Identify point of contact for participant follow-up on findings or recommendations.

STAGE 5: FINAL EVALUATION AND INTEGRATION

- ✓ Collect information and statistics related to evaluation criteria and reflect this online, on an ongoing basis.
- ✓ Co-ordinate evaluation of online and offline activities, work with technical staff.
- ✓ Document and share experiences and lessons learned.

3. Assessing and Selecting Online Tools

The choice of technology for consulting and engaging citizens should be guided by the following considerations:

- ***The type of process should drive technology choices.*** Just as for offline consultations, the type of online application used has a profound effect on the success of the exercise. Some important aspects to consider are:
  - Who is being engaged?
  - Is this an open engagement process, involving large numbers of participants reflecting a broad spectrum of Canadian society?
  - Is this a focused engagement exercise, seeking input from targeted individuals and groups?
  - Is the issue being addressed regional, provincial, national or international in scope?
  - How is the information gathered in this process going to be used? Are there required outcomes or measures that must result?
  - Is there much background information required for meaningful involvement?
  - What relationship, if any, is there to a concurrent offline engagement activity?
- ***Online discussion can be synchronous or asynchronous.*** Synchronous discussion occurs with everyone together at the same time, e.g. a live chat. Asynchronous discussion enables people to participate at different times, at their convenience, e.g. a Web-based discussion.
- ***Online engagement technology must be highly accessible.*** In order to ensure that the majority of Canadians can participate in the online engagement activities of the government a number of accessibility considerations need to be addressed:
  - Most Canadians do not have high-speed access to the Internet. Thus, online engagement tools should avoid relying on technologies that require end users to have fast connections. Lower bandwidth requirements facilitate broader participation.
  - Participants should not be required to download special software in order to participate. Engagement tools should be accessible through standard World Wide Web browsers or email programs. Background information and discussion papers should be available as Web pages or in email format, rather than requiring participants to download files to their local machines.

- Online engagement must take account of the needs of persons with disabilities. Software and set-up choices must follow accepted standards to ensure their accessibility.

- Providing choices for participating is another important way to ensure broad accessibility. In addition to providing background information in a variety of formats, many engagement tools offer participants the ability to use email instead of the World Wide Web. Conversely, email-based applications (mailing lists) now come with intuitive Web interfaces.

• ***Chosen technology must provide a bilingual interface and comply with Common Look and Feel standards.*** In addition to the requirements of the Treasury Board *Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines* and the *Official Languages Act*, there are a number of other online bilingual considerations:

- Participants should be able to choose their language preference and set the default when they log in.

- Participants should be able to switch easily from one language interface to the other.

- Where translation is not provided, participants should be able to view comments from other participants in the original language, while staying within the interface of their choice.

- All system-generated communication must be available in both official languages (error messages, welcome messages, help files, etc.).

• ***Ongoing collaboration is required between experts in consultation and information technology.*** To ensure that the objectives, integrity and desired outcomes of the consultation or engagement process are achieved, ongoing collaboration is required between those responsible for the overall management of the process and those responsible for the IT aspects. Issues of data integrity, server administration, operation and security will affect the degree to which consultation managers can keep their online process on the right track. The following are some key areas where close collaboration and timely response are necessary:

- In the case of a discussion application, where signing in, adding, removing and modifying participation may be required.

- Adding, removing or modifying individual messages.

- Adding or removing background information or discussion papers, before and during an engagement process.

- Adding or removing new sub-discussions or discussion threads.

- ***Hosting.*** While most Web-based applications do not require participants to download special software to participate, many of them do require specific back-end or server side software. Increasingly, these types of tools are built on a database back-end that requires the host server to be running a specific database program. More popular applications are frequently available in different formats so they can run on a variety of platforms.

- ***Software Licensing.*** Some applications, especially the more robust group collaboration tools, often license their software based on a per-user basis. This model can be too expensive for an engagement exercise involving large numbers of participants.

- ***Customization.*** The engagement application should allow for a fair degree of customization in terms of look and feel. Avoid applications that cannot be easily integrated into an existing Web site.

- ***Training requirements.*** More complex applications may require special training both for the IT staff as well as the responsible manager. This is especially important for engagement exercises that must be launched with a short time frame.

Email versus Web-based discussion tools

Online tools designed to support discussion generally fall into two camps: email-based and Web-based applications that can be public, private or read-only. Live chat, bulletin boards, Web forums and group collaboration are examples of online applications for consultation and engagement. Such tools enable key activities, including the work of the staff or third party contractors, to be monitored first-hand.

The choice should be based on preference and context. In any given electronic discussion group, it is likely that about half the participants will prefer email to Web-based discussion tools. The best way to ensure participation, regardless of tool choice, is by creating a compelling and legitimate reason for citizens to engage in the issue in the first place.

Email mailing lists: Email is the most commonly used tool on the Internet. It is easy, accessible, intuitive and critical to an increasing number of Canadians. Electronic mailing list software allows a group of participants (subscribers) to communicate with each other through a single email address. Original email is sent to the main address and replies are distributed to all participants. Some software applications permit Web-based subscribing or unsubscribing and the archiving of older postings. Lists can be set as public or private, moderated (postings are screened) or facilitated.

When using electronic mailing list software, discussion takes place only in email or can be archived automatically to a public or password protected Web page. Archiving to a Web page, however, does not allow posting to the list from that page. Efforts to create dual gateways between Web-based discussion tools and mail lists have not been entirely successful. The technology does not do both things well. With some software choices participants can use Web interfaces to subscribe and unsubscribe and perform routine maintenance on their subscription. Administrators can also use Web-based interfaces for maintaining the list.

The advantage of electronic mailing lists include:

- Messages are delivered directly to participant in-boxes.
- Replying to the discussion is as simple as writing and sending an email.
- There are no problems with learning a new interface.
- In settings where dial-up access is difficult or expensive, email permits people to join in but allows offline time to compose responses.

Some of the challenges are:

- It is difficult to manage the volume of messages if the discussion has many participants or the dialogue is lively (using email filters to designated mailboxes can be useful).
- It is difficult to track what has been said if messages are not archived.
- If an email mailing list is chosen, ensure there are means to back-up archives on the email server if there are no Web-based archives.

Web-based discussion tools: The advantages of Web-based discussion tools include:

- They permit users to sign-in and introduce themselves, allowing late comers to get their bearings. This assists participation and reduces duplication of comments.
- They build a living history of input and discussion for others to see.
- Threading supports response tracking. One can see immediately which topics are eliciting responses.
- Summaries can be posted periodically within the context of the larger discussion.
- Rich material is available for researchers and evaluators to return to for further analysis.
- They encourage self-directed orientation at a pace driven by the individual.

Some of the challenges related to Web-based discussion tools include:

- Large volumes of postings can be onerous; hence, the ability to move material, re-name headings and topics and cluster content can be helpful features.

– Reminding people to return – email notifications generated automatically when new messages appear are a helpful feature to look for.

– The need to find the right reason(s) for people to use the tool and continue to count on it over time.

Choosing appropriate technologies

The two tables on the next page – "Online Applications in Context" and "Online Applications for Type of Activity Planned" – are designed to optimize the use of Internet based tools in any given situation. They should be used as a guide only. Specific circumstances may require choices that are exceptions to the generally recommended use. The following list describes the specific tools referred to in each table.

Electronic Mailing Lists: An email-based application that allows a group of participants (subscribers) to communicate with each other through a single email address. (See "Email mailing lists" on page 41 for a more complete description.)

Online Polling (survey): A Web-based application that allows users to express opinions through an interactive form. Users are presented with a series of questions and are asked to make choices from a predetermined list or to provide short answers.

Live Chat: A real time text-based application that allows users to chat across the Internet. Most types of chat require the user to download special software in order to participate. Users can then look for others on the same system to initiate a one-to-one chat or enter a predetermined chat room and interact with multiple users.

Bulletin Board: A Web-based application where users can post messages to a Web site. This is a relatively simple tool that allows participants to post responses to each other's messages but does not provide true discussion threading.

Discussion (Web-based): Similar to a bulletin board, Web-based discussions allow participants to post message and respond to messages. Additional functionality includes rudimentary document sharing, discussion threading and password protection.

Web Forum: Online Web forum applications combine the functionality of Web-based discussions with aspects of live chat. This type of online collaboration tool includes real time 'white boarding' or brainstorming, chat, file sharing within an asynchronous discussion area, a document repository and some limited project tracking tools.

Group Collaboration: This type of application is the most robust in terms of functionality. Sometimes referred to as "Intranet" software, these tools are often password protected with multiple levels of access. Work groups are created with access to shared resources based on user permissions. Both synchronous and asynchronous features are available. These tools are often too expensive and complicated to be used for a single project or task and tend to be used throughout an organization as an integral part of daily work processes.

Online Applications in Context

Context	Email Lists	Online Polling	Live Chat	Bulletin Board	Web-Based Discussion	Web Forum	Group Collaboration with Document Management
Time Frame for Engagement	Any	Short to Medium	Short	Medium to Long	Medium to Long	Any	Short to Long
Time Frame for Set-up and Promotion	Short	Any	Short to Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium to Long	Medium to Long
Open Audience	N/A	Appropriate	N/A	Appropriate	N/A	N/A	N/A
Targeted Audience	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate
Level of Human Resources Required	Low	Low	Medium	Medium to High	High	High	High
Appropriate Participation Volume	Small to Medium	Medium to Large	Small	Small to Medium	Small to Medium	Small to Medium	Small
Effective in Supporting Offline Engagement	Appropriate	N/A	N/A	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate
Degree of Control over Feedback	Low-Medium	High	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High

Online Applications for Type of Activity Planned

Activity	Email Lists	Online Polling	Live Chat	Bulletin Board	Web-Based Discussion	Web Forum	Group Collaboration with Document Management
Deliberative Technique (study circle, citizen juries)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate
Polling, Survey	N/A	Appropriate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Search Conference	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate
Focus Group	N/A	N/A	Appropriate	N/A	N/A	N/A	Appropriate
Round Tables	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Appropriate	Appropriate	Appropriate
Tele-Voting	N/A	Appropriate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Electronic Town Hall	N/A	N/A	Appropriate	N/A	N/A	Appropriate	Appropriate

4. References and Resources

The following is an overview of some of the relevant legislation, policies and guidelines applicable to the online environment of the Government of Canada. Examples of online consultation and citizen engagement practices from Canada and abroad, along with other reference materials, are also included. Hyperlinks to Web sites and electronically posted documents are provided as well.

I. Legislation

Access to Information Act provides a right of access to information under government control, on the principle that government information should be available to the public, that necessary exceptions should be limited and specific, and that decisions should be reviewed independently of government.

http://canada.justice.gc.ca/STABLE/EN/Laws/Chap/A/A-1.html and

Copyright Act ensures that all materials on the Internet, i.e. text, postings to news or discussion groups, e-mail messages, photographs, graphics, digitized music, etc. are protected by copyright. The individual or organization that created the work or for which the work was created owns the copyright. (Also see the *Government Communications Policy* described below.)

http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/laws/C-42/index.htm (sections, 12, 13, 14)

Official Languages Act and Regulations ensures respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada as well as the equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions, in particular "…in communicating with or providing services to the public…"

http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/laws/O-3.01/74830.html

Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act primarily applies to the private sector but addresses public sector considerations as well.

http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/P-8.6/text.html

Privacy Act protects the personal information of individuals that public institutions collect and store for government purposes.

http://canada.justice.gc.ca/FTP/EN/Laws/Chap/P/P-21.txt

II. Policies

Access to Information Policy was developed to ensure effective and consistent administration of the *Access to Information Act and Regulations* on a government-wide basis. The policy recognizes the government's duty to inform as the essential principle underlying the access legislation. It encourages institutions to disclose to requesters the maximum information possible in a timely and consistent manner. It also aims to ensure that responses are co-ordinated across institutions and that adequate consultation takes place within and among institutions when preparing responses, particularly when the subject is interdepartmental in scope, or involves major legal or policy issues.

http://www.publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/gospubs/TBM_121/CHAP1_1_e.html

Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines is to be applied consistently to electronic services, including Government of Canada Internet and Intranet sites, products and deliverables, in order to reinforce federal identity, presence and visibility.

http://publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/si-si/clf/

Common Services Policy outlines mandatory and optional communications, consultation and publishing services available to institutions through various common service agencies.

http://www.publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/dcgpubs/TB_93/CSP_e.html

Contracting Policy provides the framework for contracting communications and consultation services, notably those related to advertising, publishing (in all forms of media) and public opinion research.

http://www.publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/dcgpubs/Contracting/contractingpol_e.html

Federal Identity Program (FIP) is the Government of Canada's corporate identity program. Its goal is to make the Government of Canada visible in the daily lives of Canadians by helping them to recognize at a glance the programs, services and activities of government institutions. It applies to a wide range of applications, including signs, vehicles, stationery, forms, advertising, publications and Web sites.

http://www.publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/sipubs/TB_FIP/CHAP2_e.html

Government Communications Policy sets out the basic principles of government communications in a parliamentary democracy. It directs institutions to take account of the concerns and views of the public when establishing priorities, developing policies and implementing programs. Key objectives are to ensure that the government is visible, accessible and answerable to the public it serves. Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for communications management are delineated in the policy.

http://www.publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/sipubs/comm/comm_e.html

Management of Information Technology Policy and associated guidelines establish a management framework to ensure that information technology is used as a strategic tool to support government priorities and program delivery, increase productivity and enhance service to the public.

http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/ciopubs/TB_IT/CHAP2_1_e.html

Policy for Public Key Infrastructure Management in the Government of Canada creates a basis for essential security features (including confidentiality, digital signature and non-repudiation services), essential for public servants to exchange sensitive information and conduct electronic transactions online.

http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/ciopubs/PKI/pki1_e.html

Policy on Privacy and Data Protection is designed to ensure the effective and consistent application of the provisions of the *Privacy Act* by government institutions; to ensure that data-matching and data linkage of personal information for administrative purposes meet the requirements of that legislation; and to limit collection and use of the Social Insurance Number (SIN).

http://www.publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/gospubs/TBM_128/INTRODUC_e.html

Policy on the Management of Government Information Holdings (MGIH) and related guidelines establish a management framework to ensure the widest possible use of information in the federal government as a corporate resource to support effective decision-making, organize government information for ready access and conservation, and preserve a coherent public record of government policies and programs.

http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/ciopubs/TB_GIH/CHAP3_1_e.html

Policy on the Use of Electronic Networks defines both acceptable and unacceptable uses of electronic networks for public servants (i.e. Intranet and Internet), and provides guidance on the response to objectionable conduct.

http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/ciopubs/tb_cp/uene.html

Policy on the Use of Official Languages on Electronic Networks sets out the official languages obligations of institutions subject to the *Official Languages Act* in using electronic networks to provide services to, or communicate with, the public or employees.

http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/OffLang/uolee.html

Review, Evaluation and Internal Audit Policies provide direction on conducting audits and evaluations of programs, services, information systems and management.

http://www.publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/dcgpubs/TBM_161/siglist_e.html

Security Policy is designed to ensure the appropriate safeguarding of all sensitive information and assets of the government.

http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/gospubs/TBM_12A/CHAPT1-1_e.html

III. Guidelines

Government of Canada Internet Guide provides an overview of federal, provincial, territorial and municipal initiatives on the Internet with general guidance on the creation and administration of a government Web site.

http://canada.gc.ca/programs/guide/index.html

IV. Online Initiatives in Canada and Abroad

The Rural Dialogue, an initiative of the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, involves both face-to-face and electronic approaches (an extensive Web site and email mailing list) to engage rural Canadians in policy discussions on rural issues.

www.rural.gc.ca

National Consultation on Environmental Education and Sustainable Development. This Canadian initiative seeks public input on the development of a national environmental education strategy via an online questionnaire. The site allows participants to interact with each other.

www.ec.gc.ca/education/

Commission d'étude sur les services de santé et les services sociaux, Québec. This site includes several background papers, regional syntheses of consultations and a survey on the future financing and organization of health services in the province of Quebec.

www.cessss.gouv.qc.ca

The ***US Senate*** has set up a Web-based forum on the topic of e-government policy, called *E-Government: An Experiment in Interactive Legislation*. The site provides multiple windows on e-government issues, publishes readers' comments and promotes inter-reader dialogue. While the issues raised are not binding, this experiment is opening up the American legislative process to more interactive deliberation.

http://gov_affairs.senate.gov/egov/

The ***Singapore*** government's *Feedback* site has been developed as the official channel for Singaporeans to voice their views through electronic forums and dialogue sessions on a broad range of proposed government policies and initiatives.

www.gov.sg/feedback

Minnesota E-Democracy Project. One of the earliest experiments in online political discussion, this Web site and political listserv were established in 1994 to monitor state elections and post information about, and by, gubernatorial candidates. The project put most of the candidates for governor and Senate online and held the first online debate among candidates at that level. Today, the listserv and Web site hosts discussions on political issues in Minnesota (MN-Politics) and elsewhere, and the Minnesota forum has taken on a deliberative quality with a more-or-less stable list of 400 participants.

http://www.e-democracy.org

The United Kingdom Government's "Citizenspace" is a one-stop portal that provides opportunities for citizens to participate in government consultation processes as well as in online discussions on a range of topics. Through this portal – formerly on the 10 Downing Street site at http://www.number-10.gov.uk – UK citizens can find out about government plans, directly access government consultation sites, and contribute to the formulation of new policies.

http://online.gov.uk\citizenspace/default.asp

V. Additional References

Aikens, G. Scott (1996) *History of the Minnesota Electronic Democracy Project*, paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Internet Society (INET'96), Montreal.

http://www.isoc.org/isoc/whatis/conferences/inet/96/proceedings/e9/e9_1.htm

Alexander, Jason Hansen and Joseph W. Grubbs (1998) "Wired Government: Information Technology, External Public Organizations, and Cyberdemocracy," in *Public Administration and Management: An Interactive Journal* available online at:

http://www.pamij.com/alex.html

Australia (2000) *Government Online: The Commonwealth Government's Strategy.*

http://www.govonline.gov.au/online/projects/strategy/GovOnlineStrategy.htm

Coate, John. (1998) *Cyberspace Innkeeping: Building Online Community.*

http://www.sfgate.com/~tex/innkeeping

Clift, Steven. (1999) A Wired Agora Minneapolis, Citizen Participation, the Internet and Squirrels.

http://www.publicus.net/present/agora.html

Clift, Steven (1997) *Democracies Online: Building Civic Life on the New Frontier.*

http://www.e-democracy.org/do/library/

Coleman, Stephen and Emilie Normann (2000) *New Media and Social Inclusion,* London: Hansard Society.

Coleman, Stephen, John Taylor and Wim van de Donk (editors) (1999), *Parliament in the Age of the Internet,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dawes, Sharon S., Peter A. Bloniarz, Kristine L. Kelly and Patricia D. Fletcher (1999) *Some Assembly Required: Building a Digital Government for the 21st Century,* Report of a Multidisciplinary Workshop Held in October 1998, Center for Technology in Government, State University of New York at Albany.

Economist (2000) "Government and the Internet" in *The Economist,* 24 June 2000, survey section, pp. 7-34.

Fullan, Riff. (1999) *The Ethiopia Pilot Site: Lessons from a non-sustainable collaborative site.*

http://www.bellanet.org/advisor/index.cfm?Fuseaction=view_article&TheArticle=27

Godwin, Mike. "Nine Principles for Making Virtual Communities Work." Wired, 2.06 (June): 72-73. 1994.

Grossman, Lawrence K. (1996) *The Electronic Republic: Reshaping Democracy in the Information Age*, New York: Penguin.

Hague, B. and B. D. Loader (eds.) (1999) *Digital Democracy: Discourse and Decision-Making in the Information Age,* London: Routledge.

Hacker, Kenneth L. (1996) "Missing Links in the Evolution of Electronic Democratization" in *Media, Culture, and Society,* volume 18, number 2, pp. 213-232.

James, Maureen and Liz Rykert. *From Workplace to Workspace: Using Email Lists to Work Together* IDRC 1998.

http://www.idrc.ca/books/848/index_e.html

Kleiber, Pamela B., Margaret E. Holt and Jill Dianne Swenson (1995) *The Electronic Forum Handbook: Study Circles in Cyberspace.*

http://www.cpn.org/sections/tools/manuals/electronic_handbook1.html

Kollock, Peter. (1998) *Design Principles for Online Communities.* PC Update 15(5): 58-60.

http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/kollock/papers/design.htm

Lanfranco, Sam. (1999) *Eight Considerations in Planning a Program-Based Online Worksite.*

http://www.bellanet.org/advisor/index.cfm?Fuseaction=view_article&TheArticle=14

London, Scott. C*ivic Networks Building Community on the Net,* March 1997.

http://www.west.net/~insight/london/networks.htm

Marital, Ernest; Angels Pont, Teresa Serra and Joan Carreras (1998) “Citizen’s Participation through Internet: City of Barcelona, Spain,” chapter 4 in *Democracy and Government Online Services,* a G8 Research project.

http://www.open.gov.uk/govonline/golintro.htm

McGregor, Liane (2000) *Literature Review of Online Community Building*, Meta Strategies, Toronto.

http://www.metastrategies.com/estrat/review.html

Netherlands, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (2000). *Contract with the Future: A Vision on [sic] the Electronic Relationship between Government and Citizen,* policy paper.

Netherlands, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (1998). *Electronic Civic Consultation: A Guide to the use of the Internet in Interactive Policy-Making.*

Percy-Smith, Janie (1996) “Downloading Democracy? Information and Communication Technologies in Local Politics” in *Policy and Politics,* volume 24, number 1, pp. 43-56.

Philip, George, D.R. Newman and Jeremy Spence. *Interactive Internet Technologies for Information Delivery under a Range of Scenarios* Internet Research and Information for Social Scientists International Conference: 25-27 March 1998, Bristol, UK.

http://www.sosig.ac.uk/iriss/papers/paper27.htm

Poster, Mark (1997) “Cyberdemocracy: Internet and the Public Sphere” in *Internet Culture*, David Porter (ed.), New York: Routledge, pp. 201-218.

Rheingold, Howard. *The Virtual Community*. 1998.

http://www.rheingold.com/vc/book/

Riley, Thomas (2000) *Electronic Governance And Electronic Democracy: Living And Working In The Wired World,* London: The Commonwealth Secretariat, 1 May.

Rojo, Alejandra. *Issues in the Adoption of Electronic Forums* 1996.

http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/~arojo/Oframes.html

Ryan, S. *Building online communities.* 1997.

http://www.builder.com/Business/Community/

Smith, Marc A. and Peter Kollock (eds.) *Communities in Cyberspace* 1999.

http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/kollock/papers/communities_01.htm

Tsagarousiona, R., D. Tambini and C. Bryon (eds.) (1998) *Cyberdemocracy,* London: Routledge.

United Kingdom, Cabinet Office, Service First, Effective Performance Division (1998) *An introductory guide: How to consult your users.*

http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/1998/guidance/users/index.htm

United Kingdom, Cabinet Office, Service First (1999) *Modernising Government.*

http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/moderngov/index.htm.

United States, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary (1999) *Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies*, December 17.

Van Rooy, Alison. (2000) *Electronic Consultation and Engagement: Lessons for Canada from International Experience,* Policy and Research, Intergovernmental Affairs Privy Council Office Ottawa.

Woolley**,** David R. *The Future of Web Conferencing* June, 1998.

http://www.thinkofit.com/webconf/wcfuture.htm

Appendix D: Evaluation Guidelines and Checklist for Consultation and Citizen Engagement Processes

Evaluation – measuring the results of an activity, assessing outcomes and identifying what works or requires improvement – should be integrated into the lifecycle management of consultation and citizen engagement processes. Evaluation helps to identify best practices in consultation management and contributes to learning by documenting the lessons of experience so they may be shared with colleagues.

Evaluation at the *beginning* of a consultation or engagement process can help to ensure that the process is effective, that the information gathered is valid, reliable and suitably comprehensive so as to be useful to any final analyses. Evaluation *throughout* the process enables a manager to determine how well a plan is being implemented and whether adjustments could be made to advance its objectives. Evaluation at the *end* of the process can help to gage its success, what its impact was, identify what worked best, and whether there were any unanticipated outcomes.

The guidelines in this appendix are organized in five sections. The first three sections outline key questions a manager should consider when deciding whether a consultation or citizen engagement process is required and how it should be evaluated (including indicators for measuring outcomes). The fourth section offers detailed advice on evaluation for each of the five stages of a consultation or engagement process. A manager's checklist is also provided for easy reference. A listing of various reference sources and published works on consultation and evaluation is provided in the final section.

1. Key Questions

When determining whether to consult the public on an issue or subject – before planning actually gets underway – managers should consider several key questions. The answers will help to build the base of information required to evaluate any stage of the consultation process:

- *What tangible results are expected from the consultation or engagement process? What is to be gained?* For example: a better understanding of a community's needs; identification of service and delivery issues from a stakeholder perspective; an action plan for addressing public needs; an inventory of the assets of a community.

- *How will the results be used?* For example: to make decisions on program design; in policy development or drafting; in a framework for government action.

- *What needs to be completed to ensure that the consultation or engagement occurs?* For example: a communications strategy; apprising the Minister; preparing briefing notes, business cases, and logistics.

- *What key activities would be carried out as part of the consultation or engagement?* For example: meetings, conferences, planning sessions, brainstorming, focus group interviews with key stakeholders.

Addressing these questions throughout the process, managers can determine whether to modify activities if anticipated results are not being achieved. It also helps to ensure that information required for a formal evaluation at the end is captured throughout the process. Information needed by the evaluator (whether internal or external) will then be readily available for assessing final outcomes as well.

Evaluation addresses several critical questions at key stages of a process: Are you achieving what you set out to do? How effective is your consultation or engagement process? Are participants comfortable with the process and confident in its ability to achieve results? What can be improved? What works well? Which factors contribute to, or inhibit, success from the participants' perspective as well as from the consultation organizers' viewpoint? What impact did the consultation or engagement process have on decisions or actions taken? Was this reported back to participants?

The table below outlines the value evaluation adds to each stage of a consultation process.

Stage in the Consultation or Engagement Process	Value Added by Evaluation
1. Preparation Stage	Helping to set clear, measurable, realistic objectives.
2. Design Stage	Mapping the process – identifying success factors and strategies and tools for collecting information to monitor results and make adjustments.
3. Implementation	Assessing progress, reviewing preliminary results, and making adjustments if required.
4. Feedback and Follow-up	Ensuring accountability, obtaining participant feedback on process, sharing results.
5. Final Evaluation	Evaluating process and outcomes, sharing lessons learned.

Consultation managers should bear all of the above in mind when planning, organizing and implementing a consultation or engagement process. While they are not expected to conduct evaluations themselves – which should be organized in collaboration with evaluation specialists – managers should be familiar with the basic information that will be needed to complete an evaluation.

2. How to Evaluate

There are times when a consultation manager may want to use an in-house evaluator, and times when it is preferable to engage the services of an evaluator from outside the organization. The choice will vary from one situation to another. Regardless of one's decision, managers will want – at the very least – to apply the principles of evaluation to the front-end or design stage of the consultation.

Some basic factors to consider in deciding when and how to conduct an evaluation include:

- Does your institution have the expertise in-house to do a credible evaluation?
- Do you have the resources and time to conduct the evaluation in-house?
- Will stakeholder feedback be influenced or biased if they know the evaluation is being conducted in-house?
- Do you require an outside evaluator to lend credibility to the evaluation results?
- Could you benefit from the expertise of someone who has reviewed similar processes in other organizations?
- Do you have the necessary resources to engage the services of an outside evaluator?
- Do you have the time to inform an outside evaluator about your initiative?

3. Measuring Success

After determining the purpose of a consultation or citizen engagement process and how it may be evaluated, the results or outcomes can be measured and assessed. Performance indicators for evaluating results, or measuring success, flow from the objectives of the process, which your answers to the "Key Questions" posed above will have established.

When considering performance indicators to assess results, managers should keep in mind that under the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy* (see *Monitoring* section, pages 17-18), the following outcomes, measured by the indicators described below, will be monitored and evaluated to help determine the effectiveness of the policy and to identify opportunities for improvement:

- Increased involvement of citizens in the development of policies, programs, services and initiatives, to be measured by the frequency and diversity of consultation and citizen engagement activities undertaken by institutions from year to year, the number of citizens involved, and the range of traditional and electronic mechanisms used.

- Increased inclusion in consultation and citizen engagement processes, to be measured by the range of participants involved in these processes and the degree to which they are satisfied with the outcome of their involvement.

- An enhanced consultative culture within institutions, to be measured by clear lines of responsibility for public consultation and citizen engagement functions, the resources allocated to consultation and citizen engagement functions, the number of staff trained in these processes, and the number of staff whose performance appraisals include involvement in consultation and engagement activities.

- Better integration of the results of consultation and citizen engagement processes in policy-making, program development and service delivery, to be measured through the feedback provided to participants in these processes and direct references to the outcomes of consultation processes in Memoranda to Cabinet and in announcements of government policies, programs, services and initiatives.

- Better informed decision-making and more responsive policies, programs, services and initiatives, to be measured through the formal evaluation of the impact of consultation and citizen engagement processes.

4. Evaluation and the Five Stages of a Consultation or Engagement Process

Appendix A of the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy of the Government of Canada* outlines the five stages of a consultation or citizen engagement process: preparation, design, implementation, feedback and follow-up, final evaluation and integration.

Evaluation can take place at each or any stage of the process. Managers should consider the need to evaluate at every stage, working collaboratively with an evaluation specialist if the manager lacks knowledge in the discipline.

Key issues and questions to be considered at each stage are outlined below. Strategies and tools for capturing the information needed for an evaluation are also identified.

STAGE ONE: PREPARATION

Setting clear objectives at the start of a consultation or engagement process is key to a successful outcome. Why are you conducting the consultation or engagement? What do you want to find out? What are you going to do with the results? Managers should reflect on these considerations and determine the answers. Objectives should be established at the beginning in collaboration with the primary stakeholders.

Key Questions

Managers need to address the following basic questions to help set clear and measurable objectives during the formative stage of a consultation or engagement process:

- Do you need to consult or engage citizens?
- If yes, what are the external factors (public opinion, recent trends, media coverage) driving public involvement? What are the internal factors (government commitment, impact of other government initiatives)?
- Is there emerging legislation, policy or litigation that could affect the consultation?
- What are the potential benefits of consultation or engagement? Some examples:
  - understanding the social, economic or environmental impact of decisions to be made;
  - changing behaviour, practices, decisions, policies, products;
  - increasing knowledge, understanding, expertise;
  - obtaining buy in and support for the implementation of a project, program or strategy.
- What are the potential disadvantages of consulting or engaging citizens on this issue? Are you consulting at the appropriate time? Are you prepared to act on what you hear? Are any expectations being raised?

As noted above, performance indicators for evaluation purposes are based on the objectives of the consultation or engagement process. Two pivotal questions need to be addressed: What is the focus of the consultation or engagement? What tangible outcomes do you expect? A few examples include:

- developing a new policy or program;
- identifying policy or program priorities, or issues for action;
- exploring ways or means to deliver a program or service.

STAGE TWO: DESIGN

From an evaluation perspective, there are several related factors to consider during the design stage. For example, **who** is involved in the process should influence **how** you are going to involve them and **when**. Evaluation helps to test assumptions and to provide feedback on how well a process is working or has worked.

Determining input

At this stage you will want to decide what you need input on and from whom. A few examples of types of input can include:

- general opinions or advice;

- opinions or advice from individual citizens;
- technical advice from specialists or experts;
- viewpoints from lobbyists, non-governmental organizations, trade and business associations, or community groups.

Once the kind of input required, and from whom, has been established, additional factors will need to be considered:

- What is the appropriate level of involvement for participants?
- What methods will be used to receive input?
- What is the best timing for this process?
- What information needs to be developed or collected to give to stakeholders for their consideration?
- What are the anticipated costs?
- Are the required resources and skills available to undertake a consultation or engagement process (i.e. staff, financial resources, consultants, time, technology, administrative support, etc.)?
- What information will help to determine whether the process should be modified to ensure that expected results are achieved?

Capturing information

The design stage is the time to identify the information or data required for evaluation purposes and how it should be captured. Factors expected to affect the success of the consultation or engagement process should be identified at this stage in order to determine what information or data will need to be tracked, and which evaluation strategies or tools (discussed in the next stages) should be utilized.

When mapping the consultation or engagement process, it is useful to identify:

- the flow of events and how each event is strategically linked to the others;
- interrelationships – how the results of the first step in the process will inform and feed into the second, etc.;
- interdependencies, expectations, responsibilities, assumptions.

Once this is done, the critical points for collecting information to monitor progress and assess results during the next and final stages of the process can be identified.

STAGE THREE: IMPLEMENTATION

Evaluating at the implementation stage provides a verification of the extent to which the consultation plan and design have been implemented, the extent to which things are going as planned and the impact that certain adjustments might have on the success of the process. Many of the issues and questions to be addressed at this stage have already been identified and considered during the preparation and design stages. The implementation stage is an opportunity to add to those and to develop more specific questions.

Evaluating progress

The goal of evaluation at this stage is to assess the effectiveness of the process in obtaining desired results, analyzing the findings and making necessary adjustments to ensure progress and to keep the process on track. Answers to the following questions should provide a good indication of how the implementation stage is progressing:

- Are you getting the views from those you wanted?
- Are the methods you are using right for your objectives? Are they right for those being consulted or engaged?
- Are you getting the required quantitative and/or qualitative information, response rate and representative sample?
- Is the timetable clear and adhered to, if not, why not?
- Is enough time allowed for input?
- Is your budget adequate? Are you saving in particular areas or overspending in others, and why? Are there unforeseen costs? What are they?
- Does any part of the process need to be modified to help ensure expected results are achieved?

Strategies and tools for capturing information

As a manager, you are looking for ways to answer the questions above in a systematic, objective and unbiased way. Some examples are provided below.

Participant feedback: Participants themselves are perhaps the most important source of feedback for all aspects of the process. Various tools can be developed to help get reliable and valid feedback. Exit and follow-up interviews are examples. As well, questionnaires can be administered at strategic points in the process to provide feedback from participants on their perceptions of how things have worked. These instruments would normally be pre-tested before they are used.

Outside Observer: It may be useful to have a neutral observer sit in on some planned events to observe how well the process is unfolding. Observation is appropriate in the following situations:

- When you want direct information.
- When you are trying to understand an ongoing process, unfolding situation or event.
- Where there are products or outcomes that can be readily seen.
- When written or other data collection methods seem inappropriate.

It would be important for the observer to have a way of capturing the information needed to assess how well the process was followed, what worked best, and so forth.

Technical Resource Opinion: A variety of technical resources can be used during the consultation to obtain feedback on the process itself or its results at any stage. For example, you may want to have a process expert review your process and suggest adjustments. A subject matter resource could review the information you are receiving and provide comments from a technical point of view. Or, evaluation specialists could provide feedback on the measures you have chosen and on the instruments you have developed to capture information.

Informal Stakeholder Feedback (Testimonials): Information about consultation or engagement processes are often provided on an informal or ad hoc basis. The key to capitalizing on this feedback is to ensure that there is a mechanism to collect and share this information with participants.

STAGE FOUR: FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW-UP

The feedback and follow-up stage ensures the institution is accountable to participants for the process. The first step in keeping things accountable is feedback. Participants are encouraged to give feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of the process, which is reflected in the final consultation report. The institution thanks the participants for their contributions and tells them how their input was used to influence the policy, program, service or initiative on which they were consulted.

Obtaining participant feedback

Below are several questions that should be addressed at this stage – their answers should provide a clear perspective on how participants viewed the process and will feed into the final evaluation report:

- Do the people consulted feel that the process has been worthwhile? Do they believe it made a difference?
- What aspects of the process did participants think went well? What did they feel could have been improved?

- Were the supporting materials effective? For example, did the consultation document encourage informed deliberation and dialogue? Was the information easy to access, clear and objective?
- Did you follow up with all those consulted on how their input has been used?
- Have the feedback and follow up activities been reflected in your reports about the consultation or engagement process?

Strategies and tools for capturing information

There are a variety of strategies and tools that can be used to capture the information required for evaluation. A few are highlighted below:

Post-process feedback: Participants are asked to provide feedback through written surveys, group discussions and/or interviews following completion of the process.

Comparative feedback: Participants are asked to provide information both at the start of a consultation or engagement process **and** following its completion. The two sets of results are compared and analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the process.

On-going feedback (longitudinal): Participants are asked to provide information and feedback at strategic points throughout the process.

The accuracy of the information collected can be enhanced through the following techniques:

- Collecting information from several sources.
- Collecting information using several different methods (e.g. surveys, interviews and on-site observation).
- Using more than one person to collect, analyze and interpret the information.

STAGE FIVE: FINAL EVALUATION

Once the process is complete, it is time to assess overall results and to document lessons learned. The following should be measured:

Effectiveness: the quality of the information and advice that has been collected, and the degree to which the consultation or engagement process itself can be judged successful.

Efficiency: whether the process made the best possible use of resources (time, human and financial).

Impact: the extent to which the results have been integrated into the policy, program, service or initiative.

If the implementation stage was evaluated, a good deal of information will already have been gleaned to help determine what has contributed to or detracted from the success of the consultation or engagement process.

Questions about the effectiveness of the process to be addressed at this stage include:

- Did you get input that you were able to use? (**effectiveness**)
- Was the consultation or engagement worth the time and costs (financial, human resources, etc.) required to achieve its results? (**efficiency**)
- Has anything changed as a result of the consultation or engagement? (**impact**)

Strategies and tools for capturing information

How the success of a process is measured is determined in large part during the preparation stage when clear, measurable objectives for the consultation were identified. At this final juncture, evaluation reflects back on the process to determine the degree of success in achieving planned objectives.

Tools for assessing effectiveness, measuring outcomes and final results include:

Post Mortems: Post mortems refer to processes that are conducted after a consultation or engagement has been completed to identify things that worked well, things that could be improved, and things that you would do differently the next time – in essence, summarizing best practices and lessons learned. This can be accomplished through interviews, structured meetings or brainstorming sessions with the key participants.

Technical Resource Opinion: Requesting feedback from an objective third party that has expertise in consultation or engagement processes, or a subject-matter resource familiar with the content of the issues under discussion, can be very helpful in assessing the relative success of your process.

Questionnaires (Surveys): Written feedback will provide structured information, and may allow you to receive feedback from a wider group of stakeholders than some of the other tools mentioned above. Questionnaires about the consultation or engagement *process* and *outcomes* can be distributed to participants, other stakeholders, experts, organizers, etc. Questionnaires can be mailed (surface or electronically), completed on-site or through interviews, either face-to-face or over the telephone.

You can choose from several types of questionnaires:

- *Event/Activity Effectiveness Questionnaires*: Can be used to assess events and activities for leadership, participation, decision-making, conflict resolution, productivity or any other variable of interest.
- *Organizational Questionnaire*: Can be designed to discover the impact the consultation or engagement is having on constituent organizations.

- *Specific Source Survey*: Can be used to collect information from specific people or groups. These are designed for key stakeholders who have special information or represent specific groups of people.

Focus Groups: "A focus group is a carefully planned discussion, with five to ten participants, designed to obtain perceptions about a specific topic in a permissive and non-threatening environment" (Krueger, 1994). Focus groups are generally used to seek input on perceptions, feelings, or the thinking of stakeholders on a particular subject. Within the consultation or engagement context, focus groups can be used to obtain information from participants, experts, outside observers or other stakeholders.

Case Studies: Chart the history of the process through interviews, documentation, meeting minutes or discussion papers to identify the specific instances in which information from the consultation or engagement influenced the discussions or decisions made. When used appropriately, tracking the formation and implementation of a policy, program, service or initiative can be quite helpful in the final evaluation stage. When completed, a case study is also an excellent way to share experiences and lessons learned with colleagues.

Evaluation Checklist

STAGE 1: PREPARATION
✓ Confirm the need for consultation or engagement – external and internal factors. ✓ Identify the focus of consultation and expected outcomes. ✓ Identify emerging legislation, policy or litigation that could affect the consultation. ✓ Identify the potential benefits of consultation or engagement. ✓ Identify potential disadvantages of consulting or engaging citizens on the issue.
STAGE 2: DESIGN
✓ Determine who should be involved, how they are going to participate, and when. ✓ Identify anticipated costs; determine if necessary resources and skills are available. ✓ Map the flow of events, linkages, interdependencies, expectations and responsibilities so progress can be assessed at critical points. ✓ Identify factors expected to affect success so they can be tracked and monitored. ✓ Identify information required to measure progress and make adjustments if needed (indicators). ✓ Determine evaluation strategies or tools to capture data for analysis.
STAGE 3: IMPLEMENTATION
✓ Implement strategies and tools for capturing information to assess progress (e.g. participant feedback, outside observer, technical resource opinion, and testimonials). ✓ Listen carefully to participants; seek feedback on process and progress. ✓ Verify the extent to which the consultation plan has been implemented and things are going as planned. ✓ Determine whether modifications are necessary (in methods, timetable, resources or participation) to advance planned objectives.
STAGE 4: FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW UP
✓ Obtain participant feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of the process. ✓ Collect information from several sources, using several methods and more than one person to collect, analyze and interpret the information. ✓ Include information on participant feedback and follow up activities in the final report on the process.
STAGE 5: FINAL EVALUATION AND INTEGRATION
✓ Evaluate the process and outcome, using performance indicators established in the design stage. ✓ Involve participants in evaluation and assessment. ✓ Select tools for obtaining final evaluation data. ✓ Collect and analyze data. ✓ Assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the process. ✓ Document evaluation findings and share lessons learned with colleagues.

5. Reference Sources and Suggested Readings

The preceding guidelines were developed drawing on the work of:

Evaluation Division, Justice Canada, *Evaluation and Citizen Engagement: Information Resources*. Prepared by the Centre for Collaborative Action, Toronto, March 2000.

Taylor-Powell, Ellen , Rossing, Boyd, and Geran, Jean, *Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential*. University of Wisconsin-Extension, Program Development and Evaluation, Wisconsin, July 1998.

Porteous, Nancy, *Making the Most of Our Connections: Evaluation and the Internet*. Presentation to the Canadian Evaluation Society National Conference, May 2000.

Program Evaluation and Review Division, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat: *Policy and Standards for Evaluation in the Government of Canada*, February 2001.

Consultation and Citizen Engagement – Evaluation Approaches

Along with the sources noted above, two other works provide general information on approaches to evaluating consultations and citizen engagement:

Canadian Standards Association, *A Guide to Public Involvement*. Canadian Standards Association, Etobicoke, March 1996.

1999 Report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/c9menu_e.html

The following are references related to the five stages of consultation and engagement processes:

Preparation Stage: Setting Clear and Measurable Objectives

Bennet, C. & Rockwell, K. *Targeting Outcomes of Programs (TOP): An Integrated Approach to Planning and Evaluation*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, December 1995.

Evaluating Feasibility. In E. Taylor-Powell et al. *Evaluating Collaboratives*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, July 1998

Hatry, H., van Houten, T., Platz, M.C. Taylor Greenway, *Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach*. United Way of America, 1996.

Rutman, L. *Planning Useful Evaluations: Evaluability Assessment*. Newbury Park: Sage, 1980.

Sipapenan, P. Bloomberg, L., Ingram D., & Hirsch, J. *Collaborative Initiative to Develop Integrated Services for Children and Families: An Outcome Evaluation Resource*

Manual. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Centre for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI), 1996.

Wholey, J.S. “Assessing the Feasibility and Likely Usefulness of Evaluation” in J.S. Wholey et al. (ed.), *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.

Wholey, J.S. “Evaluability Assessment: Developing Program Theory,” in L. Brockman (ed.) *Using Program Theory in Evaluation: New Directions for Program Evaluation*, No. 33. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987.

Design Stage: Mapping the Evaluation Process

“Mapping the Collaborative Journey,” in E. Taylor-Powell et al. *Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, July 1998.

Mattesich, P.W., & Monsey, B.R. *Collaboration: What makes it work? A Review of Literature on Factors Influencing Success*. St. Paul: Amherst H. Wider Foundation, 1992.

Weiss, H. B. & Greene, J. C. *Evaluation Research: Methods for Assessing Program Effectiveness*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

Rifkin, Susan B., Bjaras, Gunilla and Haglund, J.A. "A New Approach to Community Participation Assessment,” in *Health Promotion International*, 1991, (3) 99-206.

Implementation Stage: Evaluating How You Are Doing

“Evaluating Process,” in Taylor-Powell, Ellen et al. *Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential*. Madison: University of Wisconsin-Extension, July 1998.

Wadsworth, Y. *Everyday Evaluation on the Run*. Melbourne: Action Research Issues Association, 1991.

Feedback and Follow-up: Evaluating Early Results

Taylor-Powell, Ellen and Renner, Marcus, *Collecting Evaluation Data: End of Session Questionnaires*. Madison: University of Wisconsin- Extension, September 2000.

Final Evaluation: Evaluating Outcomes and Lessons Learned

Bennet, C.& Rockwell, K. *Targeting Outcomes of Programs (TOP): An Integrated Approach to Planning and Evaluation*. Unpublished manuscript, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, December 1995.

Bennet, C. F. *Reflective Appraisal of Programs*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University.

“Evaluating Outcomes,” in E. Taylor-Powell et al., *Evaluating Collaboratives: Reaching the Potential*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, July 1998.

Hatry, H., van Houten, T., Platz, M.C. Taylor Greenway, *Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach*. United Way of America, 1996.

Mohr, L. B. *Impact Analysis of Program Evaluation*, 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995.

Weiss, C. H. *Evaluation*, 2nd Edition. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998.

Evaluation Approaches – General

While the suggested readings below were not developed for specific application to consultation and engagement processes, they provide excellent evaluation information, tips and frameworks that can be easily transferred to these processes.

Road Map: Creating and Sustaining Project Impact, Guidelines for Evaluation and Dissemination. http://www.meaf.org/roadmap.html

The Program Manager's Guide to Program Evaluation. Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation. http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/CORE/dox/progman.html

CDC Evaluation Working Group, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. http://www.cdc.gov/eval/resources.htm

The following provides information on methods and techniques for **data collection**:

Dillman, D. A. *Mail and Telephone Surveys: The Total Design Method*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1978.

Leads, C. *Implementing a Mail Questionnaire. Edge Evaluation Guide Sheet*. Columbus: The Ohio State University, Co-operative Extension Service.

Pierto, D.S. (ed.), *Evaluation Sourcebook for Private and Voluntary Organizations*. New York: American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, 1984.

The following offers advice and information on conducting **interviews** and **direct observation** for evaluation purposes:

Fetterman, D.M. Kaftarian, S.J. & Wandersman, A. (eds.), *Empowerment Evaluation: Knowledge and Tools for Self-assessment and Accountability*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996.

Kreuger, R.A. & King, J.A. *Involving Community Members in Focus Groups*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998.

Kreuger, R. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994.

Patton, M.Q. *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980.

Pierto, D.S. (ed.) *Evaluation Sourcebook for Private and Voluntary Organizations*. New York: American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, 1984.

Taylor-Powell, E. & Steele, *Collecting Evaluation Data: Direct Observation.* University of Wisconsin-Extension, Program Development and Evaluation.

Appendix E: Participant Funding Guidelines

Inclusiveness and being accessible to a diverse range of citizens are two key principles of the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy*. These principles, in turn, confer on institutions a responsibility to ensure that adequate resources are available to groups and individuals whose input would be beneficial to policy formulation, or to program and service development, but who lack the resources to participate.

However, while facilitating the participation of Canadians, institutions must also be mindful of their responsibilities for the effective management of public funds, and use discretion in deciding whom to fund, what to fund, and how to provide support.

The participant funding guidelines outlined here are intended to assist public service managers in:

- ensuring that consultation processes are supported by sufficient resources for participants to meet the inclusiveness and accessibility provisions of the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy of the Government of Canada*; and
- balancing the provision of participant funding with the appropriate protection of public funds.

The guidelines are based on the relevant provisions of the Treasury Board *Travel Directive* and other closely related Treasury Board policies, including those covering hospitality, volunteers, risk management, and contracting. For the most part, the guidelines reflect existing government practice. However, information is also included on recently approved exceptions to the current *Travel Directive* provisions for non-public servants – see “Approved exceptions for travellers participating in consultation and citizen engagement activities” below. These exceptions are intended to allow managers greater flexibility in covering participant costs.

In addition, the guidelines include the following three schedules:

- *Schedule 1: Treasury Board Policy Provisions for Participant Funding* is a table describing the allowable types of expenditure, the applicable Treasury Board policy provisions, and guidance on sound financial practice options. It also contains information on the closely related issue of accident, medical and liability insurance coverage for participants.
- *Schedule 2* outlines the elements to be included in a *Letter of Invitation to Participants in a Government Consultation*. Such a letter is required to authorize participant funding.
- *Schedule 3* is a sample *Travel Expense Claim*, which is required to document reimbursement of participant costs.

Who is eligible to receive participant funding?

When making funding decisions, managers should consider the need for:

– participation by individuals and stakeholder groups whose contribution to policy or program development can benefit one or more institutions of the Government of Canada;

– representation from individuals and from non-profit organizations or other groups with limited or restricted financial resources;

– regional representation and/or a demographic mix of Canadians to ensure diversity and to ensure those affected by the consultation or engagement issue are represented; and

– participation by individuals with specific expertise, knowledge or alternative perspectives that will add value to the consultation process.

What participant costs are eligible for funding?

Requests for funding by participants generally fall into two categories – travel and related costs (including approved exceptions) and honoraria – which are treated separately below.

Travel and related costs: The Treasury Board *Travel Directive* defines non-public servants who are on government business as “travellers” and specifies the travel and related costs that may be reimbursed to them. This definition applies to participants in a consultation or citizen engagement process.

The types of expenditures that may be covered include:

– transportation to and from the location of the consultation by air, rail, bus, rental car, or personal motor vehicle, including local ground transportation;

– accommodation, commercial or private;

– meals and incidental allowances, where appropriate during the consultation and based on the standard Treasury Board allowances; and

– reasonable costs related to special assistance while travelling, in the case of participants with disabilities.

Further details on eligible expenses are provided in *Schedule 1*.

Approved exceptions: There are several common types of funding assistance requested by participants that are not normally acceptable under the *Travel Directive* provisions for travellers. However, consultation managers have reported that these provisions work against the policy goal of encouraging broad citizen participation by imposing a financial burden on participants.

Therefore, to better reflect the principles of access and inclusion in consultation and citizen engagement, in January 2001 the Treasury Board Secretariat approved exceptions to several provisions of the *Travel Directive* to permit participant funding in consultation and engagement activities for a two-year period. As a result of these changes, institutions may now:

– reimburse a participant's child care expenses in accordance with the government *Travel Modernization – Travel Policy Adjustments*, dated July 1, 2000;

– reimburse actual and reasonable costs for special assistance to persons with disabilities, elderly persons or youth (minors requiring a parent, guardian or chaperone) while travelling on government business;

– provide accountable travel advances up to $100 to consultation and citizen engagement participants; and

– prepay eligible out-of-pocket expenses for meals and incidentals upon arrival at a consultation.

Managers should consult their institution's travel advisors for advice and assistance concerning these exceptions to the *Travel Directive*.

The above-noted exceptions will remain in force for a two-year period beginning on the effective date of the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy of the Government of Canada*, following which the Treasury Board Secretariat will review their status to determine if they should be extended, modified or withdrawn.

Requests for additional exceptions: Institutions from time to time may request exceptions to provisions of the *Travel Directive* that are over and above those already approved by the Treasury Board Secretariat. Institutions may submit such requests, with appropriate supporting documentation, to the Chief Human Resources Officer of the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Requests for exceptions can be made for a specific consultation exercise or on the basis of an annual consultation and citizen engagement plan. That is, institutions may request that all of the events covered in the annual plan be excepted from particular provisions of the *Travel Directive*. Managers should consult their institution's travel advisors for further information on the exception request process.

Honoraria: An honorarium is a voluntary fee that is paid for services rendered at no charge, but which does not represent the full value of the work received. Managers may consider awarding an honorarium to a participant in a consultation or citizen engagement process when the individual is asked to contribute leadership and commitment beyond the scope of normal participation, or to make a substantial commitment of time.

Decisions to pay honoraria must be made with discretion. In practice, relatively few consultation participants will receive honoraria, as most are volunteers (as defined by the Treasury Board *Volunteer Policy* – see *Schedule 1*) who receive no payment for their work, other than reimbursement of their travel and related costs.

A further important consideration is that participants who receive honoraria effectively become "low level service contractors" whose relationship with the government is determined largely by the Treasury Board *Contracting Policy*. As such, they are not considered volunteers for purposes of liability insurance coverage and other benefits available under the Treasury Board *Volunteer Policy* (see *Schedule 1* for further details).

An institution's managers should also take into account the need for equity in determining the amount of an honorarium. The payment should be consistent with the amounts an institution normally pays for similar services and/or with the payments typically made for such services in other institutions of the Government of Canada. (See *Schedule 1* for general guidance on honoraria amounts.)

How is participant funding authorized and documented?

A *Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Government Consultation*, signed by a manager with delegated authority for the budget(s) to be charged, provides the participant with authority to travel or otherwise incur costs related to consultation or citizen engagement activities. Such a letter entitles a participant to benefit from the provisions of the Treasury Board *Travel Directive* for "Travellers," as well as from government discounts, while on travel status.

To assist institutions in preparing letters of invitation based on sound financial management practices, a sample *Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Government Consultation* is provided in *Schedule 2*. Managers are advised to include specific instructions for participants to follow in completing travel expense claims, based on actual expenses incurred and as governed by the *Letter of Invitation*.

In the case of consultations or citizen engagement processes involving more than one institution, managers should co-ordinate invitation activities so as to ensure that participants are not funded from more than one source for a given set of expenses.

A sample *Travel Expense Claim* form is provided in *Schedule 3*. Participants must submit such a form with supporting documentation (including original receipts) to request either pre-payment or reimbursement of allowable expenses related to participation in consultation or engagement activities. Managers should refer to *Schedule 1* for policy references and further guidance on the travel claim form and process.

Schedule 1: Treasury Board Policy Provisions for Participant Funding

The following table identifies Treasury Board policy provisions governing the funding of participants in a government consultation or citizen engagement initiative. Managers should refer to the information provided here to help determine whether participant funding should be offered, which expenses may be reimbursed to a participant and what procedures to follow when making or considering payment of participant costs. These provisions will apply for a two-year period beginning on the effective date of the *Consultation and Citizen Engagement Policy of the Government of Canada*.

Type of Expense	Description	Policy References	Payment
TRANSPORTATION			
Air Transportation **NOTES:** [1] Option 1 recommended, minimizing risk to Crown and out of pocket costs to participant. [2] Accountable advances may **not** be issued for air transportation, as manager has access to GTS and can arrange for direct billing.	**Option 1. Manager may make air transportation arrangements for participant through Government Travel Services (GTS) to obtain government discounted/group rates and charge costs to Department Travel Account (DTA).** – Department responsible for making reservations, changes and cancellations, and for paying all costs other than incremental costs due to changes/cancellations by participant. – Participant must: inform manager of plans in writing before costs are incurred, by returning signed *Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Government Consultation* (see Schedule 2); and advise manager of changes/cancellation or pay incremental costs. – All tickets or other Crown assets not required by participant must be returned to manager within 14 days of end of meeting. **Restrictions** - Economy class only (based on lowest fare available at time of booking). - No business class or first class entitlement. - Accidental death and dismemberment coverage provided automatically when DTA charged.	TB Travel Directive provisions for "traveller", Section 2-1: Article 2.1.2. Section 2-2: Articles 2.2.1; 2.2.3 Special Travel Authorities, Section 7: Article 7.4 Policy on Using Travellers' Cheques, Travel Cards and Travel Accounts (Responsibility Centre Travel Card (RCTC) and Departmental Travel Account (DTA))	Paid by Department
	Option 2. Participant may make own air transportation arrangements, pay costs, and request reimbursement. - Participant responsible for making reservations, changes and cancellations, paying all costs other than incremental costs due to changes/cancellations by manager, and requesting reimbursement by submitting *Travel Expense Claim* (see Schedule 3) with receipts. **Restrictions** - Economy class only (based on lowest fare available at time of booking). - No business class or first class entitlement. - Flight interruption, cancellation, personal accident or death insurance coverage purchased by participants not reimbursable.	TB Travel Directive provisions for "traveller" Section 2-2: Articles 2.2.2; 2.2.3	Original air ticket (i.e. stub), used boarding pass, and payment receipt required for reimburse-ment Participant must disclose value of refunded or unused portion(s) of all tickets to manager
Intercity Transportation (Train and bus)	**Option 1. Manager may make train arrangements for participant through GTS to obtain government discounted/group rates and charge costs to DTA or charter buses and charge costs to Responsibility Centre Travel Cards (RCTCs).**	TB Travel Directive, Section 2-1: Article 2.1.4 Section 2-3: Article 2.3.1 Section 2-4: Article 2.4.1	Paid by Department

NOTES: [1] Option 1 recommended, minimizing risk to Crown and out of pocket costs to participant. [2] Accountable advance up to $100 may be issued for Option 2 (bus) only, at request of participant, due to logistical problems of manager making bus arrangements and paying for tickets.	- Department responsible for making reservations, changes and cancellations, and for paying all costs other than incremental costs due to changes/cancellations by participant. - Participant must: inform manager of plans in writing before any costs are incurred, by returning signed *Letter of Invitation to Participate*; and advise manager of changes/cancellation or pay incremental costs. - All tickets or other Crown assets not required by participant must be returned to manager within 14 days of end of meeting. **Option 2. Participant may make own train or bus arrangements, pay costs, and request reimbursement.** - Participant responsible for making reservations, changes and cancellations, paying all costs other than incremental costs due to changes/cancellations by manager, and requesting reimbursement by submitting *Travel Expense Claim* with receipts. **Restriction** - Accountable advance (up to $100 per recipient) may be requested for cost of bus fare only	Policy on Using Travellers Cheques, Travel Cards and Travel Accounts TB Travel Directive, Section 2-1: Article 2.1.4 Section 2-3: Article 2.3.1 Section 2-4: Article 2.4.1	Original ticket (i.e. stub) and payment receipt required for reimburse-ment Participant must disclose value of refunded or unused portion(s) of all tickets to manager
Car Rental **NOTES:** [1] Option 1 recommended as being more efficient, other than in exceptional circumstances. [2] Accountable advances may **not** be issued for car rental, as valid credit card number is required for pick-up and billing.	**Option 1. Participant may make own car rental arrangements, pay costs, and request reimbursement.** - Participant responsible for making reservations, changes and cancellations, paying all costs other than incremental costs due to changes/cancellations by manager, and requesting reimbursement by submitting *Travel Expense Claim* with receipts. **Restrictions** - Use and size of rental car authorized at discretion of manager. - Valid credit card number required for pick-up/billing. - Manager must state participant is "traveller on government business" in *Letter of Invitation to Participate* for participant to receive government discounted rate at pick-up. Manager must also provide participant with information from PWGSC Directory. - Participant must purchase Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) coverage with the rental agreement and will be reimbursed for this expense. No other insurance coverage is reimbursable to participants e.g. Personal Accident Insurance (PAI), Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), Personal Effects Coverage (PEC). **Option 2. Manager may reserve rental car for participant through GTS to obtain government-discounted rate.** - Department responsible for making reservations, changes and cancellations, and reimbursing participant. **Restrictions** - Use and size of vehicle authorized at discretion of manager. - Manager must state participant is "traveller on government business" in *Letter of Invitation to Participate* for participant to receive government discounted rate. - Participant must purchase Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) coverage with the rental agreement and will be reimbursed for this expense: No other insurance coverage is reimbursable to participants e.g. Personal Accident Insurance (PAI), Loss Damage Waiver (LDW), Personal Effects Coverage (PEC).	TB Travel Directive, Section 2.9: Article 2.9.2; 2.9.3; 2.9.7; 2.9.8 (see Government Travel Modernization Announcement 2000-06-30) PWGSC Car Rental Directory TB Travel Directive, Section 2.9: Article 2.9.2; 2.9.3; 2.9.7; 2.9.8 (see Government Travel Modernization Bulletin 2000-06-30) PWGSC Car Rental Directory	Original rental agreement, payment receipt and gas receipt(s) required for reimburse-ment Original rental agreement, payment receipt and gas receipt(s)req uired for reimburse-ment

Personal Motor Vehicle (PMV) **NOTE:** Manager may issue an accountable advance of up to $100 for operation of PMV where local ground transportation is not available, at request of participant, and if deemed necessary. Applicable kilometric rate to be used in determining amount of advance.	**Manager may authorize participant to use PMV and pay applicable kilometric rate for most direct route.** - Either manager (i.e. 'employer') or participant (i.e. 'traveller') may request use of PMV. 'Employer requested' or 'traveller requested' kilometric rate will be applied, as applicable. - Kilometric rate based on province of PMV registration. - Manager must inform participant of applicable rate approved, prior to consultation. - Participant must submit *Travel Expense Claim* reflecting approved rate to request reimbursement (receipts not required). **Restrictions** - Reimbursement based on kilometric distance for most direct route from point of departure to destination and return only. - Kilometric rate reflects total cost of operating vehicle. - If kilometric rate claimed, no other transportation costs may be reimbursed (including, but not limited to: additional motor vehicle insurance coverage, insurance deductibles, and maintenance and traffic violations). - Total cost of meals consumed en route, lower kilometric rate, and cost of accommodation (with receipts) shall not exceed amount equal to cost of commercial or government transportation and other local ground transportation costs that would have been authorized by manager if PMV was not used. - Participant will not be paid for travel time.	TB Travel Directive, Section 2.10: Article 2.10.1 Section 2.11: Articles 2.11.1; 2.11.2; 2.11.8 Section 2.12 Section 2.13 Appendix B - Kilometre rates in effect at time of consultation	Kilometres must be recorded by participant and submitted for validation and reimburse-ment Receipts not required
Local Ground Transportation (e.g. To/from airport or meeting) **NOTE:** Accountable advance up to $100 may be issued for local ground transportation, at request of participant, as manager cannot normally arrange for these costs to be billed directly to department.	**Manager may authorize participant to use the following forms of local ground transportation and reimburse: taxis to/from airports/meetings, airporters, shuttle buses, local buses, subways, ferry charges, watercraft, parking, and tolls.** - Participant must submit *Travel Expense Claim* with receipts. **Restriction** - Government taxi vouchers/chits not to be issued to or used by participant (i.e. non public servant).	TB Travel Directive, Section 2.4: Article 2.4.1 Section 2.5: Article 2.5.4 Section 2.11: Article 2.11.4	Original receipts required for reimburse-ment
ACCOMMODATION			
Commercial (i.e. hotel, motel, travel lodge, etc.) **NOTES**: [1] Option 1 recommended to minimize risks to Crown and out of pocket costs to participant. [2] Accountable advances may **not** be issued for accommodation, where manager has access to GTS/ RCTC and can arrange for direct billing.	**Option 1. Manager may make accommodation arrangements for all participants through GTS and charge costs to DTA or make arrangements directly and charge costs to RCTC, to obtain government discounted/group rates where available. Using government facilities should also be considered.** - Department responsible for making reservations, changes and cancellations, and paying all costs other than incremental costs due to changes/cancellations by participant (e.g. 'no show'). - Participant must: inform manager of plans in writing before costs are incurred, by returning signed *Letter of Invitation*; and advise manager of changes/cancellations or pay incremental costs. **Restrictions** - Hotels in white listings of PWGSC Hotel Directory allowable. - Acquisition card may not be used to pay for accommodations. - Only cost of room plus applicable taxes covered: items such as valet service, laundry, dry cleaning, movie rental, mini-bar, room service, or telephone calls are not covered (also for Option 2). ***	TB Travel Directive, Section 3.1: Article 3.1.4 PWGSC Hotel Directory (white listings / standard accommodation only) Policy on Using Travellers Cheques, Travel Cards and Travel Accounts	Paid by Department

	Option 2. Participant may make own accommodation arrangements, pay costs and request reimbursement. - Participant responsible for making reservations, changes and cancellations, paying all costs other than incremental costs due to changes/cancellations by manager and requesting reimbursement by submitting *Travel Expense Claim* (with receipts). **Restrictions** *** - Hotels in white listings of PWGSC Hotel Directory allowable. - Manager must provide list of allowable hotels. - Manager must state participant is "traveller on government business" in *Letter of Invitation* to receive government-discounted rate at check-in. Participant responsible for 'no-show fees'. - Valid credit card number required (confirm reservation/billing).	TB Travel Directive, Section 3.1: Articles 3.1.3; 3.1.4 Section 3.2: Article 3.2.1 PWGSC Hotel Directory (white listings / standard accommodation only)	Original hotel invoice and payment receipt required for reimburse-ment
Private (Private residence) **NOTE:** Accountable advance may not be issued for private accommodation (no cash outlay normally involved).	**Participant may stay in private residence (i.e. with friends or relatives) and claim nightly allowance currently in effect.** - Participant responsible for making all arrangements and requesting reimbursement by submitting *Travel Expense Claim* (no receipts required).	TB Travel Directive, Section 3.4: Article 3.4.1 (see Government Travel Modernization Bulletin 2000-06-30)	No receipts required
	MEAL AND INCIDENTAL ALLOWANCES		
Meals **NOTE:** Accountable advance may **not** be issued for meals, as manager can arrange for group meals/direct billing/meal vouchers or prepay up to $100.	**Manager may authorize meal allowances, as appropriate, in line with TB Travel Directive provisions for "travellers**". - Participant requests payment on *Travel Expense Claim.* - Receipts are **not** required to claim meal allowance. - Refer to information on Hospitality Meals and Travel Claims (below) regarding pre-payment of meals.	TB Travel Directive, Section 4.1: Article 4.1.3 Section 4.7: Article 4.7.1 and Appendix C - Meals Allowance	No receipts required
Hospitality Meals (i.e. prepaid or free meals, including refreshments)	**Managers may prepay or provide free group meals (and/or refreshments) during meetings or issue meal vouchers.** **Restrictions** - Participants may **not** claim or be reimbursed for hospitality meals (meal allowance will be reduced for all hospitality meals). - Meals offered by third parties (e.g. commercial carriers during flights) provided at no extra cost to participants may **not** be claimed or reimbursed.	Hospitality Policy, Section 5.3 Policy on Using Travellers Cheques, Travel Cards and Travel Accounts	Paid by Department Not claimable by participants or reimbursable
Incidentals **NOTE:** Accountable advance may not be issued for incidentals as normally, these represent low dollar value, minimal expenditures.	**Managers may authorize daily incidental allowance, in line with TB Travel Directive provisions for "travellers**". - Includes gratuities (other than those related to meals and taxi use), laundry, dry cleaning, bottled water, telephone calls home, depreciation of luggage and other needed supplies/services attributed to a period in travel status, but for which no reimbursement/allowance is provided under this directive. - Participant requests payment on *Travel Expense Claim.* - Receipts are **not** required to claim incidental allowance. **Restrictions** - Incidental allowance may be paid for each day that the manager authorizes sleeping accommodations. - Reasonable costs related to special assistance while traveling (e.g. for physically disabled/elderly** participants/youth) may be reimbursed as additional incidental expenses, in the absence of appropriate cost-free GTS services (e.g. meet and greet), with the prior approval of manager and upon presentation of receipts.	TB Travel Directive, Section 4.9: Article 4.9.1 (see Government Travel Modernization Bulletin 2000-06-30) Section 7.11: Article 7.11.1 and Appendix C - Meals Allowance ** TB policy exception approved for special assistance to elderly and youth, for use at discretion of manager	No receipts required

TRAVEL ADVANCES and TRAVEL EXPENSE CLAIMS			
***Accountable Travel Advance** **NOTE**: TB exception approved for issuing accountable advances to participants (i.e. non public servants).	**If participant unable to arrive at consultation without receiving financial assistance, authorized manager with delegated E.I. authority may issue accountable travel advance under $100 per recipient.** **NB:** Insofar as possible, costs should be billed directly to department, to minimize out of pocket expenses for participants and reduce risks associated with issuing accountable advances. **Restrictions** - Manager may **not** issue advances for item(s) prepaid by or billed to Department. To receive an advance, participant must: a) self-identify their financial need b) make their request to manager in writing (see Schedule 2) c) indicate specifically for what item(s) advance is needed and estimate associated costs d) indicate their acceptance of responsibility to either account for or repay full amount within 14 days of end of consultation by signing attest statement (see Schedule 2) e) return completed and signed Schedule 2 to manager with other travel plans, within time frame specified f) account for advance by submitting *Travel Expense Claim* (see Schedule 3) with receipts, either immediately upon arrival at consultation or prior to departure. - If participant does not attend after advance issued, full amount must be refunded within calendar 14 days of end of consultation. - Manager advised to undertake recovery action at the end of fourteen day period – Refer to Travel Expense Claim section below for alternatives to issuing accountable travel advances to participants.	Special Travel Authority, Section 7: Article 7.10 Volunteer Policy Contracting Policy Risk Management Policy TB policy exception approved, for use at discretion of manager	Completed and signed Schedule 2 Must be accounted for by participant immediately upon arrival at consultation *or* refunded in full within 14 days of end of consultation
Travel Expense Claim **NOTES:** [1] Three options available to manager for processing of participant travel expense claims. [2] Options 1 and 2 allow for prepayment of meal and incidental allowances up to $100 per recipient, in lieu of issuing accountable travel advance. [3] Options 1 and 2 may not be combined with issuance of accountable travel advance to participant. **Total of accountable advance + prepaid meals/incidentals may NOT exceed $100 per recipient.**	**Option 1. Participant may request prepayment of meal/ incidental allowances prior to consultation and obtain payment upon arrival at consultation (up to $100), at discretion of manager. Reimbursement of all other travel expenses would require submission of second *Travel Expense Claim* (with receipts), within 14 days of consultation ending.** - Manager must advise participant of deadline for submission of completed *Travel Expense Claim* (see Schedule 3) to request prepayment of standard allowances in *Letter of Invitation*. - Manager may request Receiver General cheque or use DBA or petty cash account to pay travel expense claim. **Option 2. Participant may request prepayment of meal/incidental allowances (up to $100), plus request reimbursement of actual expenses incurred prior to arrival at consultation (with receipts), upon arrival at consultation and obtain immediate payment. Reimbursement of all other travel expenses would require submission of second *Travel Expense Claim* (with receipts), within 14 days of consultation ending.** - Manager must advise participant of deadline for submission of claim to request prepayment of allowances in *Letter of Invitation.* - Manager may use combination of pre-issued Receiver General cheques, DBA and petty cash account to pre-pay meal and incidental allowances, and refund actual expenses (with receipts). - Participant must submit second *Travel Expense Claim* for all other costs (with receipts). **Option 3. Participant may submit one claim for ALL meal and incidental allowances and ALL actual expenses (with receipts) within 14 calendar days of end of consultation.** - Reimbursement of travelling expenses (i.e. transportation,	TB Travel Directive, Section 1.2: Article 1.2.2 [1]Financial Administration Act (FAA), Section 34 [1] 1.2.2 states: "The traveller shall: a) obtain prior authorization to travel; b) submit fully completed travel expense claims on the authorized form with necessary supporting documentation, including receipts and explanations as required; c) be responsible for the safeguarding of travel advances and funds provided; d) submit claims involving an advance within 10 working days (i.e. 14 calendar days) after completion of the travel for which the advance was authorized. *** *** **NOTE:** The 14 calendar day time frame is being applied to submission of all travel expense claims for participants, whether or not	Original receipts attached to signed travel claim

	accommodation, meals and incidentals) is not a taxable benefit, unless participant receives honorarium, thereby becoming a contractor and subject to Contracting policy. - Regardless of option chosen, *Travel Expense Claim* form (Schedule 3) must be completed, signed and submitted to obtain payment or request reimbursement of expenses (with receipts).	an advance has been issued, to minimize length of time participant is out of pocket for consultation activities.	
HONORARIA			
Honoraria **NOTE**: Managers should take into account the need for equity in determining the amount of an honorarium. Payment should be consistent with amounts paid elsewhere in same department or agency for similar services and/or with the payments typically made for similar services in other federal organizations.	**Manager may consider awarding an honorarium to participant, when individual is asked to contribute leadership and commitment beyond scope of normal participation, or make substantial commitment of time over weeks or months.** - Participant receiving honorarium effectively becomes "low level service contractor" and is considered "non-volunteer". **Restrictions** - Public servants and individuals whose participation is integral to job duties or role in organization normally not paid honorarium. - Honoraria generally range between \$200-\$500 per day, but not to exceed \$1000 per month. - Amounts larger than \$200 per day normally require justification. - *Letter of Invitation to Participate* may be used to notify participant of honorarium, if total payment less than \$500. - Separate service contract with participant recommended for honorarium exceeding \$500, or where honorarium paid for more than 1-2 days. - Honorarium payments exceeding \$500 per year are taxable benefits and department will issue T4-A. - Recipient required to provide Social insurance Number (SIN) or GST registration number or business registration number prior to receiving payment re: issuance of T4-A.	Special Travel Authorities Policy: Section 7-10 Volunteer Policy Risk Management Policy Contracting Policy, TBS Contracting Policy Notice 1998-4: Preparation of T4-4A Supplementary Slips for Contracts for Services, Section 3 - Technical Instructions on Reporting Requirements for Government Service Contracts.)	Awarded at discretion of manager
CHILD CARE			
Child Care **NOTE**: TB exception approved (January 2001) to extend child care provision to non-public servants	**Manager may reimburse actual costs of childcare, to a maximum of \$75 per night (with receipts), when participant solely responsible for care of dependent child(ren).** - "Dependant" child defined as child under 16 years of age (including children of legal or common-law spouse). - Participant must request reimbursement by submitting *Travel Expense Claim* - Reimbursement of actual dependant care expenses not taxable benefit. **Restrictions** Participant required to: - obtain prior consent of manager; - certify that he/she has sole responsibility for care of dependant child(ren) during consultation period; - provide name(s) of dependant child(ren) and age(s) (i.e. full name) and identify relationship to dependant; - provide care giver's name complete address, telephone number and SIN (payment to care giver is taxable income); - specify relationship of caregiver to participant (e.g. third party, relative, etc.)	TB Travel Directive provisions for "employee" - Section 7.7 - Child Care Assistance extended to "traveller" by TB approved exception At discretion of manager	Prior approval of manager and original receipt required for reimburse-ment
ACCIDENT, MEDICAL AND LIABILITY COVERAGE			
Accident, Medical and Liability Coverage	**Liability coverage for participant traveling on government business varies is dependant upon whether they are viewed as "volunteer" or "non-volunteer".** **Volunteer**	Risk Management Policies Volunteer Policy Interim Policy on	Original receipts required for reimburse-ment when

	- Participant receives no honorarium or payment for services to government, other than reimbursement of travel expenses. - Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) coverage must be purchased by participant and reimbursed by Crown, if car rented. - Manager may elect to reimburse cost of additional medical insurance while participant on travel status. - Participant has same liability coverage as a public servant while on travel status, at no cost to them. **Non-Volunteer** - Participant receives honorarium for additional services to government, or extra length of service. - Honorarium establishes participant as contractor (low value contract) and requires contractor to obtain and absorb costs of their own liability coverage. - If manager makes transportation arrangements and bills costs to either DTA or RCTC, coverage provided under contractual accident coverage benefit provided by supplier. - Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) coverage must be purchased by participant and reimbursed by Crown. - No reimbursement of supplementary medical insurance to participant.	Indemnification in Contracting	applicable

POLICY REFERENCES	
Policy Title	**Web Address (URL)**
TBS Travel Directive ('traveller')	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/hrpubs/TBM_113/TD_e.html
Government Travel Modernization - Travel Policy Adjustments	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/hrpubs/TBM_113/gtm_e.html
Special Travel Authorities	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/hrpubs/TBM_113/STA_e.html
PWGSC - Hotel and Car Directory **	http://hotel.publiservice.gc.ca/ehcd_e.htm
Policy on Using Travellers Cheques, Travel Cards and Travel Accounts	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/dcgpubs/TBM_142/travcheqcardsacc_e.html
Hospitality Policy	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/Pubs_pol/hrpubs/TBM_113/HOSP_e.html
Volunteer Policy	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/hrpubs/vp-pb/vp-pb_e.html
Contracting Policy	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/dcgpubs/Contracting/contractingpol_e.html
Contracting Policy Notice 1998-4: Preparation of T4-A Supplementary Slips for Contracts for Services	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/dcgpubs/ContPolNotices/98-41_e.html
Policy On Indemnification in Contracting	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/dcgpubs/Contracting/2_7RECON_e.html
Risk Management Policy	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/dcgpubs/RiskManagement/riskmanagpol_e.html

** NOTE: PWGSC Hotel and Car Directory is not available outside the federal government: participants do not have access to this site. Department to provide list of hotels and/or car rental companies available at location of meeting. Participant makes own reservations.

Schedule 2: Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Government Consultation

The *Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Government Consultation* provides authority to travel on government business – allowing consultation participants to benefit from government discounts and the provisions of the Treasury Board *Travel Directive* for "Travellers" while on travel status.

General instructions to help draft such a letter are provided in the section below.

Two copies of the letter should be sent to the participant for completion and signature. One signed copy is to be returned to the manager, by the date specified, to accept the invitation to authorize the manager to incur costs on behalf of the participant and, where requested, to arrange for the issuance of an accountable advance or prepayment of meal and incidental allowances. The other copy is to be retained by the participant, brought to the consultation to obtain government discounts while in travel status, and submitted with any claim for reimbursement to the travel authority.

A manager with delegated Expenditure Initiation (E.I.) authority for the budget(s) to be charged signs the letter to the participant. A blank *Participant's Travel Expense Claim* form should be included with the letter (a sample form is provided in *Participant Funding Guidelines: Schedule 3).* The manager may also wish to include an information sheet for the participant, listing current TB rates, relevant PWSGC Hotel and Car Rental Directory excerpts, deadline dates for requesting accountable advances, and so forth.

General Instructions (Sample Letter)

Following the normal address and salutation lines, the letter should begin with an introductory statement; e.g., "You are invited to participate in a Government of Canada consultation meeting, sponsored by (*name of institution*) which will be held at (*location*) on (*dates*)."

The letter should go on to address the points listed below, as appropriate:

1. This letter officially authorizes you to travel on government business, for the purpose of attending a Government of Canada consultation. During your period in travel status, you will be entitled to benefit from the provisions for a "traveller on government business", as provided under the Treasury Board *Travel Directive* and summarized below. These are not taxable benefits to the recipient.

2. Two copies of this letter are enclosed. You are asked to complete and sign both. One signed copy is to be returned to (*name, address, etc, of authorized manager*) by (*date*). Once received, this document will be deemed as written confirmation of your intention to participate in the consultation. It will authorize (*the manager*) to incur expenses on your behalf, in line with the selections you have made in this letter. It will also serve as your formal acknowledgement and acceptance of the terms, conditions and responsibilities associated with participating in the consultation.

You are asked to bring the second copy of this letter with you to the consultation, so that you may benefit from government discounts on items such as hotel or car rentals, while on travel status. You are also asked to attach the second copy to your *Participant's Travel Expense Claim* form, along with your **original receipts**, when you request reimbursement or payment of your expenses. A claim form is enclosed for your convenience.

3. The Department will make the following travel arrangements on your behalf. Although you are not required to make an outlay of funds for these items, please include them on your *Participant's Travel Expense Claim* in Section A and attach your ticket stub and boarding pass. Indicate your preferred mode of transportation below or indicate if modes other than air or train are required:

   – Transportation by (*indicate mode*): ___ air ___ train ___ other (*specify*)

   – Commercial accommodation at (*name and address of establishment*)

4. You may also make your own travel arrangements. However, you will be responsible for making all reservations, including any changes and cancellations. You will also be responsible for paying all associated costs and requesting reimbursement from the Department, by submitting your *Participant's Travel Expense Claim* (with receipts). The Department will **not** reimburse costs resulting from changes in your plans or cancellation (e.g. no-show fees) unless the Department requests such changes or cancellations.

5. Costs will be reimbursed in line with the Treasury Board *Travel Directive* provisions for "travellers." You are strongly advised to contact (*authorized manager*) before finalizing your travel plans, to ensure no non-reimbursable costs are incurred. Any amount above that paid by the Department to make arrangements for you will **not** be reimbursed, unless justifiable. Travel advances will **not** be issued to participants who choose to make their own arrangements, when the Department is able to make these arrangements on a participant's behalf. The Department must be kept informed of your plans (including all changes or cancellation) if you intend to request reimbursement of your costs.

6. Please indicate your planned mode of transportation and accommodation arrangements below and ensure your *Participant's Travel Expense Claim* (Section B) reflects the same information:

   – Transportation by (*indicate mode*): ________________

   – Commercial accommodation at (*name and address of establishment, if other than that selected by the Department*) to a maximum of $____ per night for the cost of the room and applicable taxes only.

   – Private accommodation (a standard per night allowance of $____ will be paid).

7. The Department will reimburse or pay the participant costs listed below – in line with current Treasury Board *Travel Directive* provisions for "travellers" on government business (i.e. non public servants) and standard allowance rates in effect. You may request reimbursement or payment for these costs by submitting a *Participant's Travel Expense Claim* form (Section B and C).

   – Local ground transportation to and from the meeting (Section B, receipts required).

   – Daily meal allowance of $____ per day (Section C, no receipts required). (NOTE: Prepaid or free meals, such as those provided by air carriers en route or offered by the Department at the meeting, are not eligible for reimbursement.)

   – Daily incidental allowance of $____ per day, for each night of accommodation authorized (Section C, no receipts required). (NOTE: The incidental allowance is intended to cover the cost of items such as gratuities (other than those related to meals and taxi usage), dry cleaning, bottled water, telephone calls home, depreciation of luggage and other needed suppliers or services while on travel status, for which no other provision is made.)

8. Treasury Board provides managers with special exceptions to reimburse participants for the actual cost of the following two items. Please indicate below if you would like reimbursement of either of these special provisions considered, and complete Section D on your claim form if authorized:

   – Reasonable incidental costs for special assistance while travelling, for persons with disabilities, elderly persons, youth or minors (i.e. chaperon), where no free services are available (e.g. "meet and assist"). Receipts are required for reimbursement. Estimated cost: $______.

   – Childcare costs for participants who have sole responsibility for the care of dependant children (i.e. under 16 years of age). Reasonable, actual costs will be reimbursed, upon completion of the declaration below and presentation of an invoice or payment receipt, to a maximum of $75 per night.

     For authorization to claim childcare expenses, a participant is asked to make the following declaration (signed and returned to the manager as part of the *Letter of Invitation*):

     – I certify that I have sole responsibility for the care of (*number)* dependant children under 16 years of age during the period *(dates)* of the consultation.

     – The name(s) and age(s) of my dependant(s) are as follows *(list)*.

     – The caregiver's name, telephone number and Social Insurance Number are *(list)*.

– My relationship to the caregiver is *(specify)*.

– I estimate the total cost of childcare to be ($____ x ____ nights = $_____).

9. As per our discussions, you have agreed to perform several additional tasks during the consultation (*specify, with dates and timeframe*). An honorarium in the amount of $______ will be paid to you, to show the Department's appreciation for your extra participation. This amount is to be reflected in Section E of your travel expense claim. Please note that recipients of honoraria lose their volunteer status and become contractors (i.e. non-volunteers). Honorarium payments exceeding $500 per year are a taxable benefit to the recipient, for which the Department will be required to issue a T4-A. Therefore, your Social Insurance Number (or GST Registration Number or Business Registration Number) is required to make the payment:

   – Social Insurance Number: ______________________________
   – GST Registration Number: ______________________________
   – Business Registration Number: ______________________________

   ***NOTE**: Not all participants receive honoraria. An honorarium is awarded at the discretion of the manager, not at the request of the participant. Managers should only insert this item in the letter when the participant will be receiving an honorarium of less than $500. If the amount to be awarded exceeds $500, a separate service contract should be prepared.*

10. The Department will **not** reimburse the following costs to participants:

   – your travel time to or from the consultation;

   – any expenses not specifically referred to in this letter;

   – incremental costs due to a change of plans or cancellation by the participant, where the participant has not advised the manager in writing by the date specified below and thus has not avoided incurring additional costs.

11. If you would like to participate in this consultation, but are unable to do so unless first receiving an advance from the Department, please complete the "Request for Special Financial Assistance" provided with this letter (*see below*) and return to the manager by (*due date*). The amount issued to you through this advance will be deducted from any monies owed to you as a result of your travel expense claim.

   Please note that misinterpretations of government policy are not considered a legitimate basis for reimbursement or payment of expenses. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact (*official's name, address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address*).

12. If you agree to the foregoing, please complete the following Declaration of Acceptance:

"I hereby acknowledge and accept the terms and conditions as specified in this travel authority and that I have not received support (financial, in-kind, in-lieu) from any other source for items on the *Participant's Travel Expense Claim* or for honoraria."

_________________________	__________	(______)___________
Participant Signature	Date	Daytime Phone Number

Participant Request for Special Financial Assistance

If you are unable to participate without receiving financial assistance from the Department, please select ONE of the following options and return the requested information to (*manager's name, address, etc.*) by (*due date*).

OPTION 1: Accountable travel advance (up to $100 per recipient)

You may request an accountable advance of up to $100 per recipient to assist you with paying for travel costs which the Department cannot pay directly on your behalf. Accountable advances are issued at the discretion of the manager.

If you receive an advance of public funds, you are required by regulation to do one of the following **within 14 calendar days** of the end of the consultation:

– complete, sign and submit a *Participant's Travel Expense Claim* form to the manager, with the required receipts, to account for the use of the funds; or

– refund the advance in full, preferably with a cheque payable to the Receiver General for Canada.

To request an accountable advance, please indicate the reason(s), state your social insurance number (for tax purposes) and sign the statement of acknowledgement of responsibility below:

1. For which item(s) is the advance needed and what is the estimated cost (including taxes)?

    - intercity bus ticket: estimated cost $_________

    - ground transportation (to/from airport/meeting): estimate cost $_________

    - use of private motor vehicle: estimated cost (kilometric rate x kilometres) $_________

2. What is your Social Insurance Number (SIN)? ______________________

(NOTE: If the advance is not repaid in full or cleared by a claim within 14 days, or recovered, the amount will become a taxable benefit to the participant and a T4A will be issued.)

As a recipient of public funds, I accept responsibility to either account for or repay the amount in full within 14 calendar days of the end of the consultation. If this amount is not recovered from me, I understand that the issuing Department will undertake a recovery action.

______________________________________ _______________

Participant Signature Date

OPTION 2: Prepayment of meal and incidental allowances (up to $100 per recipient)

In lieu of an accountable advance, I request prepayment of my meal and incidental allowances, to a maximum of $100.00, immediately upon my arrival at the consultation. I understand that it is my responsibility to submit a *Participant's Travel Expense Claim* form to the manager to request payment and that the manager will calculate the amount payable to me, in line with Treasury Board Travel Directive provisions for "travellers".

______________________________________ ________________

Participant Signature Date

Schedule 3: Participant's Travel Expense Claim

All consultation participants must complete, sign and submit this form to request reimbursement of actual expenses (with **original receipts**) and payment of standard allowances for meals and incidentals.

Participants must attach to this claim their *Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Government Consultation* signed by an authorized manager.

Participants must submit their completed forms to the manager no later than 14 calendar days after the end of the consultation.

Where special financial assistance has been granted, failure to submit an expense claim within this timeframe will result in a recovery action by the Department.

Travel Expense Claim Form (Sample)

DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION (To be completed by Department)

Rider GTS: Travel Authorization Number (TAN)	Rider GTS: Traveller Identification Number (TIN)	
Document Reference	Branch	Responsibility Centre
Commitment Number	Financial Coding	

TRIP INFORMATION (To be completed by Participant)

Purpose of Trip: Consultation on ___________________________	Location of Consultation:
Point of Departure:	Duration of Consultation: _________ (total days/hours)
Departure Date: ________________ Time: ________ am/pm	Start Date: ________________ Time: ________ am/pm
Arrival Date: ________________ Time: ________ am/pm	Finish Date: ________________ Time: ________ am/pm

TRAVELLER INFORMATION (To be completed by Participant)

Name of Traveller	
Mailing Address (including postal code)	
Home Telephone Number (including area code) Business Telephone Number (including area code)	Fax Number (including area code) E-mail Address

EXPENDITURE INFORMATION (Sections A to E to be completed by Participant)

SECTION A: Travel Arrangements Made and Paid for by Department		
Transportation: Check (√) applicable mode. **Attach ticket stub and boarding pass.**	Air: ___ Train: ___ Bus: ___ Other (specify): ___________________	$ ______
Accommodation: State place and duration.	Accommodation at ____ From: ________________________ To: ________________________	$ ______
SECTION B: Travel Arrangements Made and Paid for by Participant (Receipts required for reimbursement)		
Transportation: Check (√)	Air: ____ Train: ____ Bus: ____	

applicable mode of transportation, provide other applicable information, and state total cost ($ amount) in right-hand column. **Attach receipts.**	Car Rental (including Collision Damage Waiver insurance): _____ Private Motor Vehicle (PMV): Traveller Requested ___ or Employer Requested Rate ___ Province of Vehicle Registration: ________________ Calculation of PMV Allowance: ____ kilometres x $ _________ rate requested Local ground transportation (specify taxi, bus, etc.) _______________________	$ ______
Accommodation: State place and duration. **Attach receipts**	Accommodation at ____ From: _______________________ To: _______________________ (Note: Receipts are required for stays at commercial establishments such as hotels, inns, lodges, etc. Receipts are not required if the participant paid for accommodation at a private residence. A maximum of $50 per night is allowed for paid accommodation at a private residence.)	$ ______
SECTION C: Standard Allowances for Participants' Meals and Incidentals (Receipts not required)		
Daily Meal Allowance(s) (NOTE: Prepaid or free meals – e.g. those provided by air carriers, accommodation hosts or consultation organizers – are **not** claimable)	Breakfast(s) @ $__________ x _____ (no. of breakfasts) Lunch(es) @ $__________ x _____ (no. of lunches) Dinner(s) @ $__________ x _____ (no. of dinners)	$ ______
Daily Incidental Allowance(s)	Incidentals @ $__________ x _____ (no. of overnight stays)	$ ______
SECTION D: Other Provisions for Participants (Pre-authorization of manager *and* receipts required)		
Special assistance while travelling (i.e. for physically disabled, elderly travellers or youth/minors)		$ ______
Child Care Allowance (Declaration required as per *Letter of Invitation to Participate in a Government Consultation*)		$ ______
SECTION E: Honorarium Paid to Participants (For information only)		
Indicate amount of honorarium payment(s) you will receive or have received for participation in this government consultation		$ ______

TOTAL COST AND REIMBURSEMENT (Amount payable to Participant or amount owed to Department)

TOTAL COST OF TRIP (Add amounts in Sections A to D)	$ ______
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS (To be subtracted from Total Cost): Expenses paid by Department (enter amount stated in Section A above): $ __________________ Accountable Advance: $ __________________ Pre-payment of Meals and Incidentals: $__________________	$ ______
AMOUNT PAYABLE TO PARTICIPANT (Total Cost minus Total Deductions)	$ ______
AMOUNT DUE TO DEPARTMENT (When Total Deductions exceed Total Cost) Participant must enclose the amount due in a money order or cheque payable to the Receiver General for Canada	$ ______

DECLARATION (To be signed by Participant and by Department Manager)

I hereby certify that this account is correct and just in all respects and that the expenses were incurred on Government business. Signature of Participant and Date:
Requisitioned for payment pursuant to Section 33 of the Financial Administration Act and certified in accordance with the Payments and Settlements Requisitioning Regulations (1997). Signature of Manager and Date:

TBS 01/01/2001