

**OECD Public Governance Reviews**

# **Open Government Scan of Canada**

**DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING AN OPEN  
GOVERNMENT STRATEGY**





OECD Public Governance Reviews

# Open Government Scan of Canada

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING AN OPEN  
GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

This document, as well as any data and map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

**Please cite this publication as:**

OECD (2023), *Open Government Scan of Canada: Designing and Implementing an Open Government Strategy*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/1290a7ef-en>.

ISBN 978-92-64-88643-8 (print)  
ISBN 978-92-64-55187-9 (pdf)  
ISBN 978-92-64-98527-8 (HTML)  
ISBN 978-92-64-97107-3 (epub)

OECD Public Governance Reviews  
ISSN 2219-0406 (print)  
ISSN 2219-0414 (online)

**Photo credits:** Cover © Sergii Figurnyi/Shutterstock.com.

Corrigenda to publications may be found on line at: [www.oecd.org/about/publishing/corrigenda.htm](http://www.oecd.org/about/publishing/corrigenda.htm).

© OECD 2023

---

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <https://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.

---

# Foreword

Policies and practices that foster government openness and citizen participation are widely recognised as important contributors to a robust democracy. The results of the OECD's first Trust Survey (2022) show that governments across the OECD are seen by many as unresponsive to public feedback and as providing insufficient opportunities to participate in policy making. The findings highlight that citizens care about having a government that offers access to government information, provides opportunities to engage in the policy-making process and responds to public feedback and demands.

Canada is widely recognised as a global leader in the area of open government thanks to its co-chairmanship of the Steering Committee of the OGP in 2018 - 2019 and continued involvement as a Steering Committee member until 2023, as well as the country's highly developed open data and open information agenda, which includes practices such as the renowned Open Government Portal. To continue making progress towards an integrated open government agenda and, more specifically, to receive tailored advice on the design of the country's first-ever holistic open government strategy, the Canadian government requested the support of the OECD in identifying the strengths and opportunities for improvement of its current agenda to open up the government.

The OECD Open Government Scan of Canada takes stock of past reform efforts, analyses the present scenario and shows a path for Canada to successfully design, implement, monitor and evaluate this open government strategy. The Scan provides an evidence-based assessment of the country's frameworks for and governance of open government reforms and their implementation against selected provisions of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017). The Scan benefitted from more than 20 interviews with governmental and non-public stakeholders, data collected through questionnaires answered by the Federal government, and extensive desk research by the OECD Secretariat.

The Scan finds that the adoption of a holistic federal open government strategy can indeed help Canada set a vision, objectives, and a narrative for its open government agenda in the medium and long term. In addition to opening the door for promoting more far-reaching governance mechanisms and tools, such as the country's first maturity models in the field of open government, the Strategy presents an opportunity to broaden Canada's understanding of open government. This means addressing citizen and stakeholder participation more, while also linking open government reforms more directly with improving citizens' trust in public institutions and strengthening democracy. The OECD Open Government Scan of Canada recommends concrete actions for Canada to consider in the short, medium and long term to strengthen the enabling environment for open government and to design a successful open government strategy. Ultimately, the recommendations aim to support Canada in the move towards a fully integrated open government ecosystem.

This document was approved by the Public Governance Committee via written procedure on 27 May 2022 and prepared for publication by the OECD Secretariat.

# Acknowledgements

The OECD Secretariat wishes to express its gratitude and acknowledge all the institutions and individuals that have contributed to this Open Government Scan. This Scan was carried out in a virtual setting, due to COVID-19-related restrictions. The OECD team would like to thank all involved stakeholders for their flexibility in making themselves available for online interviews and substantive discussions of the results of this work.

In particular, the OECD would like to thank the team of the Open Government Division of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat for their dedication and commitment throughout the process, including mobilising all relevant stakeholders. The leadership of Mélanie Robert, former Executive Director for Open Government was essential for this Review. Special thanks go to Jean Cardinal (Director, Open Government), Benoît Frenette (former Acting Director, Open Government), Sarah MacLeod (Team Lead, Open Government), Peter A. Ferguson (Senior Policy Advisor, Open Government), Sarah Bérubé (Senior Policy Analyst, Open Government), and Lucas Beal (Senior Policy Analyst, Open Government) for their commitment and continuous support.

The OECD wishes to extend its gratitude to all institutions from the Canadian Federal and Provincial administrations and non-governmental stakeholders from academia, civil society organisations, and representatives of the private sector that provided inputs and support throughout the project. Overall, the OECD organized more than 30 hours of in-depth interviews, which were instrumental in further improving the OECD's understanding of the Canadian context.

This Review was prepared by the Public Governance Directorate (GOV) of the OECD under the leadership of Director Elsa Pilichowski. The report was drafted under the strategic direction of Alessandro Bellantoni, Head of the Open Government, Civic Space and Public Communications Unit in GOV. The process was led by David Goessmann with the support of Mauricio Mejia. David Goessmann also co-ordinated the drafting of the Scan, with the support of Mauricio Mejia and Benedict Stefani.

Joshua Yeremiyew provided administrative support throughout the Review and Benedict Stefani prepared the document for publication. In addition, the Review team would like to thank those OECD colleagues who provided comments, including Sara Fyson, Emma Cantera, and Andrea Uhrhammer.

# Table of contents

Foreword	3
Acknowledgements	4
Executive Summary	7
<b>1 Setting the scene</b>	<b>9</b>
Introduction	10
Open government is a culture of governance	12
Situating this Scan in the wider OECD work on measuring the impact of open government reforms	14
What is an Open Government Strategy?	17
Formulating an Open Government Strategy	20
Open government in Canada today	25
References	28
Notes	29
<b>2 How to successfully design and implement an Open Government Strategy in Canada?</b>	<b>30</b>
The Strategy of the Strategy: Creating the context for an Open Government Strategy in Canada	31
Ensuring the existence of the necessary legal, regulatory and policy frameworks for an Open Government Strategy in Canada	34
Creating institutional arrangements and co-ordinating the implementation of the Open Government Strategy	38
Monitoring and evaluating Canada's Open Government Strategy	48
Communicating around Canada's Open Government Strategy	50
Ensuring the successful operationalisation and take-up of the Open Government Strategy	51
Moving towards an Open State approach	57
References	59
Notes	61
<b>3 Conclusion: Towards an integrated open government ecosystem in Canada</b>	<b>62</b>
Policy recommendations	64
References	66
<b>Annex A. Practical considerations to design an Open Government Strategy</b>	<b>67</b>
References	76

## FIGURES

Figure 1.1. The operational dimensions of the OECD definition of open government: openness from a government perspective	13
Figure 1.2. The operational dimensions of the OECD definition of open government: openness from a citizen perspective	14
Figure 1.3. The OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments	15
Figure 1.4. The OECD Openness Spectrum	17
Figure 1.5. Key elements to be included in an Open Government Strategy	21
Figure 1.6. Key elements of an open government assessment	22
Figure 2.1. Key terms referred to in OECD Member countries' definitions of open government	32
Figure 2.2. OECD Member countries' main policy documents on open government	36
Figure 2.3. The OGS anchored in Canada's existing policy framework	37
Figure 2.4. TBS's role as a Central agency and as a Department	40
Figure 2.5. The proposed new role of the Open Government Office of TBS	44
Figure 2.6. Availability of guidelines for civil servants on open government at the central/federal level	52
Figure 2.7. Available trainings for civil servants at the central/federal government in OECD member countries	53
Figure 3.1. The OGS could be a first step towards a fully integrated open government ecosystem in Canada	63
Figure A.1. Example of a principle-based approach to an OGS	68
Figure A.2. Example of a sectorial approach	69
Figure A.3. Taking a tool-based approach to an OGS	70
Figure A.4. Example of a target-audience approach	71
Figure A.5. Example of an Open State approach to an OGS	72
Figure A.6. Including all initiatives in the Open Government Strategy	74
Figure A.7. Defining a whole-of-government open government working/action plan	74
Figure A.8. Defining independent open government working plans for each institution	75
Figure A.9. Defining initiatives at different paces	76

## TABLES

Table 1.1. The difference between a "strategy" and an "action plan"	17
Table 1.2. Structure and description of Treasury Board policy instruments	20
Table 2.1. Key institutional responsibilities for open government in Canada	38
Table 2.2. Overview of the most important co-ordination mechanisms for open government policies in Canada	44
Table A.1. Examples of open government tools	69



# Executive Summary

Open government is based on the idea that the public should be able to see, understand, contribute to, monitor, and evaluate public decisions and actions. Defined by the OECD as “a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth”, open government constitutes a change of paradigm for governments, public administrations, civil servants, citizens, and public policy stakeholders in general. The implementation of open government reforms can help countries address complex policy challenges and improve policy efficiency, effectiveness and compliance. Over time, it can reinforce democracy, by improving inclusive and responsive policymaking and service design and delivery, and, hence, strengthen citizen trust in public institutions and governments.

Canada has a long history of implementing reforms that seek to strengthen the relationship between government and citizens. Today, the country is widely seen as a leader in the global open government community and stands out for its highly developed open data and open information agenda. Accordingly, Canada compares well in various indicators measuring the openness of government. For example, it ranked first globally in the most recent Open Data Barometer and fifth in the OECD OURdata index. Moreover, successive Canadian administrations have shown high levels of political support for open government. Thanks to a highly effective, hands-on approach to open government by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS), the main co-ordinating institution of Canada’s open government agenda, open government initiatives (while not always labelled as such) can today be found in all federal government ministries and departments and at all levels of government.

Building on its achievements, Canada is now working to increase the impact of the open government agenda on citizens’ trust in public institutions and, ultimately, strengthen democracy. Notably, Canada is seeking to broaden and extend the understanding of open government across the federal government, moving from a focus on open data and open information to other important dimensions, such as citizen and stakeholder participation and the protection and promotion of civic space. Moreover, like many other OECD Member countries, Canada is working to identify, quantify and communicate the causal link between the implementation of open government initiatives and their impact on the functioning of the public sector. Finally, the country seeks to complement and bolster its highly effective “start-up approach” to open government with a more “classical” policy approach in order to consolidate Canada’s open government efforts.

To promote a more holistic approach to open government - as in other OECD Member countries such as Colombia, Finland, or Italy - Canada has decided to develop its first umbrella policy framework for open government at the federal level. The design of an open government strategy is an ambitious undertaking that needs to be adapted to the specific context of each country and that may require far-reaching reforms. The assessment presented in this Scan is based on the premise that Canada plans to develop an open government strategy that focuses on creating the necessary governance arrangements and mechanisms to align all strategies and initiatives that are linked to the promotion of openness and bring them together under a coherent narrative. The policy recommendations provided in this Scan build on Canada’s

achievements and aim to support the government in building a wider ecosystem that can ensure sustainability and continuity of reform efforts in the medium and long term.

## Selected policy recommendations

- Ground the open government strategy in a broad understanding of the concept of open government, by including elements related to the promotion of transparency, accountability, citizen and stakeholder participation, and the protection of civic space.
- Couple the design of the strategy with a review of Canada's Directive on Open Government.
- Ensure that the strategy complements and strengthens existing policy frameworks, including the National Action Plan designed as part of the country's participation in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the Policy on Service and Digital.
- Empower the Open Government Office of the Treasury Board Secretariat, including by reviewing the positioning of the open government portfolio with a view to elevating it.
- Give the leadership of the citizen and stakeholder participation portfolio to the Treasury Board Secretariat, as part of its role in co-ordinating Canada's new open government strategy.
- Ensure the take-up of the open government strategy across government, including by updating the mandates of Departmental Open Government Coordinators.
- Build a network of civil society stakeholders with a broader range of interests and expertise to match and support the wider focus of the open government strategy and play a key role in its implementation.
- Couple the development of the strategy with the design of an open government maturity model based on a clear theory of change, indicators, and benchmarks.
- Create an integrated system to monitor the strategy and its implementation and make results available on the Open Government Portal to allow public and non-public stakeholders to track progress on a constant basis.
- Build the necessary skills for the successful operationalisation of the open government strategy, including by designing an (online) open government toolkit and by creating an online course on the open government strategy.
- Link the implementation of the open government strategy with ministers' mandate letters.
- Use the strategy to support existing open government agendas at the subnational level, including by considering the inclusion of a dedicated section on open government at the subnational level in the strategy.

A full list of recommendations can be found in Chapter 3.

# 1 Setting the scene

---

This Chapter starts by introducing the OECD’s approach to open government and by explaining the process used for the collection of data and the elaboration of the Review’s policy recommendations. It then discusses what an Open Government Strategy represents in the Canadian context, including its key elements. The final part of this Chapter situates Canada’s open government agenda in the wider context, analysing the main achievements and identifying areas of opportunity moving ahead.

---

## Introduction

Open government constitutes a change of paradigm in the way public institutions and civil servants interact with citizens and stakeholders in general. Under this new paradigm, citizens have access to all kinds of relevant government information and data and are enabled to fully participate in the democratic life of their country throughout the electoral and policy cycles.

Defined by the OECD as “a culture of governance that promotes the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in support of democracy and inclusive growth” (OECD, 2017<sup>[1]</sup>), open government is intended to be a wide concept encompassing all kinds of initiatives that aim to bridge the existing gaps between citizens and their public administrations.

Canada has been a pioneer in several fields of open government, including open government data and access to information. The country is today recognised as one of the leaders of the global open government community, having for example shaped the global debate around open government issues as the co-chair of the Steering Committee of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) between 2018 and 2019, and by being among the most committed and vocal members of the OECD Working Party on Open Government (WPOG), including as a member of the WPOG’s bureau. At a national level, Canada has a long tradition of promoting open government reforms, dating back at least to the entry into force of the Access to Information Act in 1983. Since 2011, the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) of the Federal Government of Canada has been leading an ambitious open government agenda, co-ordinating Canada’s participation in the OGP and promoting open data and open information practices across the whole of the federal government and aligning open government policies and practices in partnership with Canada’s provinces and territories.

This *OECD Open Government Scan of Canada* was conducted at the request of the Treasury Board Secretariat of the Federal Government of Canada, which has been also the main counterpart for the Scan-process. TBS has sought OECD advice following an Evaluation of the Open Government Program (hereafter “the Evaluation”) that was prepared by the TBS Internal Audit and Evaluation Bureau for the Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee (Government of Canada, 2021<sup>[2]</sup>). The Evaluation assessed the relevance and effectiveness of the Open Government Program, covering fiscal years 2016-2017 to 2018-19. Among other findings, it highlighted that “there is a need for a strong vision of open government in the Government of Canada”. As its primary action to implement the recommendations made in the Evaluation, the Treasury Board Secretariat decided to design a Federal Open Government Strategy (OGS) as the main guiding document on open government for the federal government.

The research and interviews conducted for this OECD Open Government Scan are aligned with the findings of the Evaluation and highlight the opportunities that an Open Government Strategy would provide. **The primary objective of this Scan is therefore to support Canada in the successful design and implementation of its first whole-of-government Open Government Strategy.** The present document provides recommendations that are tailored to the Canadian context and that are based on OECD best practices in the area. In so doing, the Scan assesses Canada against key dimensions of the [OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government](#) (OECD, 2017<sup>[1]</sup>), the first and only internationally recognised legal instrument in the area of open government (Box 1.1).

Following a definition of the concept of open government (this section), the Scan highlights important contextual elements for Canada’s ambition to design an Open Government Strategy, discussing achievements to-date, as well as areas of opportunity lying ahead (Open government in Canada today). Based on this context, chapter 2 then provides recommendations that Canada could take into consideration when designing and implementing its first OGS. The conclusion discusses how the OGS could be a first step towards a fully integrated open government ecosystem while the final section of this Scan discusses elements that should be included in any OGS, from vision to objectives and concrete open government initiatives.

### Box 1.1. The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017<sup>[1]</sup>) is the result of years of extensive research, data-collection and in-country policy analysis. Recognising that open government is critical to building citizen trust and to achieve a broad range of policy outcomes, the Recommendation provides guidance to countries that aim to consolidate their open government agendas and lists a set of criteria for the design and implementation of successful open government policies. These ten provisions concern not only the enabling environment for open government, for example an adequate legal framework, but also implementation frameworks, such as public communication processes, and directions for cutting-edge developments, such as the move towards an “open state”.

#### The 10 Provisions of the Recommendation

RECOMMENDS that Adherents develop, adopt and implement open government strategies and initiatives that promote the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation in designing and delivering public policies and services, in an open and inclusive manner. To this end, Adherents should:

1. take measures, in all branches and at all levels of the government, to develop and implement open government strategies and initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders and to foster commitment from politicians, members of parliaments, senior public managers and public officials, to ensure successful implementation and prevent or overcome obstacles related to resistance to change;
2. ensure the existence and implementation of the necessary open government legal and regulatory framework, including through the provision of supporting documents such as guidelines and manuals, while establishing adequate oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance;
3. ensure the successful operationalisation and take-up of open government strategies and initiatives by: (i) Providing public officials with the mandate to design and implement successful open government strategies and initiatives, as well as the adequate human, financial, and technical resources, while promoting a supportive organisational culture; (ii) Promoting open government literacy in the administration, at all levels of government, and among stakeholders.
4. co-ordinate, through the necessary institutional mechanisms, open government strategies and initiatives - horizontally and vertically - across all levels of government to ensure that they are aligned with and contribute to all relevant socio-economic objectives;
5. develop and implement monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms for open government strategies and initiatives by: (i) Identifying institutional actors to be in charge of collecting and disseminating up-to-date and reliable information and data in an open format; (ii) Developing comparable indicators to measure processes, outputs, outcomes, and impact in collaboration with stakeholders; and (iii) Fostering a culture of monitoring, evaluation and learning among public officials by increasing their capacity to regularly conduct exercises for these purposes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
6. actively communicate on open government strategies and initiatives, as well as on their outputs, outcomes and impacts, in order to ensure that they are well-known within and outside government, to favour their uptake, as well as to stimulate stakeholder buy-in;

7. proactively make available clear, complete, timely, reliable and relevant public sector data and information that is free of cost, available in an open and non-proprietary machine-readable format, easy to find, understand, use and reuse, and disseminated through a multi-channel approach, to be prioritised in consultation with stakeholders;
8. grant all stakeholders equal and fair opportunities to be informed and consulted and actively engage them in all phases of the policy-cycle and service design and delivery. This should be done with adequate time and at minimal cost, while avoiding duplication to minimise consultation fatigue. Further, specific efforts should be dedicated to reaching out to the most relevant, vulnerable, underrepresented, or marginalised groups in society, while avoiding undue influence and policy capture;
9. promote innovative ways to effectively engage with stakeholders to source ideas and co-create solutions and seize the opportunities provided by digital government tools, including through the use of open government data, to support the achievement of the objectives of open government strategies and initiatives;
10. while recognising the roles, prerogatives, and overall independence of all concerned parties and according to their existing legal and institutional frameworks, explore the potential of moving from the concept of open government toward that of open state.

Source: OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017<sup>[1]</sup>), <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438>.

### ***The process of this OECD Open Government Scan of Canada***

This OECD Open Government Scan is part of a wider collaboration between the Open Government and Civic Space Unit of the OECD and the federal government of Canada that started in 2020. The overall aim of this collaboration is for the OECD to support the government of Canada in the design of its first integrated Open Government Strategy.

The findings included in this Scan are based on Canada's responses to the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government (OECD, 2021<sup>[3]</sup>), as well as a follow-up questionnaire that the OECD Secretariat shared with the Treasury Board Secretariat in early 2021. The results of these questionnaires allow for benchmarking and put Canada's policies and practices in an international comparative perspective.

The Scan's findings were enriched through a virtual fact-finding mission that took place over the course of June and July 2021 and during which the OECD team interviewed numerous stakeholders from Canadian federal and provincial governments, as well as a number of other stakeholders (28 public and non-public stakeholders overall)<sup>1</sup>.

### **Open government is a culture of governance**

Putting the principles of open government into practice, is not simply a technical matter of having the right legislation or systems in place. Rather, it is about transforming the entire culture of governance so that citizens are enabled and empowered to understand how governments work, to scrutinise their action and to participate in the decisions that matter the most to them. This is especially relevant for those citizens whose interests are usually underrepresented in government institutions and processes.

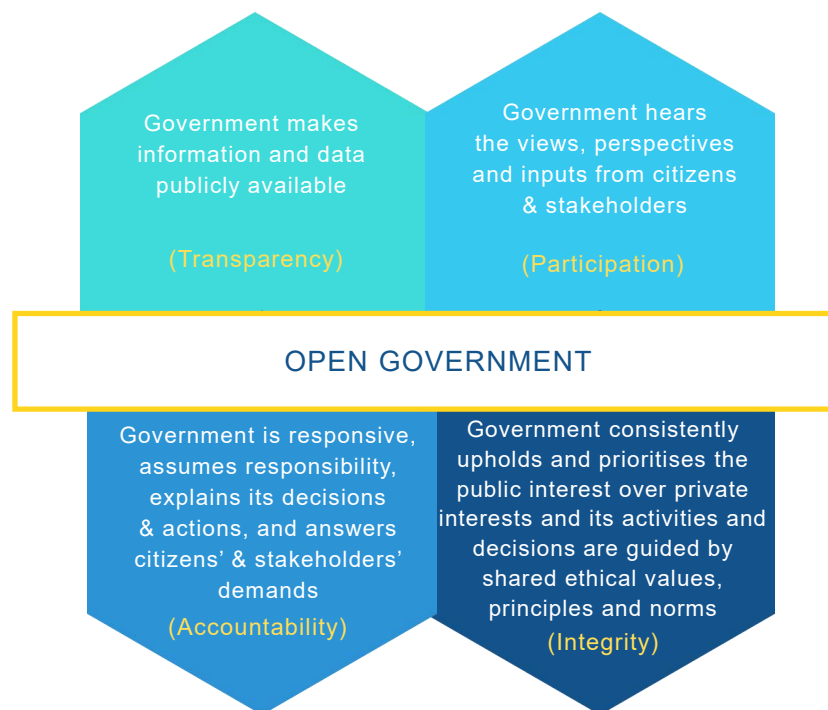
The prevailing governance culture of a country touches upon every institution and every individual public official and has deep implications for the relationship between public institutions and citizens. An open government culture of governance requires governments to be receptive to citizens' demands and change

their daily operations as to include them and serve their needs. In sum, an open government requires a culture of governance that puts citizens at the heart of any public action and decision.

Such a transformation requires cultural changes for both public officials and citizens. This involves changes in individual and institutional values, skills, beliefs, norms of conduct, and expectations, which are materialised in new policies, services and public goods, among others. At the institutional level, it requires a new set of processes to transform the internal ways of working, and new norms and values that integrate open government as an intrinsic responsibility of the state. At the individual level, this new paradigm means new ways of thinking public service and adapted skills to deliver public action in a transparent, accountable and participatory manner. At all levels, the cultural change requires an adapted mind-set that understands the benefit of citizens' inputs.

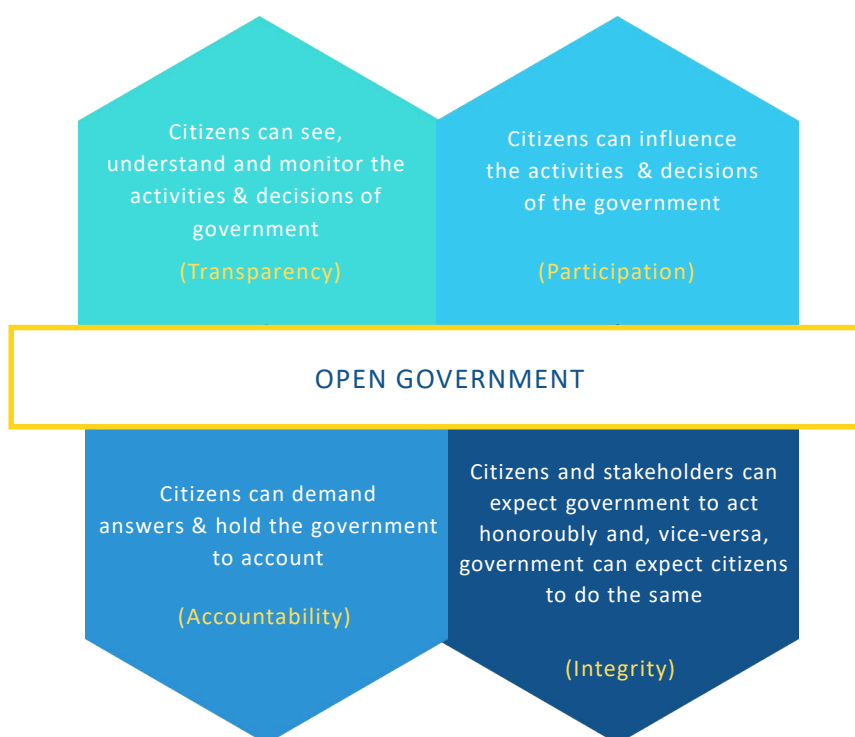
This Scan aims to support Canada in moving towards the creation of an open government culture of governance through the design and implementation of its first-ever Open Government Strategy.

**Figure 1.1. The operational dimensions of the OECD definition of open government: openness from a government perspective**



Source: Author's own elaboration.

**Figure 1.2. The operational dimensions of the OECD definition of open government: openness from a citizen perspective**



Source: Author's own elaboration.

## Situating this Scan in the wider OECD work on measuring the impact of open government reforms

While initiatives to foster the open government principles of transparency, accountability, integrity, and stakeholders' participation have been a priority on countries' policy agendas and political discourse for at least the past decades, it is only in recent years that governments have started to move towards a more holistic and integrated approach to the promotion of openness (OECD, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>). Building on successful practices and the experience gathered, the global open government movement has started to become more mature. Along with the progressive improvement, consolidation, and institutionalisation of countries' open government agendas, there is an increasingly loud call for performance indicators to measure their contribution to broader policy goals such as trust in government and more generally to socio-economic outcomes (Ibid.).

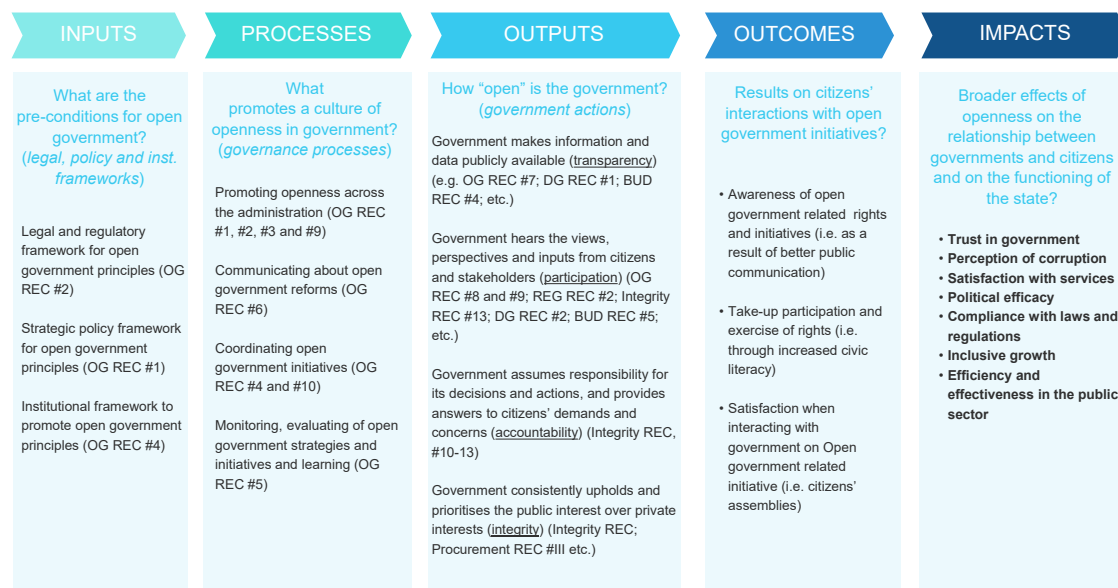
The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (Box 1.1) recognises “the need for establishing a clear, actionable, evidence-based, internationally recognised and comparable framework for open government, as well as its related process, output, outcome and impact indicators taking into account the diverse institutional and legal settings of the Members and non-Members”. In the OG Recommendation, the OECD Council instructed the PGC to “[...] develop process and impact indicators against which to measure the implementation of this Recommendation”.

In a first step, the OECD Secretariat therefore elaborated the OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments (OECD, 2020<sup>[41]</sup>), proposing a clear roadmap for the development of open government indicators. By restructuring and systematising the ten provisions included in the OG Recommendation, as well as relevant elements from other OECD Recommendations, as a theory of



change, the Framework aims to clarify the relationships and interplays between all the elements involved in an open government culture of governance. The Framework describes how the principles of open government can be put into practice by public administrations to produce meaningful and measurable impacts for them and for citizens and stakeholders. It also aims to support countries in taking a more integrated and structured approach to the promotion of openness that includes all of the key building blocks of a truly open government (e.g. open government data, open budgeting; open contracting; civic space; citizen participation; etc.) co-ordinated under the umbrella of a whole-of-government Open Government Strategy.

Figure 1.3. The OECD Framework for Assessing the Openness of Governments



Source: OECD (2020<sub>[4]</sub>), *A Roadmap for Assessing the Impact of Open Government Reform*, Paper presented to the OECD Working Party on Open Government

Based on the framework (OECD, 2020<sub>[4]</sub>), the OECD is currently in the process of developing three different sets of indicators:

1. **The OECD Open Government Dashboard** which shows the inputs and processes of open government reforms;
2. **The OECD Open, Participatory and Representative Government Index** which analyses the level of openness governments have achieved; and
3. **Results Indicators** showing the broader effects of openness on the relationship between governments and citizens and on the functioning of the state.

Based on the results of the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government (OECD, 2021<sub>[3]</sub>) (to which Canada contributed), the **OECD Open Government Dashboard** focuses on the governance arrangements and mechanisms that countries have put in place for their open government agendas (inputs and processes<sup>2</sup>, as identified in the Framework, see Figure 1.3). It includes numerous indicators on governance topics, such as co-ordinating open government reforms, monitoring and evaluation of open government reforms and the legal framework for open government. These indicators give a snapshot of measures that governments are taking to foster openness. For the first time, the Dashboard gives the open government and public governance community the possibility to track progress, compare practices and establish benchmarks on a diverse range of open government topics. It is against the standards established in the

indicators contained in the Dashboard that Canada's governance of open government will be assessed throughout this Scan.

As a basis for the second indicator, the OECD Open, Participatory and Representative Government Index, the Secretariat elaborated the OECD Openness Spectrum (Figure 1.4): The Spectrum seeks to identify what a truly *open* government looks like in practice (as, for example, opposed to a *closed* government). According to OECD research (OECD, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>), a government that is *open* allows its citizens to see, understand and monitor its activities and decisions; provides them with the opportunity to demand answers and hold it to account; and allows them to influence its activities and decisions. Accordingly, a government's openness can be measured along the following dimensions (OECD, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>):

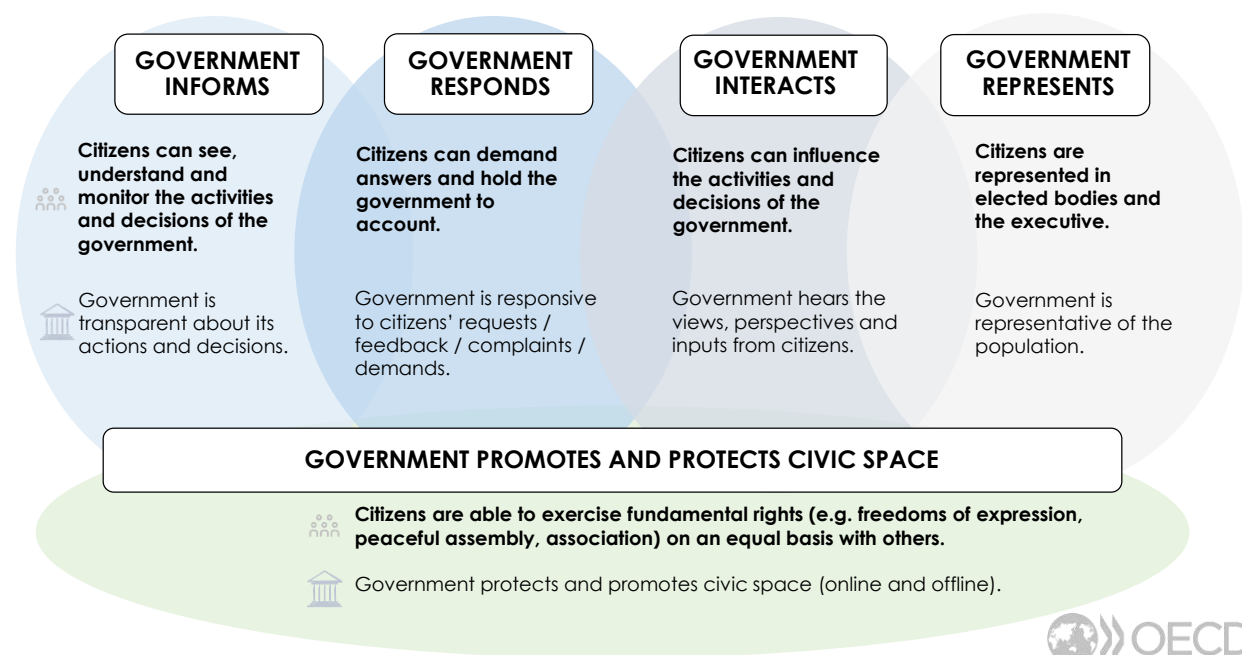
- **Government informs** is about citizens being able to access relevant, up-to-date, and re-usable information and data about governmental policies, services and functions (such as the budget, asset declarations). Being closely associated with the open government principle of transparency, this dimension constitutes openness in its most "static" way: Citizens are passive receivers of information (one-way relationship).
- **Government responds** is about governments' capacity and willingness to respond to citizens' requests, complaints and feedbacks and allow for social control. This dimension requires a two-way relationship between governments and citizens (i.e. citizens approaching government with a certain demand (e.g. an access to information request)).
- **Government interacts** is about citizens' ability to provide constructive inputs to the government's decision-making process. As such, this dimension is strongly linked with the open government principle of participation. This dimension constitutes the most "dynamic" form of openness, since it makes citizens active contributors to public decision-making.
- **Government represents** is about citizens being represented in elected bodies and the executive. As such, this dimension measures the diversity in the actual composition of elected bodies and the civil service.

The four dimensions of openness (inform, respond, interact, and represent) have to be underpinned by a protected civic space in order to become operational. A healthy civic space is a precondition for and facilitator of open government initiatives. The fifth dimension of the OECD Openness Spectrum is therefore:

- **Government promotes and protects civic space** is about allowing citizens to exercise their rights on an equal basis with others. Government needs to protect fundamental civic freedoms and rights (online and offline) and guarantee inclusiveness and non-discrimination in order to become truly open.

The Openness Spectrum constitutes the foundation of the OECD's approach to the implementation of open government reforms. It, hence, provides the conceptual basis for the discussions included in this Scan, including for example those relating to an update of Canada's definition of open government (see The OGS should be built on a broader understanding of the concept of open government).

Figure 1.4. The OECD Openness Spectrum



Source: Authors own elaboration

## What is an Open Government Strategy?

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017<sup>[1]</sup>) defines an Open Government Strategy as:

*“A document that defines the open government agenda of the central government and/or of any of its sub-national levels, as well as that of a single public institution or thematic area, and that includes key open government initiatives, together with short, medium and long-term goals and indicators”.*

An Open Government Strategy presents a whole of government roadmap for a country's open government agenda. It provides an umbrella policy framework that can align all strategies and initiatives that are linked to the promotion of openness, as defined in the OECD Openness Spectrum (Figure 1.4), and bring them together under a coherent medium- to long-term narrative. As such, it differs from an action plan (such as the OGP action plan) in many ways (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. The difference between a “strategy” and an “action plan”

Strategy (or “policy”)	Action Plan (or “implementation roadmap”)
Translates high-level government commitments into policy objectives and implementation priorities	Makes a strategy operational
Provides a strategic implementation framework	Relies on the strategic framework to define concrete activities
Applies to the whole-of-government or an entire sector	Applies to specified institutional actors
Outlines the vision and high-level objectives	Includes targeted commitments and initiatives aimed at contributing to high-level objectives
Outlines major initiatives and projects	Translates major initiatives and projects into concrete implementation steps
Gives guideline to achieve objectives	Includes short-term deliverables
Allocates resources	Delineates how to use resources

Foresees governance arrangements	Includes a progress reporting structure and a measurable timeline
Timeframe: medium to long term (4-15 years)	Timeframe: usually 1-2 years
Outlines strategic KPIs and high-level indicators	Contributes to data collection for high-level indicators

Source: OECD (2020<sub>[5]</sub>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

Recognising the benefits of having such an umbrella policy framework for open government in place (see Box 1.2) for a discussion of potential benefits of an OGS), an increasing number of OECD Member and Partner Countries, including Finland, Colombia, Italy, Argentina, Romania, Tunisia and Morocco, have started designing and / or implementing Federal / Central Open Government Strategies. More detailed information on existing country practices can be found in the OECD paper *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy* (2020<sub>[5]</sub>).

### Box 1.2. The potential benefits of a whole of government Open Government Strategy (OGS)

#### **An OGS ensures whole-of-government policy coherence**

An OGS can provide the umbrella for all open government initiatives implemented in a country and ensure that they follow similar methodological guidelines and contribute to a shared vision of openness. As such, a whole of government Open Government Strategy, besides putting new initiatives in place, makes those policies and initiatives that are already being implemented by public institutions more coherent and stronger by working together under the same coherent (and powerful) narrative and methodological setting.

#### **An OGS ensures efficiency and intra-institutional knowledge sharing**

An OGS is a tool to save resources and reduce costs. Government institutions spend time and public resources trying to develop solutions that might already be in place or build on lessons learned by other administrations that have already successfully implemented certain reforms. An OGS helps to intensify efforts to create collaborative solutions to shared problems. A concerted OGS can help public institutions to elaborate a common understanding and shared standards relating to open government, thereby harmonising practices. As such, An OGS can enable the government to achieve outcomes – at a lower cost – that would not be possible to achieve if institutions work in isolation.

#### **An OGS enables collaboration and co-ordination**

The main purpose of whole-of-government frameworks is to enable different government entities to pursue joint objectives in a co-ordinated manner. The Australian government defines whole-of-government as “public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues (...)”. An OGS that includes clearly assigned responsibilities to the identified goals and objectives can be a valuable co-ordination and collaboration instrument.

#### **An OGS acts as a tool for mainstreaming**

The design and implementation of an OGS gives visibility to the concept of open government and puts open government reforms on all public institutions' agendas. An OGS, hence, mainstreams an openness culture by spreading and implementing the values and principles of open government across the entire administrations and all policy areas. In addition, it communicates to civil servants, citizens and stakeholders that the government embraces a new understanding of the way the state is run. As

such, An OGS creates a powerful, compelling and coherent narrative that inspires policymakers to champion open government reforms in their own areas of work. Lastly, an OGS can help civil servants and citizens to better understand the added value and concrete output of open government by applying it to the policy area of their interest and expertise.

### **An OGS is a formidable governance tool**

An OGS allows for an effective management of a country's open government agenda. The development of an OGS is usually led by a high-level official (e.g. Minister, Secretary General, senior appointee, inter-ministerial delegate, etc.) and accompanied by concrete efforts to create institutional and governance mechanisms (e.g. inter-ministerial committees; monitor and evaluate mechanisms, training modules, HR performance evaluations; budget allocations, etc.). High-level commitment of a politician can also be a tool to foster the impact of the strategy (as per the resources, mobilisation power and symbolism). In addition, the adoption of an OGS empowers a person or office that will present the open government agenda to the wider public, monitor the follow up, and be the point of contact for the press and the wider public.

### **An OGS functions as a tool for public accountability**

An OGS commits the government to certain key reforms and creates a pressure for institutions to deliver. At the same time, a strategy that commits the government to concrete, ambitious but feasible outcomes can be a message to the citizens emphasising that this is a serious endeavour. The identification of milestones and indicators allows stakeholders to monitor the government's implementation efforts and analyse their compliance with the strategy's objective. Hence, the strategy and the commitments made in it are a tool for stakeholders to hold the government to account and avoid "open washing". In addition, civil society can channel its demands through the strategy.

### **An OGS can give long-term sustainability to the open government agenda**

The lack of a national coherent strategy can undermine the long-term sustainability of open government reforms and protects it from government instability. If designed for the long term, an OGS can give open government a non-political value and anchor the implementation of open government principles in internal action plans that can continue without high-level political support.

Source: OECD (2020<sup>[5]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

## **What kind of policy instrument is an Open Government Strategy in the Canadian context?**

Each OECD Member country has its own policy-making tradition. Table 1.2 provides an overview of the policy hierarchy applied by the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada (TBS) to its own policy instruments. Within TBS, the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is the home for the Open Government Office (OGO).

The mandate for the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) is to provide strategic direction and leadership in the pursuit of excellence in information management, information technology, security, privacy and access to information across the Government of Canada. To facilitate this work, the OCIO provides support and guidance on capacity building and project management and oversight. To deliver this mandate, the OCIO sets out enterprise digital transformation objectives and priorities through strategic planning and governance activities including, setting the strategic operational and policy direction for the Government of Canada for open government.

*The Policy on Service and Digital* (Government of Canada, 2020<sup>[6]</sup>) and the *Directive on Open Government* (Government of Canada, 2014<sup>[7]</sup>) can be used to prescribe requirements and responsibilities of the OGS for TBS and departments across the government. The OGS is more appropriately seen as a guiding vision to set strategic operational direction for the Government of Canada, in a manner similar to the *GC Digital Operations Strategic Plan* (Government of Canada, n.d.<sup>[8]</sup>) or the *Report to the Clerk of the Privy Council: A Data Strategy Roadmap for the Federal Public Service* (Privy Council Office, 2018<sup>[9]</sup>).

**Table 1.2. Structure and description of Treasury Board policy instruments**

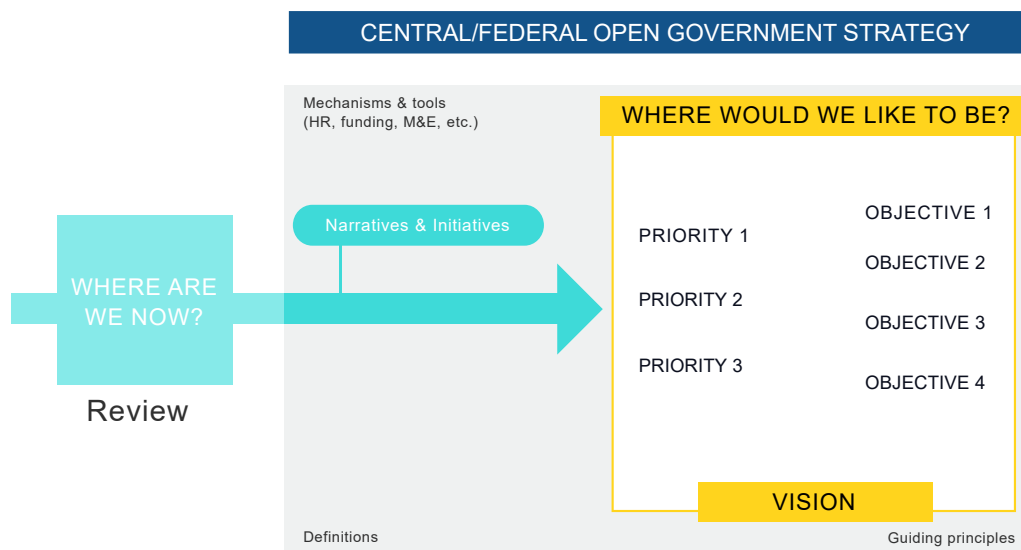
Instrument	Description	Usual Audience	Application
Policy Framework	Formal statement that provides context and broad guidance with respect to policy themes or clusters. Also provides the supporting structure within which specific Treasury Board policies and other instruments can be understood in strategic terms. Explains <i>why</i> Treasury Board sets policy in particular area.	Ministers, Deputy Heads	Architectural
Policy	Formal direction that imposes specific responsibilities on departments. Policies explain <i>what</i> deputy heads and their officials are expected to achieve.	Ministers, Deputy Heads	Mandatory
Directive	Formal instruction that obliges departments to take (or avoid) specific action. Directives explain <i>how</i> deputy heads' officials must meet the policy objective.	Managers & Functional Specialists	Mandatory
Standard	A set of operational or technical measures, procedures or practices for government-wide use. Standards provide more detailed information on <i>how</i> managers and functional specialists are expected to conduct certain aspects of their duties.		Mandatory
Guideline	A document providing guidance, advice or explanation to managers or functional area specialists.		Voluntary
Tools	Examples include recognized best practices, handbooks, communications products and audit products.		Voluntary

Source: Government of Canada (2008<sup>[10]</sup>), Foundation Framework for Treasury Board Policies, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=13616>.

## Formulating an Open Government Strategy

Open Government Strategies can take different forms, as countries have different traditions when it comes to the drafting of policies and use different terminologies. This section presents elements that are common to most policy documents and most existing Open Government Strategies and that – in an ideal case – would also be part of Canada's Open Government Strategy. The elements presented in this section are based on the OECD-paper *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy* (OECD, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>).

Figure 1.5. Key elements to be included in an Open Government Strategy



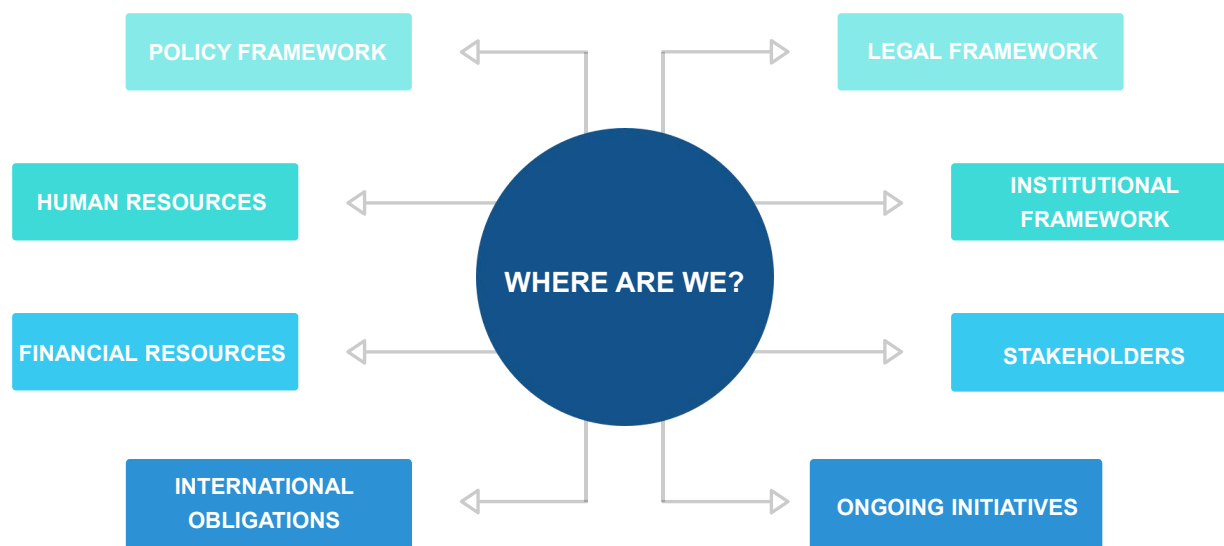
Source: OECD (2020<sup>[5]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

### **Assess the current situation and look ahead**

Before moving forward, it is essential to look back and analyse past experiences. Any Open Government Strategy should therefore be based on a thorough assessment that maps efforts to date, discusses achievements and highlights challenges ahead. This initial and fundamental step provides both the government and stakeholders with the necessary information and data to make better decisions. The assessment should analyse what kind of initiatives to foster transparency, accountability, integrity and stakeholders' participation the government has already implemented. Whenever possible, this kind of assessment should also include forecasting and the analysis of data and evidence of impact of previous open government reform efforts.

Results from the OECD fact-finding mission confirmed that the government of Canada already has a good understanding of its main achievements and the challenges laying ahead. The *Evaluation of the Open Government Program* (hereafter "the Evaluation") prepared by the TBS Internal Audit and Evaluation Bureau for the Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee (Government of Canada, 2021<sup>[2]</sup>), the reports prepared by the OGP's Independent Reporting Mechanism as well as the present OECD Open Government Scan provide an excellent basis.

Figure 1.6. Key elements of an open government assessment



Source: OECD (OECD, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

### **Identify a vision**

An Open Government Strategy is the key tool to set a vision for a country's open government agenda. A vision constitutes a clear statement of what the government and stakeholders aim to achieve through the implementation of open government reforms (OECD, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>). It constitutes a shared long-term expectation of outcomes and of how these outcomes can contribute to broader governmental and societal objectives. As such, the vision guides the process to design objectives and of initiatives that build the substantive part of the OGS. The clearer the vision, the more compelling it will be.

The vision should be ambitious, bold and inspiring and realizable in a realistic time horizon at the same time. While the vision can be created within the government, involving other stakeholders in its definition can ensure that it is widely shared and clearly linked with broader government objectives and priorities. When identifying the vision for its OGS, Canada could also reflect on the underlying values that frame the Strategy.

As part of the ongoing collaboration between Canada and the OECD, a visioning exercise was organised in early 2021 (Box 1.3).



### Box 1.3. Visioning exercise to guide the development of Canada's Open Government Strategy

As part of the collaboration between the government of Canada and the OECD Secretariat, the OECD organized a visioning exercise divided into two online workshops. This exercise was organized following three main parts:

- Part 1: Looking ahead - The vision for open government in Canada
- Part 2: The objectives – How can the Open Government Strategy help achieve the vision?
- Part 3: Next steps – The process for designing Canada's Open Government Strategy

The objectives of this visioning exercise were:

1. For the OECD Secretariat to present the concept, main findings and good practices to develop an Open Government Strategy, based on the Paper "Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy".
2. For the Government of Canada to reflect, brainstorm and collectively think about the vision for open government, the objectives of the Strategy and the main stages of the process.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

### ***Establish priorities***

Open government, as defined by the OECD, is a wide field that touches upon the very functioning of every government institution. Achieving a change towards an open government culture takes time and requires sustained long-term effort and commitment. Not all objectives can be pursued and not all initiatives can be implemented at once, as government resources and capacities are limited.

It will therefore be of key importance for Canada to be selective and set clear priorities from the very beginning (which means making compromises). For example, reforms in certain key open government areas (e.g. citizen participation) may over time require the adaptation of new laws and regulations or the creation of new institutions which can be a time-consuming process.

Whenever possible, priorities should be established jointly with all relevant stakeholders (both from within government and from civil society). Canada could consider using the existing co-ordination spaces (see Table 2.2) to discuss priorities with all interested stakeholders. Once established, priorities should then be communicated to the wider public through the OGS to manage expectations.

### ***Define objectives***

The Strategy's objectives translate the vision into targets. Objectives included in the OGS should be:

- Measurable, achievable and relevant;
- evidence-based;
- ambitious without over-committing the government or creating unrealistic expectations; and
- budget responsible.

Setting clear objectives is a key step to enable monitoring, evaluation and learning. Canada could consider mixing whole-of-government objectives (i.e. those that aim at changing the culture of government in general) with more specific objectives (e.g. those that aim to foster change in a specific sector / policy area). In the process of defining strategic objectives, stakeholder participation is fundamental to help the

government prioritize and make choices. Objectives included in the OGS should contribute to and be clearly linked with broader government objectives and priorities.

### ***Include a narrative***

Most policy documents include a narrative in their first sections. The narrative links the document with the country's broader policy agenda and government priorities. This fundamental part of a public policy should be written in easily understandable language as it sets the tone and provides public institutions and external stakeholders with a common understanding of why this strategy has been developed.

In Canada, the narrative of the OGS could be based on the assessment that is suggested below (see *The Strategy of the Strategy: Creating the context for an Open Government Strategy in Canada*) in order to clearly outline the necessity of the proposed Open Government Strategy. The narrative may also take the form of a foreword signed by the Prime Minister / the President of Treasury Board.

### ***Include key definitions***

Different stakeholders have different understandings of what constitutes open government. In order to clarify expectations and foster coherent implementation, the OGS therefore needs to include definitions of key concepts, such as open government and open state, as well as of key principles, including transparency, accountability, integrity, and stakeholders' participation. Clearly outlined definitions can:

- Provide guidance to policy-makers and ensure that all government institutions share a similar understanding.
- Inform stakeholders about the essential elements of open government, including the extent and limitations of key concepts.
- Facilitate a robust analysis of the impact of open government initiatives across different institutions and levels of government.

Definitions to be included can be co-created with stakeholders (see section *The OGS should be built on a broader understanding of the concept of open government.*) or be taken from internal government sources or from external sources (such as academia, international organisations, etc.).

### ***Outline governance mechanisms and processes***

An Open Government Strategy can be a key tool to promote the creation of governance mechanisms and processes for a country's open government agenda, including institutional responsibilities (e.g. contact points) and co-ordination mechanisms.

Canada's OGS could include a dedicated section that explains how the Strategy was designed and how it will be implemented. This may include making reference to new mechanisms, such as the suggested National Open Government Committee and the Open Government Community of Practice, should Canada decide to accept these recommendations.

### ***Include a dedicated section on Monitoring and Evaluation***

Canada could also consider establishing provisions for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in the Open Government Strategy itself. The Strategy could, for example, include a specific section dedicated to monitoring, detailing institutional responsibilities, mechanism to be used, frequency of monitoring, and including a template for monitoring reports, etc. Along similar lines, the Strategy could include provisions for undertaking evaluations, including standards, templates, frequency, stakeholder engagement, evaluator profiles and the budget for evaluations.

## Open government in Canada today

Canada has a long history of implementing reforms that aim to foster the relationship between government and citizens and the country is today widely seen as a leader in the open government community. According to the Evaluation that was prepared by the TBS Internal Audit and Evaluation Bureau for the Performance Measurement and Evaluation Committee (Government of Canada, 2021<sup>[2]</sup>) certain reforms at the federal level of government have “increased public access to government data and information” and “strengthened partnerships with civil society, Indigenous groups and other governments”, among other benefits. Among these reforms are the creation of the open data and open information portal ([www.open.canada.ca](http://www.open.canada.ca)) and the development of the Open Government Guidebook (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2018<sup>[11]</sup>) that have been implemented by the Open Government Office.

Despite the important progress of the past decade, open government in Canada still faces a number of challenges that need to be addressed in order for the open government agenda to develop its full potential. The planned Open Government Strategy should build on the achievements so far while aiming to address (some of) the challenges that have been identified. This section introduces key contextual considerations that will frame the recommendations on Canada’s Open Government Strategy that are provided in chapter 2.

### ***Strengths and achievements of Canada’s open government agenda***

- **Canada compares well in different indicators measuring the openness of government and public governance more generally.** For example, in the 2020 Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International Canada scores 11<sup>th</sup> out of 179 countries. In the 2019 OECD Open, Useful and Re-usable Data Index (OURData) Canada has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest score (0.73) among the 32 ranked countries (OECD, 2020<sup>[12]</sup>). In the 2021 OECD Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance Canada also scores comparatively well when it comes to stakeholder engagement in developing both primary laws and subordinate regulations, figuring well above the OECD-average in both sub-dimensions (OECD, 2021<sup>[13]</sup>). Similarly, in the open government dimension of the 2020 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, Canada is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> out of 139 countries. In particular, Canada comes in as 5<sup>th</sup> globally (out of 139 countries) when it comes to publicised laws and government data (World Justice Project, 2021<sup>[14]</sup>). Lastly, the Government Transparency Index developed by the European Research Centre for Anti-Corruption and State-Building ranks Canada 11<sup>th</sup> out of 128 countries when it comes to the practice of transparency (European Research Centre for Anti-Corruption and State-Building, 2021<sup>[15]</sup>).
- **Canada has made impressive efforts to create governance frameworks and mechanisms for its open government agenda.** For example, Canada’s adopted one of the world’s first Directive on Open Government (Government of Canada, 2014<sup>[7]</sup>) in 2014 and established numerous mechanisms to co-ordinate its open government agenda (e.g. bodies exist at technical level, at Director-General level and with provinces and territories). TBS has led the development of numerous tools (guidebooks, trainings, etc.) to support public institutions in implementing open government reforms.
- **Canada has a highly developed open data and open information agenda.** As also visible from the different measurements and indicators presented above, Canada is a global champion in the fields of open data and open information and many of the initiatives that have been designed by the government, such as the wider open data ecosystem and the Open Government Portal, stand out as global good practices.
- **Canada is well integrated into the international open government community and globally recognised as a leader in different areas of open government.** In addition to being an active participant of the OECD Working Party on Open Government, Canada is currently a key member

of various coalitions in the field, including the Open Government Partnership, the Open Contracting Partnership and the Community of Democracies. Canada was co-chair of the Steering Committee of the OGP in 2018-2019 and hosted a successful Global Summit of the OGP in Ottawa in 2019. Reflecting the high levels of maturity of the open data / open information agenda, Canada has also been a leader in the Open Data Charter initiative. As co-anchor of the OGP Open Data Working Group, the Canadian government, along with a number of other governments and civil society organizations, led the effort to develop and launch the international Open Data Charter in 2015 (Government of Canada, 2021<sup>[16]</sup>).

- **The Treasury Board Secretariat has a strong standing within the government of Canada when it comes to open government.** Interviews conducted for this Scan showed that public institutions and public officials from all levels of government recognise the expertise that the Open Government Office in TBS has on open government. Interviewees praised TBS for providing the necessary policies and infrastructure to departments' and agencies' open data and open information agendas and highlighted the usefulness of the tools that have been put at their disposal. The institutional location of the Open Government Office within one of the main centre-of-government institutions has considerably facilitated co-ordination and collaboration.
- **Canada leads a strong and stable OGP-process.** Canada started embarking upon a dedicated open government agenda in 2011 when it joined the Open Government Partnership (OGP). The OGP-process is seen by many as an example of effective and efficient co-operation across institutional boundaries and TBS' role in it was widely praised by interviewees.
- **Canada has deliberately taken a “start-up approach” to open government which has delivered positive results.** From the beginning of its open government journey, the work of the Open Government Office at TBS has put an important focus on experimentation and testing of new approaches, recognising that the achievement of an open government culture requires a cultural change in government and the wider society. Results from the OECD fact-finding mission show that this hands-on approach to open government is highly valued by public officials across the wider federal government but it has sometimes come at the detriment of a more “classical” policy-approach.
- **Open government initiatives, while not always labelled as such, can be found at all levels of government.** Open government initiatives, as defined by the OECD are widely spread in Canada and implemented by public institutions at all levels of government. For example, Canada has a strong public consultation culture and is already experimenting with representative deliberative processes (e.g. the current Canadian Commission on Democratic Expression). Elements of an open government culture are in fact present in all public institutions in Canada.

### ***Areas of opportunity of Canada's open government agenda***

- **There is a narrow understanding of the full potential of the concept of open government across the federal government.** Interviews conducted for this Scan confirmed that - while large parts of the Canadian public sector are aware of the meaning of the term open government - many public officials confuse the concept with that of open data and mostly associate openness with being transparent (in terms of providing information and data to citizens). Wider discussions surrounding the power of open government to reinforce democracy, and in particular on the role of participatory practices, are mostly absent from the mainstream open government discourse.
- **The open government agenda is fragmented and focused on open data and open information, leaving out other important dimensions of open government.** As a consequence of the previous point, the wider citizen and stakeholder participation file is not yet fully integrated into the open government agenda. Citizen and stakeholder participation (“public engagement” in the Canadian understanding) is mostly seen as a separate policy agenda that is outside of the realm of open government and of the mandate of the Open Government Office in TBS. Similarly,

the wider accountability / responsiveness agenda is currently detached from the open government agenda led by TBS. For example, managing and strengthening the government's wider system of complaint redress mechanisms does not form part of Canada's current open government agenda (nor the Open Government Office's mandate). In addition, as in many OECD countries, the wider integrity / anti-corruption agenda is disconnected from the open government discourse<sup>3</sup>. While a fragmentation of the open government agenda into different pieces is common in OECD countries, more and more countries have recently taken steps to integrate their public policy agendas on transparency, integrity, accountability and citizen/stakeholder participation under the concept of open government.

- **In order to support its current competences, the Open Government Office in TBS has developed most of its expertise in the open data / open information field** and focuses mainly on providing the necessary policies and infrastructure for departments' and agencies' open data and open information agendas. Accordingly, TBS is perceived by public officials as an infrastructure provider (e.g. manager of the open government portal, etc.).
- **While Canada's open information and open data agendas are already well-developed, the government needs to continue to innovate in order to maintain its leadership role in the wider transparency field.** This may involve further developing the Open Government Portal and pushing the proactive disclosure agenda across the whole federal government. Canada could also explore emerging trends in the transparency field such as targeted transparency initiatives<sup>4</sup>, algorithmic transparency, building alliances across the open data ecosystem to publish public interest information and data, and developing a governance framework that supports the mainstream adoption of an open by default culture.
- **Open government is sometimes seen as a "nice to have" or as a (technical) burden by Canadian public officials.** According to information collected during interviews conducted for this Scan, open government (the way it is currently framed by TBS) is often seen as an overhead or add-on consideration that public officials do not consider core to achieving their mandates. The focus of the open government agenda on open data / open information and the fact that open government is situated under the digital government agenda, has resulted in public officials seeing it as a technical / start-up agenda linked with concepts such as "open by default", as well as considerations surrounding interoperability and codes, rather than a transformative new culture of governance.
- **Canada's open government ecosystem is currently mostly limited to stakeholders in the Ottawa area that are actively contributing to the open data / open information agenda.** TBS has managed to build strong links with the open data community in the capital city. However, non-public stakeholders that are working on other pillars of open government but that are not involved in the OGP-process are not yet fully involved in the open government agenda. This is for example the case for the community working on representative deliberative processes which is detached from open government considerations.
- **Canada has a strong compliance culture when it comes to open government.** Compliance is of fundamental importance for the continuity of public services and it ensures that public officials act according to commonly established standards. However, some areas of open government need innovation and the breaking down of existing barriers. In that regard, an overly rigid compliance culture can be an obstacle to their implementation. For example, in interviews different public officials stressed that they feared going beyond their mandate or even breaking the law when engaging stakeholders at one's own initiative.
- **High level of rotations within the public sector impacts the implementation of open government policies.** Canada's federal public administration is highly institutionalised and characterised by high levels of stability. Many staffers are hired at a junior position and slowly make their way up through the hierarchy, remaining federal public employees throughout their career.

Job changes within the federal government (i.e. from one department to another) are however very common. Interviews conducted by the OECD during the fact-finding mission revealed that these job changes have an impact on the work conducted by the open government team and the open government agenda at large.

## References

- European Research Centre for Anti-Corruption and State-Building (2021), *Government Transparency Index*, <https://www.againstcorruption.eu/ercas-projects/transparencyindex/>. [15]
- Government of Canada (2021), *Answers to the background questionnaire for the OECD Open Government Scan of Canada*. [16]
- Government of Canada (2021), *Evaluation of the Open Government Program*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/corporate/reports/evaluation-open-government-program.html>. [2]
- Government of Canada (2020), *Policy on Service and Digital*, <https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=32603>. [6]
- Government of Canada (2014), *Directive on Open Government*, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=28108>. [7]
- Government of Canada (2008), *Foundation Framework for Treasury Board Policies*, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=13616>. [10]
- Government of Canada (n.d.), *Digital Operations Strategic Plan: 2021-2024*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/government-canada-digital-operations-strategic-plans/digital-operations-strategic-plan-2021-2024.html>. [8]
- OECD (2021), *2020 OECD Survey on Open Government*. [3]
- OECD (2021), *Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance*, [https://qdd.oecd.org/subject.aspx?Subject=GOV\\_REG](https://qdd.oecd.org/subject.aspx?Subject=GOV_REG). [13]
- OECD (2020), *A Roadmap for Assessing the Impact of Open Government Reform*, WPOG Working Paper, GOVPGCOG20205. [4]
- OECD (2020), *OECD Open, Useful and Re-usable data (OURdata) Index: 2019*, <https://www.oecd.org/gov/digital-government/policy-paper-ourdata-index-2019.htm>. [12]
- OECD (2020), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1. [5]
- OECD (2017), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438>. [1]
- Privy Council Office (2018), *Report to the Clerk of the Privy Council : a data strategy roadmap for the federal public service*, <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.864666/publication.html>. [9]
- Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2018), *Open Government Guidebook*, <https://open.canada.ca/ckan/en/dataset/9eaa6d0e-4b8c-5241-acf7-c6885294b8c1>. [11]

World Justice Project (2021), *Rule of Law Index*, <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/country/Canada>.

[14]

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The following stakeholders were interviewed for this Scan: Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada Secretariat; Privy Council Office; Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada; Public Service Commission; Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Canada School of Public Service and Government; Employment and Social Development Canada; People Management and Community Engagement (TBS); GC InfoBase; Environment and Climate Change Canada; Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada; Indigenous Services Canada; Canadian Heritage; Government of Ontario; Government of Quebec; Multi-stakeholder Forum; Transparency International Canada; OGP Independent Research Mechanism; Open North; Academics

<sup>2</sup> *Inputs* refer to the preconditions enabling open government reforms to happen while *processes* refer to those processes that support the adoption and implementation of open government principles across government and that foster their application

<sup>3</sup> In many countries, the promotion of open government and public sector integrity are implemented as separate policy agendas, both with their own communities, policy documents, governance mechanisms, etc. Nevertheless, certain practices that are commonly associated with the promotion of public sector integrity, such as the publishing of asset declarations or the creation of lobbying registers, have found their way into countries' open government agenda. This Scan acknowledges that the promotion of public sector integrity is its own-standing agenda in Canada and argues in favour of co-ordination, rather than integration of the two agendas.

<sup>4</sup> Targeted transparency is defined as “the use of publicly required disclosure of specific information in a standardized format to achieve a clear public policy purpose”. This transparency mechanism uses disclosure as a means to attain or improve other policy objectives, for example, for decreasing violence among youth or preventing overweight.

# **2**

## **How to successfully design and implement an Open Government Strategy in Canada?**

---

This Chapter takes stock of Canada's governance frameworks and mechanisms for open government and provides recommendations for their consolidation in line with the country's ambition to design its first holistic and integrated Open Government Strategy. In particular, the Chapter discusses the need to enlarge the focus of Canada's open government agenda and move beyond the traditional emphasis on open data / open information. It also reviews institutional mandates and roles and provides recommendations to upgrade monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including through the design of Canada's first Open Government Maturity Models.

---



Based on the premise that the Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada intends to develop an Open Government Strategy, the following sections provide tailored recommendations on the process to design and implement an eventual Federal Open Government Strategy. It should be noted that the recommendations provided here are based on the assumption that Canada aims to design an Open Government Strategy aimed at fostering transparency, accountability and citizen and stakeholder participation across all federal institutions.

## The Strategy of the Strategy: Creating the context for an Open Government Strategy in Canada

Designing and implementing an Open Government Strategy is an ambitious undertaking that has to be planned well. This section provides contextual recommendations that could be considered prior to starting the development of the Strategy.

### ***The design and implementation of an OGS requires political commitment.***

As stipulated by provision 1 of the OG Recommendation (Box 2.1), political commitment is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of an Open Government Strategy. In addition to the support that is needed to initiate the design process of an Open Government Strategy, there needs to be long-term commitment in order to sustain the momentum for reform during the implementation phase. Ensuring this kind of long-term commitment requires, for example, creating buy-in and identifying political champions. The most senior government leaders need to be personally invested in the process to design and implement the OGS.

#### **Box 2.1. Provision 1 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government**

“Take measures, in all branches and at all levels of the government, to develop and implement open government strategies and initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders and to foster commitment from politicians, members of parliaments, senior public managers and public officials, to ensure successful implementation and prevent or overcome obstacles related to resistance to change”

Source: OECD (2017<sup>[1]</sup>), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, OECD, Paris, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438> (accessed 30 November 2018).

*The process to design and implement the OGS needs to fully involve the senior leadership of the Canadian government*

Under the previous government, oversight responsibilities for the open government file were split between the President of the Treasury Board and the Minister of Digital Government. Until the abolishment of the position in 2021, the Minister of Digital Government was for example in charge of policies and practices on open data, digital services, inclusive and open digital governance, ethical use of data, artificial intelligence, and open source products (Government of Canada, 2021<sup>[2]</sup>). This Minister also played a key role in the OGP-process, endorsing and approving the action plans before their submission to the OGP and acting as the ministerial representative to the OGP. In turn, the President of the Treasury Board was responsible for policies relating to transparency (e.g. proactive disclosure of information), accountability, and inclusion and diversity and for approving TBS policy instruments, such as the Policy on Service and Digital. Following the 2021 election, the government decided to reorganise parts of the executive branch and the oversight responsibility for the open government file will be newly defined.

In order to raise awareness and create buy-in, once responsibilities have been defined, the Open Government Office should aim to involve all relevant Ministers and Deputy-Ministers at TBS (and the federal government in general) from the preparatory phase of the Open Government Strategy. This may include the organisation of specific briefing meetings, facilitating their participation in international events on open government topics, among others.

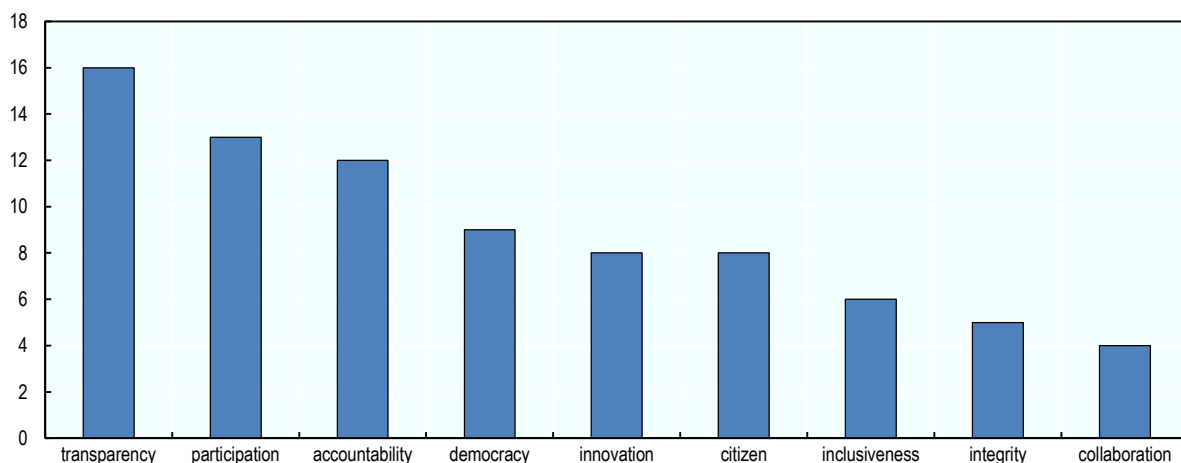
***The OGS should be built on a broader understanding of the concept of open government.***

Guided by the 2014 Directive on Open Government (Government of Canada, 2014<sup>[3]</sup>), which defines open government as “a governing culture that holds that the public has the right to access the documents and proceedings of government to allow for greater openness, accountability, and engagement”, Canada’s open government agenda has historically had a focus on elements relating to open data and open information. This focus is also reflected in the understanding that most public officials and civil society stakeholders have of the concept. Interviews conducted for this Scan confirmed that they mainly associate open government with the provision of open government data.

While open information and open data are definitely important building blocks of an open government agenda and while the provision of high quality data and information should continue to be an important axis of the open government agenda of Canada, **the government of Canada could ensure that its eventual Open Government Strategy fosters all dimensions of openness** (in addition to further pushing the open information / open data agenda to maintain Canada’s leadership role in the field).

In this regard, the OGS represents a unique opportunity to redefine the concept of open government and ensure that public officials and non-public stakeholders understand that open government represents a holistic understanding of the way citizens and the state interact. Figure 2.1 highlights key terms that are included in OECD Member countries’ definitions of open government.

**Figure 2.1. Key terms referred to in OECD Member countries’ definitions of open government**



Note: Preliminary data. N=31. Graph displays the count of countries where a specific keyword is part of the definition.

Source: OECD (2021<sup>[4]</sup>), 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government.

Once updated, the definition could be included in the OGS itself. The definition would further have to be disseminated widely in order to ensure that the whole-of-society understands that open government refers

to a wider agenda that focuses on fostering the government-citizen nexus. Alternatively, instead of re-refining open government, Canada could consider starting to refer to “open, responsive and participatory government”.

*The new definition of open government and the OGS could integrate a civic space perspective*

Civic space is defined by the OECD as the set of legal, policy, institutional and practical conditions necessary for non-governmental actors to access information and data, express themselves, associate, organise and participate in public life. A healthy civic space is a precondition for and facilitator of open government initiatives. In order to maximise the benefits of open government initiatives, and ensure that they achieve their full potential, governments need to guarantee that their civic space is open, protected and promoted through clear policies and legal frameworks that set out the rules of engagement between citizens and the state, framing boundaries, and defending individual freedoms and rights (OECD, 2016<sup>[5]</sup>).

For example, when open government data (OGD) are shared by public entities, it is crucial for citizens, journalists and civil society organisations (CSOs) to be able to safely and securely access the data on an equal basis to achieve real transparency and democratise its use and re-use. Similarly, it is critical to have strong legal protections for individual rights, functioning and funded complaints mechanisms, and rule of law to achieve real accountability. Effective participation is only possible when all members of society have an opportunity to be consulted, informed, and listened to and to express their opinions. Lastly, the increasing use of digital technologies by public authorities, to communicate with citizens or to deliver essential public services, require that individual rights and freedoms are also protected in the digital sphere.

Canada could lead the way for the global open government community by integrating civic space considerations into an eventual update of its definition of open government. According to data collected by the OECD through a Perception Survey (OECD, 2021<sup>[6]</sup>), civic space considerations are not yet an integral part of most Member and Partner countries’ open government agendas. In fact, more than 70% of responding WPOG-Delegates noted that civic space was not yet fully integrated into their countries’ open government agendas. Data collected by the OECD shows that in Canada, as in many other OECD Member and Partner countries, the protection of the civic space is a cross-cutting responsibility, with different public institutions involved (i.e. the Prosecutors’ Office, the Human Rights Commission, etc.). Acknowledging that TBS is not the main entity responsible, Canada could include the promotion and protection of the civic space as part of the enabling environment for open government, meaning as a precondition for the success of open government reforms. This could resonate with values and objectives of Canada’s open government agenda such as inclusion, accessibility and diversity.

In addition, TBS could include initiatives / activities in its Open Government Strategy that support a protected civic space. For example, an objective could include ensuring an inclusive and equal participation by reaching out to traditionally underrepresented groups of society such as indigenous people, LGBTI persons, migrants, etc. Other concrete initiatives could include fostering a healthy information ecosystem, empowering citizens to fight against mis- and disinformation and improving the environment for civil society organisations to operate and collaborate with public authorities. In particular, Canada could take an international leadership position<sup>1</sup> in the protection of the digital civic space, by protecting an open Internet, empowering citizens with digital rights, fighting against the digital divide and promoting an ethical use of technology across the Government.

***The process to design the Strategy should be based on a clear roadmap.***

Forward planning can allow governments to improve transparency, predictability and co-ordination of policy processes. As a first step, prior to launching the development of the OGS, the Treasury Board Secretariat should therefore establish a clear roadmap. This roadmap could involve elements such as:

- An overview of key steps and milestones for the development of the Strategy (e.g. planned launching date; intermediary steps that are needed; etc.)
- A citizen and stakeholder participation plan, including an analysis of interested public / non-public stakeholders.
- A communications plan.

### **Box 2.2. The “Communicating Open Government: a How-to Guide” developed jointly by the OECD and OGP**

This publication that was developed jointly by the OECD and the Open Government Partnership provides a step-by-step process to developing a communications plan for an open government strategy or initiative. It also contains insights about communication tools and their use for open government reforms as well as guidance on how to partner within and beyond public administrations for effective communication.

The publication targets public officials in charge of steering and implementing strategies and initiatives in the field of open government, as well as communication officers in public institutions that are looking to play a bigger role in this context. The guide is also a useful tool for anyone who is interested in making governments more open, including journalists and civil society.

Source: OECD/OGP (2018<sup>[7]</sup>), *Communicating Open Government: A How-to Guide*, <https://www.oecd.org/gov/Open-Government-Guide.pdf>.

## **Ensuring the existence of the necessary legal, regulatory and policy frameworks for an Open Government Strategy in Canada**

Open government, as a policy area, is slowly becoming more institutionalized. Across the OECD, in the past 10 years, numerous countries have started adopting laws, decrees and regulations on open government (e.g. Open Government Directives) and the open government principles (e.g. Access to Information Laws; Participation Laws; etc.) and on mechanisms and processes associated with them (e.g. Decree on the composition of open government co-ordination mechanisms). This section provides recommendations that could be considered to embed Canada’s Open Government Strategy in the wider legal, regulatory and policy frameworks of the country.

### Box 2.3. Provision 2 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

“Ensure the existence and implementation of the necessary open government legal and regulatory framework, including through the provision of supporting documents such as guidelines and manuals, while establishing adequate oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance.”

Source: OECD (2017<sup>[1]</sup>), Recommendation of the Council on Open Government, OECD, Paris, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438> (accessed 30 November 2018).

### ***The design of an OGS could be coupled with a review of Canada’s Directive on Open Government.***

In an ideal case, Canada’s Open Government Strategy would be mentioned in some kind of regulation, or even legislation, in order to ensure sustainability and protect it from changing political priorities. As discussed above, Canada already has a Directive on Open Government in place (Government of Canada, 2014<sup>[3]</sup>). This Directive constitutes a policy instrument under the larger Policy on Service and Digital. As such, the existing Directive on Open Government is strongly focused on data and information management<sup>2</sup>.

Canada could consider coupling the design of its Open Government Strategy with a review of the existing Directive or – eventually – with the design of a Policy on Open Government.

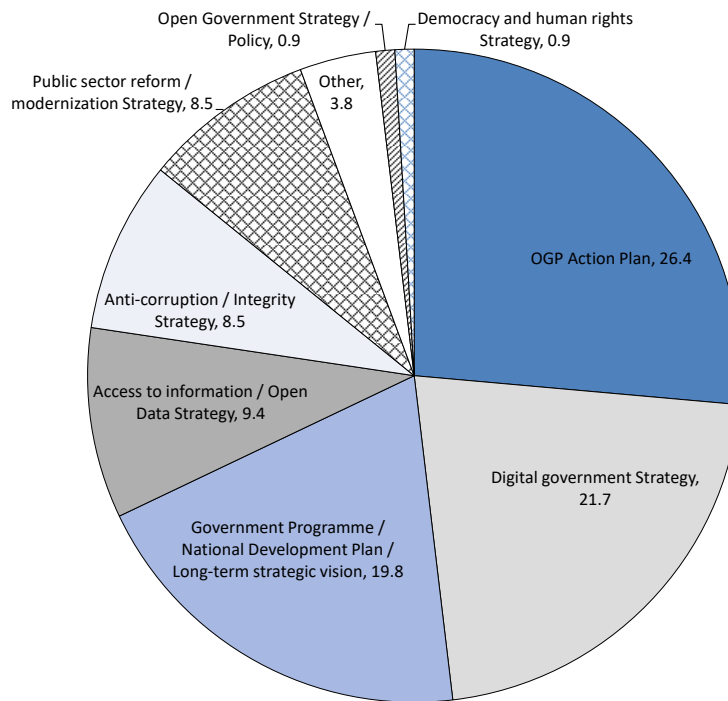
The updated Directive or a new Policy could, for example, be used to:

- Introduce the new broader understanding of open government and fully integrate the wider participation and accountability agenda into the open government agenda;
- Mandate the adoption of open government implementation plans by all federal government departments, in case Canada decides on using this model (see Annex A for an overview of models for Open Government Strategies);
- Review the institutional architecture in the Government of Canada as regards the different elements of the open government file;

### ***The OGS should complement and strengthen existing policy frameworks***

An Open Government Strategy can and should never operate in isolation: giving its cross-cutting ambition, an OGS needs to complement and be embedded in the existing policy framework of a country. As open government affects all areas of the public administration, policies and initiatives to foster its adoption are usually spread throughout several strategic documents. In this regard, Figure 2.2 shows the main policy documents on open government that OECD Member and Partner countries are implementing.

Figure 2.2. OECD Member countries' main policy documents on open government



Note: Preliminary data. Data is shown as % of 106 submitted policy documents by 33 respondents.  
Source: OECD (2021<sup>[4]</sup>), *OECD 2020 Survey on Open Government*.

*The OGS can provide an umbrella policy framework for Canada's National Action Plan on Open Government.*

As in many other OECD Member Countries, Canada's National Action Plan on Open Government (the "OGP action plan") currently constitutes the main policy documents that Canada implements in the area of open government<sup>3</sup>. The OGP action plan constitutes an action-oriented series of priority initiatives focusing mainly on short-term policy issues. For example, Canada's 2018-2020 OGP action plan (Government of Canada, 2018<sup>[8]</sup>) includes commitments as diverse as "Feminist and inclusive dialogue" (commitment 8), "corporate transparency" (commitment 3) and "open science" (commitment 5). While all of these commitments are important, they are not "woven together" through a strong and coherent narrative. Additionally, as also pointed out by the Government of Canada (2021<sup>[2]</sup>), the action plan cycle is not necessarily aligned with government planning and budget cycles and action plans tend to be political document that do not address internally needed reforms or change management within the government. This is no surprise as the commitments are co-created with non-public stakeholders and mirror priority initiatives with important external visibility, rather than work on the needed governance back office for the implementation of a wider open government agenda (e.g. co-ordination mechanisms, issues relating to HRM, budgeting; or laws and policies). As such, the OGP action plan does not constitute a comprehensive roadmap for open government reforms in Canada.

By providing a wider context and a vision coupled with concrete measurable objectives to the wider open government agenda, the Open Government Strategy can function as the overarching umbrella to Canada's OGP action plan and improve the internal coherence and overall impact. The Open Government Strategy can further be a tool to promote initiatives that are less appealing to an external audience but that are nevertheless fundamental to a successful open government agenda, such as the establishment of

governance mechanisms and processes, as discussed above. Taken as such, an Open Government Strategy and an OGP action plan are indeed perfectly complimentary.

*The OGS should be co-ordinated with the Policy on Service and Digital and associated policy documents.*

In many countries, the digital government agenda has developed in parallel to the open government movement. With the rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), governments across the world started integrating digital tools and platforms to modernise the back office of the public administration and to simplify the interaction with citizens. The digitalisation of governments, and especially the new possibilities of interaction with citizens offered by ICTs, is sometimes understood as part of the movement towards increased openness. Both a digital and an open government aim at enhancing the relationship between governments and citizens. However, open government does not see the implementation of digital technologies as the goal, but rather as the mean to achieve the broader goal of a more transparent, accountable and participatory government.

Canada's digital government agenda currently provides the umbrella to the open government agenda. Under the Policy on Service and Digital (Government of Canada, 2020<sup>[9]</sup>), which sets out the requirements in terms of digital government for the whole of the federal government, Canada is implementing a Digital Government Strategy (which provides the political directions to the digital government agenda) and a Digital Operations Strategic Plan (which elaborates on how the Digital Government Strategy will be put into action including government-wide priorities and key activities in a 3-year timeframe).

Whether the government of Canada elevates the level of the open government agenda to put it at the same level as the digital government agenda, as recommended below, or not, the open and digital government agendas should continue to be fully co-ordinated. Many elements of the digital government agenda can and should be leveraged to further open government goals. For example, elements relating to open data / open information are cross-cutting between both agendas and digital government tools and ICTs are today key to achieve all different kinds of open government objectives in Canada (e.g. fostering interaction with citizens through digital platforms, etc.). Along similar lines, the open government agenda can be a key tool to achieve goals of the digital government agenda. Figure 2.3 explains how the OGS could be anchored in Canada's existing policy framework.

**Figure 2.3. The OGS anchored in Canada's existing policy framework**



Source: Author's own elaboration.

## Creating institutional arrangements and co-ordinating the implementation of the Open Government Strategy

Given the breadth of strategies and initiatives that relate to the promotion of openness, responsibilities and mandates for designing, co-ordinating and implementing different open government policies and practices are usually spread across a number of public institutions in OECD Member and Partner Countries (OECD, forthcoming). This fragmentation of responsibilities is common across the OECD and it creates a strong need for effective co-ordination between them. Accordingly, provision 4 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017<sup>[11]</sup>) highlights the importance of effective horizontal and vertical co-ordination of open government policies “through the necessary institutional mechanisms (...) to ensure that they are aligned with and contribute to all relevant socioeconomic objectives” (Box 2.4). Along similar lines, the OECD Policy Framework on Sound Public Governance (OECD, 2020) underlines the need to foster co-ordination and address fragmentation across institutions of major policy initiatives and priorities.

### Box 2.4. Provision 4 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

“Coordinate, through the necessary institutional mechanisms, open government strategies and initiatives - horizontally and vertically - across all levels of government to ensure that they are aligned with and contribute to all relevant socio-economic objectives.”

Source: OECD (2017<sup>[11]</sup>), Recommendation of the Council on Open Government, OECD, Paris, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438> (accessed 30 November 2018).

### ***The design and implementation of the OGS may require empowering the Open Government Office of TBS.***

While many public institutions are involved in fostering government-citizens relationships in Canada (see Table 2.1), the primary responsibility for co-ordinating Canada’s open government agenda is currently situated at the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS). Within the larger institutional architecture of TBS, the Open Government Office is situated under the Office of the Chief Information Officer of Canada (CIO), the mandate of which is to “provide strategic direction and leadership in the pursuit of excellence in information management, information technology, security, privacy and access to information across the Government of Canada” (Government of Canada, n.d.<sup>[10]</sup>).

**Table 2.1. Key institutional responsibilities for open government in Canada**

Function	Name of the institution(s) / secretariat(s) / directorate(s) in charge	Specific responsibilities of the institution(s)
Co-ordinating open government data initiatives across government	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	Hosting the open government portal, technical support, policy centre, implementation and working group secretariat.
Fostering transparency of government institutions	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	Challenge-function of government spending, working group secretariat, policy centre
Overseeing the implementation of the access to public information law	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	Information and Privacy Policy Division (IPPD) provides advice and assistance to Treasury Board Secretariat and government institutions on issues concerning access to information and privacy, as well as proactive disclosure initiatives. IPPD also participates in monitoring institutional compliance required in the Access to Information



		Act and the Privacy Act.
Protecting and promoting civic space	Canadian Heritage / Department of Justice	Canadian Heritage – advancing and protecting Canadian art, culture and heritage, primarily through grants and contributions Department of Justice –Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom (Oversight and complaints through the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal)
Protecting and promoting CSOs	Canadian Heritage Department of Finance and the Canada Revenue Agency	Department of Finance and the Canada Revenue Agency – administration of tax system
Fostering citizen and stakeholder participation at the national level	Privy Council Office Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat  Women and Gender Equality Canada	Privy Council Office – Up until 2020, hosting Consulting with Canadians portal.  Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat – sharing lessons learned and piloting engagement practices, sharing resources through open government portal and through <a href="#">the Public Engagement Community of Practice</a>  Woman and Gender Equality Canada – advancing inclusive engagement practices
Fostering citizen and stakeholder participation at the sub-national level	-	Individual provinces, territories and municipalities are responsible for their citizen stakeholder participation. TBS does support and promote through Canada’s Open Government Working Group
Fostering citizen and stakeholder participation in thematic areas (environment, health, public services, etc.)	At the department level and is dependent on the theme.	Examples include: On environment issues: Environment and Climate Change Canada On health: Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada Office of the Chief Science Advisor - Roadmap for Open Science National Security Transparency – Public Safety Canada
Overseeing integrity of public authorities and institutions	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer – Supporting the HR infrastructure in the public service, supporting the HR change agenda , and administration of TBS policy ( <a href="https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=25049">https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=25049</a> )
Fostering an open budget (transparency and participation in fiscal decisions)	Department of Finance	Federal Budget – including conducting consultations (example: <a href="#">Let's talk Budget 2021   Let's Talk Budget 2021- Canada.ca</a> )  All data from Budgets are posted in near real time as open data: <a href="#">Open Government Portal   Open Government (canada.ca)</a>
Fostering vertical accountability (social auditing or control)	Elections Canada	
Fostering transparency in public expenses (procurement, contracting, budget implementation, etc.)	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Public Service and Procurement Canada	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat – Policy centre for procurement and contracting Public Service and Procurement Canada – administration of the federal procurement systems
Coordinating the public innovation agenda of the Federal government	Privy Council Office Public Services and Procurement Canada Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	Identification of priority innovative efforts, including Greening Government, digital government and talent management. <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/modernizing.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/modernizing.html</a>

Source: Government of Canada (2021<sup>[2]</sup>), *Answers to the background questionnaire for the OECD Open Government Scan of Canada* (unpublished working paper).

The Open Government Office is headed by an Executive Director for Open Government who reports to the Assistant Secretary in charge of Digital and Services Policy who himself/herself reports to the Chief Information Officer. While this institutional location of the Open Government Office (OGO) has resulted in strong links between the digital and open government agendas, it also means that open government is essentially seen as one of the tools of the wider digital government agenda, as mentioned above.

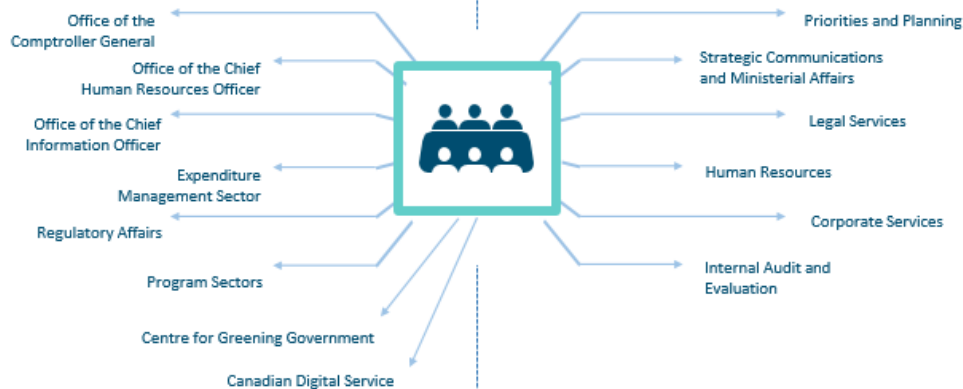
Figure 2.4. TBS's role as a Central agency and as a Department

## Central agency

The central agency function supports the Treasury Board's mandate:

- Sets the government-wide management agenda and provides guidance to departments on a wide range of management issues.
- Performs a challenge function and advises Ministers on proposals brought forward by departments (e.g. on Memoranda to Cabinet, Budget items, and Treasury Board submissions).

The central agency function is generally carried out by the following groups:



## Department

The department functions support the smooth operation of the Treasury Board Secretariat:

- As a department, it is subject to the same TBS agenda and guidance set for other departments.
- Submits proposals to Cabinet for the President's own initiatives

These departmental functions are carried out mainly by the following groups:

Source: Government of Canada (2021<sup>[2]</sup>), *Answers to the background questionnaire for the OECD Open Government Scan of Canada* (unpublished working paper).

The successful design and implementation of a broader OGS that brings open government beyond the realm of digitalisation (while keeping it fully coordinated with it), will require reviewing the institutional mandate of the Open Government Office in TBS, as well as empowering it to become the co-ordinator of and / or centre of expertise for a new broader open government approach that fully integrates the transparency, accountability, citizen participation and civic space agendas.

*The Open Government Office could move towards becoming a centre of expertise in order to facilitate the implementation of the OGS*

In the medium to long term, the successful implementation of Canada's Open Government Strategy may require that the team leading open government reforms in TBS makes a shift from its current role as service / infrastructure provide on open data / open information to becoming a centre of expertise on a much broader range of open government issues (e.g. participation, accountability mechanisms, etc.).

In line with a new broader understanding of open government, the OGO's role will be to promote an open government culture across the whole federal government and provide advice to departments in the implementation of different kinds of open government initiative / facilitate contact with competent departments. This may include the development of an open government maturity model, additional

trainings and toolkits, the creation of communities of practice, as well as the provision of informal support (e.g. sharing of best practices, etc.), as further discussed below.

*The government of Canada could consider giving the leadership of the citizen and stakeholder participation file to TBS.*

At the moment, the citizen/stakeholder participation file has no clear institutional leadership at the level of the federal government in Canada. Participatory practices such as public consultations or co-creation processes are mostly implemented on an *ad hoc* basis by federal government departments and agencies. Moreover, interviews conducted for this Scan revealed that participation is often understood as communication / cooperation with local level or consultation with First Nations, rather than a wider policy to hear (consultation) and integrate (engagement) in public decision making the views, perspectives, and inputs from citizens and stakeholders. This narrow understanding of participation isolates impactful participatory processes organized at the Federal and subnational levels of government, such as deliberative processes. In fact, the OECD (2020<sup>[11]</sup>) gathered more than 40 case studies of the use of representative deliberative processes in Canada, and none of these experiences is integrated in the wider open government agenda (or the civil society ecosystem involved in those processes).

Given the experience that the Open Government Office gathered through the co-ordination of the OGP co-creation process and through the inclusion of relevant initiative in the National Action Plans on Open Government, the OGO would be in a primary position to become the co-ordinator of the federal government's citizen participation / engagement policy, as part of the open government agenda. In this scenario, the OGO could become the policy steward and the centre of expertise on participation, combining both the policy and hands-on approaches currently defended by TBS. This would mean that the OGO would, for example, take ownership for disseminating the existing Public Engagement Principles (Government of Canada, 2019<sup>[12]</sup>) and ensure that they are applied across the whole federal government. The OGO would further become the primary entry point for advice and support on any kind of participatory initiative conducted by departments and agencies and for leading the elaborating of regulatory and policy frameworks on citizen participation. Under this scenario, the proposed Open Government Strategy, co-ordinated by the OGO, would be the primary tool to move forward the participation agenda.

In case Canada decides not to formally give the participation file to the Open Government Office, the OGO could still start playing a more active role in fostering citizen and stakeholder participation across the government. The OGO could take a practical approach on this matter by supporting other departments and agencies in their participation efforts, with tools, resources, knowledge and capacities. This could be done for example by producing dedicated resources to support acculturation and provide guidance through for example handbooks or guidelines. The Government of Canada could get inspiration in the forthcoming OECD Citizen Participation Guidelines or the OECD Handbook on Open Government for Peruvian Civil Servants (2021<sup>[13]</sup>). The OGO could also support the continuous learning of public officials across the federal government by developing trainings, tutorials or courses on participation. Building on TBS' start-up approach, this office could increase the impact of participatory practices by scaling up successful initiatives (e.g. deliberative assemblies, participatory budgeting, etc.) and by developing dedicated tools (digital platform, methodologies, etc.). Ultimately, taking a more active *de facto* role in the participation agenda will allow the OGO to move towards becoming a centre of expertise on participation. On this matter, the Government of Canada could take inspiration from the French Centre of Citizen Participation (see Box 2.5).

### Box 2.5. Centre of Citizen Participation in France

The Inter-Ministerial Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP) is the public institution in charge of the open government and participation agendas in France. In 2019, it created the Centre of Citizen Participation (*Centre de la Participation Citoyenne*) as a Centre of Expertise, a physical space and a community of practice for all public servants.

- **A Centre of Expertise:** The DITP provides public officials and civil society technical support and guidance to implement participatory processes. Public officials have access to knowledge resources, examples and templates to organize a participatory mechanisms as well as ready-to-use digital tools. As part of this Centre, the DITP has dedicated teams to support the organisation of participatory processes by other public institutions as well as to train public officials and interested stakeholders.
- **A digital platform for participation:** The DITP has established a centralised platform for participatory opportunities at the national level. The platform allows citizens to easily find opportunities and monitor the impact of their participation. It also allows public authorities to provide feedback and communicate about their participatory opportunities in a simple and harmonized platform.
- **A physical space:** The Centre of Citizen Participation is a physical space open to public institutions, civil society and citizens. Public authorities can use this space to organize meetings or any other activity with citizens and stakeholders.
- **A community of practice:** the DITP has put in place a digital hub to group the communities of practice related to open government and State modernisation. With more than 50 communities, the hub allows all public officials to discover and join the communities that interest them, according to a topics of interest (participation, digital services, collective intelligence, design thinking etc.) or a geographical area.

Source: Author's own elaboration based on interviews with the Inter-Ministerial Directorate for Public Transformation (DITP).

*The government of Canada could consider reviewing the positioning of the open government file within TBS.*

Open government, as a transversal and transformational agenda, requires high-level leadership, as highlighted above. It is only through commitment from the most senior levels of government that a change towards an open government culture can be achieved. As a means of highlighting the importance of a particular policy file, many OECD Member and Partner countries usually identify a “champion” that leads reform efforts across the whole central / federal government.

Evidence collected by the OECD shows that Open Government Offices across the Membership often face reorganization challenges that can negatively affect senior leaders' levels of commitment to open government. While reorganization is a fact of life in government, it has sometimes shown to be problematic for Open Government Offices, mostly due to the broad scope of the concept and the wide variety of policies that fall under it. In some cases Open Government Offices have been placed in niche settings that restrict their ability to achieve the full potential of open government reforms. In other cases, multidisciplinary teams (which are typical of open government) were split along more traditional lines which, as a consequence, undercut their ability to deliver positive outcomes.

In order to reflect a broader approach to openness and elevate the profile of the open government file, the government of Canada could consider reviewing its positioning within TBS. For example, the current Open

Government Office could be elevated to the Assistant Deputy Minister level and be given additional responsibilities (e.g. the citizen participation file, as proposed above). According to the Key Leadership Competency profile of the Government of Canada (Government of Canada, 2015<sup>[14]</sup>), Assistant Deputy Ministers are for example tasked with “modelling and building a culture of commitment to citizen-focused service and the public interest” and “seeking and forming strategic alliances with partners and stakeholders to continuously improve upon results”. Putting the open government file at this level would, hence, reinforce accountability structures and provide more leverage to the Open Government Office.

In the long-term and as a means to further raise the profile of the open government file, Canada could be the first OECD Member country to create the position of the Chief Open Government Officer (COGO) at the Deputy Minister level. This could be coupled with the creation of a Centre of Expertise for Open Government (CEFOG) within the structure of TBS. The CEFOG could have sub-ordinate structures (“Directorates”), each composed of multidisciplinary teams that focus on different open government topics (e.g. open government data; access to information; citizen participation; etc.).

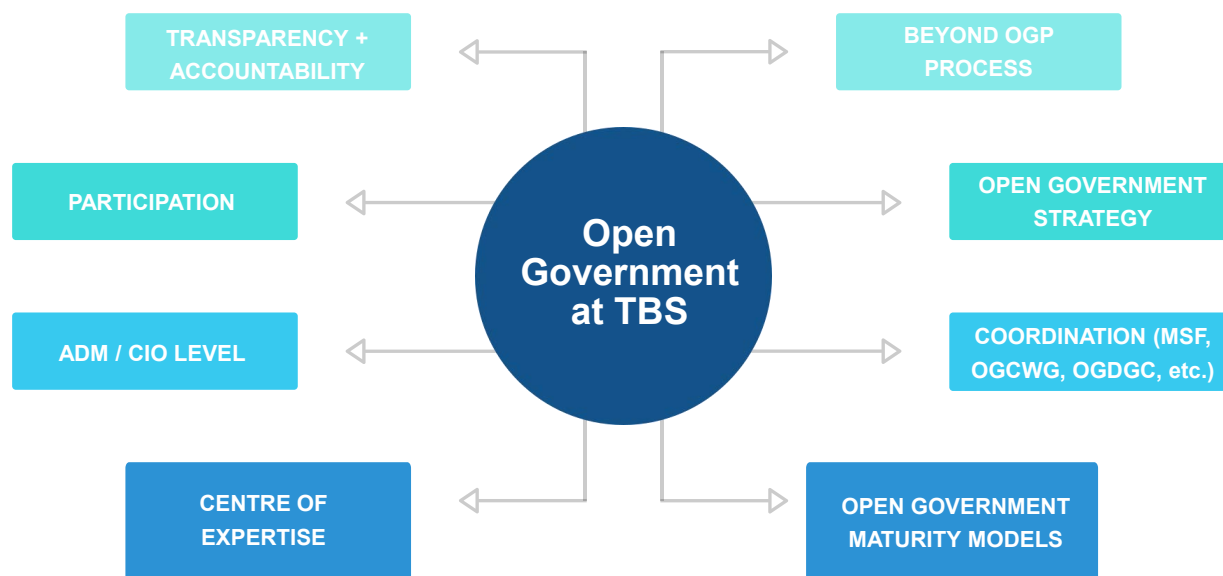
### **Box 2.6. The institutional location and level of hierarchy of Open Government Offices in OECD Member and Partner countries**

Data from the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government reveals that the implementation of almost one third of their most relevant policy documents on open government (30.53 %) are coordinated by the office of the Head of Government or Cabinet. This is followed by the Ministry of Public Administration / Reform and the Ministry of Justice (both 13.68 %) as the most frequent open government office locations.

To be impactful, these offices further require personnel with sufficient competences. The successful implementation of open government also depends on public officials’ mandate to design and implement successful open government strategies and initiatives (OECD, 2017<sup>[1]</sup>). Considering the level of the most senior employee in the open government offices, in 60 % of cases, the most highly ranked member is a public official of the highest managerial level below the Minister or Secretary of State. More than one-fifth of open government policy documents is coordinated by an office that includes a senior civil servant (21.25%). Lower managerial levels are rarely present (combined 13.75%).

Note: Preliminary data. Includes the responses of 33 OECD countries and 2 key partner countries.  
Source: OECD (2021<sup>[4]</sup>), *2020 OECD Survey on Open Government*.

Figure 2.5. The proposed new role of the Open Government Office of TBS



Source: Author's own elaboration.

***The process to design and implement the OGS needs to be coordinated across government and with non-public stakeholders.***

The implementation of an Open Government Strategy needs to be well co-ordinated across the public sector and with non-public stakeholders in order to achieve a lasting impact. Ultimately, each federal government department and each agency has to be involved in moving towards an open government culture. Recognising that the implementation of open government policies requires co-ordination and collaboration, Canada has already created a number of co-ordination mechanisms over the past years (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2. Overview of the most important co-ordination mechanisms for open government policies in Canada**

Name	Year of creation	Key attributions	Participants	Co-ordinating public institution
Multi-stakeholder Forum on Open Government	2011	To co-ordinate Canada's participation in the OGP. To provide input and advice on the development and implementation of Canada's National Action Plan on Open Government	8 civil society representatives and 4 federal government officials	Treasury Board Secretariat
Open Government Directors General Committee  Executive level	2016	To promote the advancement of the Government of Canada's Open Government principles and values by ensuring cross-departmental executive support and information-sharing in the application of Open Government principles and tools.	According to its mandate, "members are DG-level or equivalent who are leading implementation of National Action Plan commitments, or who have clear responsibility for open government-related activities in their organizations, and are prepared to assume a leadership role to support key OG issues within their institutions and/or at a	The Committee is chaired by the Executive Director of Open Government at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS).

Open government Coordinator Working Group  <b>Working level</b>	2013	To ensure cross-departmental information-sharing on Open Government best practices and any policy updates, and support a cohesive and results-driven approach to Open Government across the Government of Canada.	government-wide level". Membership is intended for Open Government Coordinators, Open Government Plan commitment leads and Open Government enthusiasts. Membership is open to any federal official who wants to participate. A minimum of one representative per department or agency is requested.	The coordinating institution of the Working Group is the Treasury Board Secretariat. The Director of the Open Government Team chairs the meetings.
Canada Open Government Working Group  <b>Working level – focused on subnational level of government</b>	2017	To strengthen collaboration on open government initiatives between the various levels of governments	The Working Group's membership reflects the multiple levels of government in Canada and brings together members from the Federal Government, Provinces, Territories and Municipalities. Membership is limited to one or two representatives from each participating jurisdiction, with expertise from a variety of domains.	The Working Group is chaired by a representative of the Federal Government (Executive Director, Open Government, Treasury Board Secretariat) and a representative from the provincial/territorial governments (to be reviewed annually).

Source: Author's own elaboration based on Government of Canada (2021<sup>[2]</sup>)

### *Canada could consider updating the mandates of Departmental Open Government Coordinators.*

Recognising that the effective implementation of open government policies requires co-ordination and collaboration across government, Canada has created Open Government Coordinators at the Department level. The Coordinators are usually at working level (Director and below) and they act as the Open Government Office's main point of contact (see Box 2.7) for a list of responsibilities). Coordinators meet regularly in a dedicated Working Group (Table 2.2). While the establishment of the Coordinators is a good practice, evidence collected during the OECD fact-finding mission revealed that many Coordinators are fulfilling this role as a "side-of-desk" activity and they usually do not sit within an office dedicated to open government.

In addition, Canada has established an Open Government Directors General Committee. Members of the Committee are engaged in their institutions' open government-related activities. They often assume a leadership role to support key open government issues within their institutions and/or at a government-wide level. That said, this work is also commonly performed as a "side-of-desk" task and many lack a clear line of responsibility over open government matters.

While the establishment of these two groups can be considered a good practice, interviews conducted during the OECD fact-finding mission revealed that both the Open Government Co-ordinators and the Director Generals (DGs) in charge of open government are in fact mainly open data / open information co-ordinators, rather than co-ordinators of the wider open government agenda of their departments / agencies. In practice, most Co-ordinators / DGs do not co-ordinate their departments' participatory policies and they are rarely in charge of initiatives that aim to foster accountability / responsiveness.

The activities, roles, and responsibilities of both the Open Government Co-ordinators and Director Generals (DGs) should be updated to reflect Canada's new approach to open government, once the OGS has been adopted. The Co-ordinations could, for example, function as their departments' contact points for the OGS, while the Director Generals (DGs) could support efforts to ensure policies their institutions design and implement follow open government approaches (e.g. citizen and stakeholders are involved in the design of the policy; information about the policy is made available in a timely and accessible manner; performance data is easily accessible; etc.).

## Box 2.7. Responsibilities of the Open Government Co-ordinators at the Department Level

### Point of contact for TBS and other government departments

- Identification of point of contact in departments for feedback received on the open government portal.
- Participation in various working groups to advance open government across the Government of Canada
- Facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and learning events within departments
- Support clear lines of governance on issues and challenges

### Central coordinating role within department

- Open government requirements span across various programs and sections, including information management, IT, access to information, strategic planning, and communications
- Identify and create dedicated programming and material for department adoption and advancement of open government, including the data and information release process, communication materials, learning materials and events
- Coordination and support function for GC data stewards and program owners with releasing open data and responding to open data requests on the open government portal (e.g. suggest a dataset function, online or email comments received)
- Support the adoption of digitally enabled release process, including open by default and automation

### Maturing open government as an ongoing government priority

- Better support with designated coordinators with core responsibilities
- Able to develop and provide support on advancing open government initiatives, such as publish with a purpose / prioritizing based on public demand
- Provide department perspective and working knowledge on advancing open government across the Government of Canada.

### Maintaining departmental resources on the open government portal

- Understanding of the open data release process on the open government registry, including metadata requirements, accessibility, official languages and supporting documentation
- Support the management of open data holdings including meeting data quality requirements

Source: Government of Canada (2021<sup>[2]</sup>), *Answers to the background questionnaire for the OECD Open Government Scan* (unpublished working paper).

*Canada could consider upgrading existing co-ordination mechanisms for open government.*

A broader approach to open government and the eventual adoption of an Open Government Strategy may require a review of the existing co-ordination spaces for open government in Canada. In the short- to medium-term, Canada could for example consider creating a mechanism that facilitates the implementation of the OGS. This mechanism could be based on the existing MSF, retaking its current composition and expanding its mandate. As such, the Open Government Co-ordination Mechanism could



have a broader scope of responsibilities, including co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of the OGS and the wider citizen participation agenda.

Once the open government agenda of Canada has reached full maturity, in the long-term, Canada could consider creating a National Open Government Committee composed of all relevant public and non-public stakeholders. The Open Government Committee would be a co-ordination mechanism for all policies and practices that fall under the realm of the concept of open government.

In practical terms, an eventual Open Government Committee would integrate other existing mechanisms such as the Multi-stakeholder Forum (and the Open Government Co-ordination Mechanism, as recommended above) as sub-committees. The Open Government Committee could be chaired by TBS and the recommended Chief Open Government Officer, if Canada decides to implement this Recommendation. It would be comprised of senior representatives from the key institutions of the federal open government ecosystem, as well as key civil society representatives, academics, private sector representatives and trade unions.

### Box 2.8. The Spanish Open Government Forum (*Foro de Gobierno Abierto*)

In February 2018, the Government of Spain launched the Open Government Forum, the first open dialogue between all levels of government and civil society on transparency, participation and accountability.

The **Plenary** meets once or twice a year. It brings together public administrations from all levels and civil society including:

- representatives of the General State Administration (AGE), all the Autonomous Communities and Cities (CC. AA.) and the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)
- representatives of the Royal Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, university professors, non-profit associations and foundations, the Council of Consumers and Users, and entities of the third sector.

The **Permanent Commission** is the executive organ of the Forum. It comprises the following members of the Plenary:

- the First and Second Vice Presidents
- six members representing the public administration (including subnational governments) and six vocal representatives of civil society
- other members of the Plenary that are not part of the Permanent Commission, as well as experts or advisors in matters to be discussed.

The **working groups** are spaces for reflection where information is grouped, knowledge is generated and different points of view are contrasted on specific topics of open government. Experts or advisors on the topics to be discussed may be invited to the meetings, as well as any member of the Plenary. There are currently three working groups:

- Participation and collaboration
- Transparency and accountability
- Training and awareness.

Source: Government of Spain (n.d.<sup>[15]</sup>), Foro de Gobierno Abierto [Open Government Forum], Madrid, [http://transparencia.gob.es/transparencia/transparencia\\_Home/index/Gobierno-abierto/ForoGA.html](http://transparencia.gob.es/transparencia/transparencia_Home/index/Gobierno-abierto/ForoGA.html) (accessed 10 December 2018)

## Monitoring and evaluating Canada's Open Government Strategy

Given their multidimensional and cross-cutting nature, open government policies are inherently difficult to monitor and evaluate (OECD, 2019<sup>[16]</sup>). Notwithstanding this complexity, the necessity of being able to prove the positive impacts of open government reforms, including a more concrete understanding of their dynamics and effects, has made monitoring and evaluation (M&E) particularly relevant (OECD, 2019<sup>[16]</sup>).

Canada is not alone in needing to show the impact of open government reforms. The creation of more solid M&E systems for open government is a challenge faced by many OECD Member and Partner countries. Data collected through the *2020 OECD Survey on Open Government* (OECD, 2021<sup>[4]</sup>) suggests that – for the time being – most countries only monitor the implementation of their OGP action plans (rather than the wider open government agenda) and collect limited data and evidence on the broader effects of open government initiatives (OECD, forthcoming<sup>[17]</sup>). Evaluations are still mostly conducted on an *ad hoc* basis, if at all.

In Canada, like in most other OECD Member countries, there is currently no integrated system to monitor the openness of the federal government. Nevertheless, Canada already gathers ample data on different open government policies. For example, the Open Government Portal includes a dedicated section providing statistics on the Access to Information and Privacy Acts, including data on requests received during the identified period; requests completed or carried forward to the next period; etc.

### Box 2.9. Provision 5 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

“Develop and implement monitoring, evaluation and learning mechanisms for open government strategies and initiatives by:

1. Identifying institutional actors to be in charge of collecting and disseminating up-to-date and reliable information and data in an open format;
2. Developing comparable indicators to measure processes, outputs, outcomes, and impact in collaboration with stakeholders; and
3. Fostering a culture of monitoring, evaluation and learning among public officials by increasing their capacity to regularly conduct exercises for these purposes in collaboration with relevant stakeholders”.

Source: OECD (2017<sup>[1]</sup>), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, OECD, Paris, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438> (accessed 30 November 2018).

### **Canada could consider coupling the development of the OGS with an open government maturity model.**

A maturity model is a reference instrument for assessing an entity's transition towards a given objective during a given period. Maturity models are increasingly being developed in different areas of public governance, including in the field of open government.

Canada's OGS could be coupled with a maturity model that allow them to assess their openness and take initiatives to foster it. In particular, Open Government Maturity Models can:

- Set a baseline standard of what good practices in the field of open government looks like;

- Allow public institutions to assess their levels of openness at a given point in time and identify where they are situated in relation to national good practice.
- Allow building a coherent and flexible trajectory towards high levels of maturity, adaptable to the situation of each public institution;
- Show the stages of this progression and the necessary achievements that at each stage are useful and consolidate the passage into the subsequent stages;
- Help structure a monitoring and evaluation methodology;
- Allow for comparison between public institutions within a defined framework;

In order to be useful, Open Government Maturity Models need to be based on a shared understanding of what different stages of openness in a public institution look like. This implies finding an answer to the questions: *When can a public institution be considered fully open? What does being closed imply?* In order to be able to answer these questions, an Open Government Maturity Model should be based on a clear theory of change and coupled with indicators, targets and benchmarks.

Coupling the OGS with a maturity model can have several advantages: First of all, it can provide incentives to public officials to report on progress relating to open government, thereby fostering a culture of M&E and of accountability more generally. Secondly, it can foster the involvement of senior leaders, thereby “creating sticks”.

### ***The Strategy should include a solid system to monitor and evaluate implementation***

The implementation of the Open Government Strategy needs to be systematically monitored and, eventually, evaluated. Monitoring could, for example, be done through an integrated monitoring system, available on the Open Government Portal. The system should allow public and non-public stakeholders to track strategy implementation on a day-to-day basis.

The strategy could provide a mandate to TBS to develop an annual M&E plan for the Open Government Strategy. The National Open Government Committee, recommended above, could serve as an institutional platform to follow up and discuss progress on the strategic goals in a systematic manner. Meanwhile, the newly created Office of the Chief Open Government Officer at TBS could be responsible for ensuring the monitoring of the implementation of the strategy on a daily basis.

#### **Box 2.10. Mexico’s baseline indicators on open government**

Mexico’s Open Government Metrics were developed by the Centre for Economic Research and Teaching (CIDE), and were based on an initiative of the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI). The metrics are designed as a baseline to measure the current state of the National System of Transparency, Access to Information and Protection of Personal Data (SNT) and open government policies more generally. Aiming to be an “x-ray of the starting point of the open government policy of the Mexican State” at the national and subnational level, its focus goes beyond measuring the compliance with regulations, and aims to capture performance information on the outcomes of open government policies from the perspective of both government and citizens.

The metrics start with an operational definition of open government structured around two dimensions: transparency and public participation. Each dimension is approached from two perspectives: government and citizens.

	Transparency dimension	Public participation dimension
<b>Government-perspective</b>	Does the government make public information about its decisions and actions? To what extent is this done? What is the quality of this information?	In what ways can citizens have an impact on public decisions?
<b>Citizen-perspective</b>	How feasible is it for a citizen to obtain timely and relevant information in order to make decisions?	Can citizens activate a mechanism that allows them to influence public decisions?

The CIDE team developed an Open Government Index, consisting of measurements of transparency and participation from the perspective of both government and citizens. The construction of these indexes involved the analysis of existing regulations, a review of government websites, and user simulations, including information requests. The Metrics survey included a sample of 908 governmental bodies at the national and subnational level; 754 portals were reviewed and 3 635 requests for information were sent. The resulting Open Government Index of Mexico was 0.39 (on a scale of 0 to 1). The index showed that the transparency dimension has a much higher value (0.50) than the participation dimension (0.28).

Source: INAI (2017<sup>[18]</sup>), *Resultados Edición 2017*, <http://eventos.inai.org.mx/metricasga/index.php/descargables> (accessed 11 January 2019).

## Communicating around Canada's Open Government Strategy

Public communication is a key lever of government that can be deployed both *internally* (across and within public entities) and *externally* (with the broader public) and serve as a tool of policy implementation and service design and delivery.

### Box 2.11. Provision 6 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

“Actively communicate on open government strategies and initiatives, as well as on their outputs, outcomes and impacts, in order to ensure that they are well-known within and outside government, to favour their uptake, as well as to stimulate stakeholder buy-in.”

Source: OECD (2017<sup>[11]</sup>), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, OECD, Paris, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438> (accessed 30 November 2018).

### ***The OGS needs to be communicated widely both internally and externally.***

The design and implementation of an OGS could be an opportunity for Canada to build a more coherent communication approach to open government and an occasion to coordinate messages with communication officers across the Government of Canada.

Ensuring that the strategy is communicated to relevant stakeholders is essential, as per the *Communicating Open Government: a How-to Guide* (OECD; OGP, 2018<sup>[7]</sup>), developed jointly by the OECD and OGP. The Strategy's vision has to become relevant to the day-to-day activities of each individual public servant. TBS could therefore make dedicated efforts to ensure that all public officials are aware of its

existence and that high-ranking officials hold their institutions accountable for implementation. This may involve the organisation of high visibility events and the establishment of a dedicated communication strategy. Internal communication around the OGS can also help create synergies by bringing policy makers and public communicators more closely together.

## Ensuring the successful operationalisation and take-up of the Open Government Strategy

The design of an Open Government Strategy will put Canada's open government agenda on a new level. The move towards an open government culture of governance will need to involve changes in individual and institutional values, beliefs, norms of conduct, and expectations (OECD, 2021<sup>[19]</sup>). Recognising that the creation of awareness, knowledge and skills play an important role in fostering a change towards an open government culture, Provision 3 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government for example invites countries to promote "open government literacy"<sup>4</sup> (Box 2.12).

### Box 2.12. Provision 3 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

"Ensure the successful operationalisation and take-up of open government strategies and initiatives by:

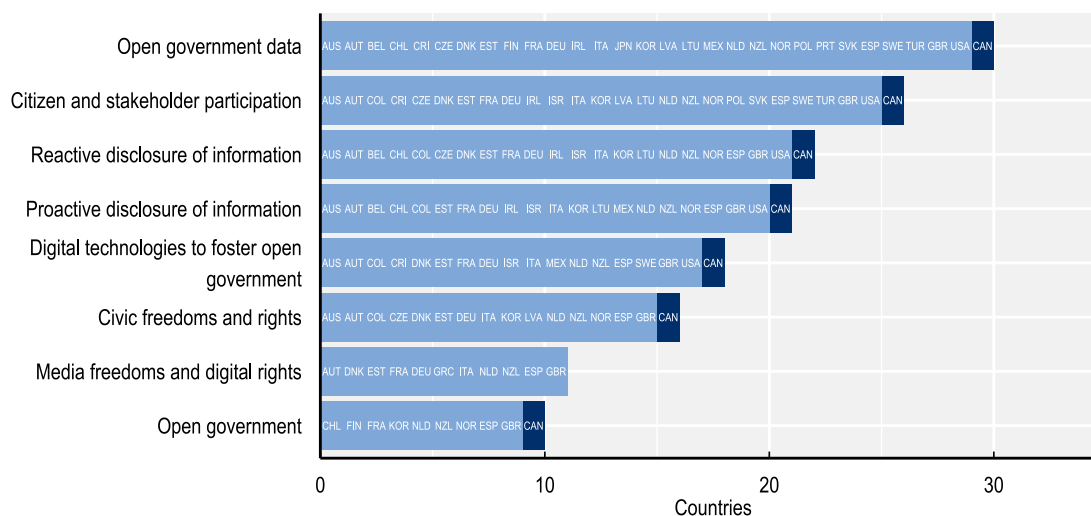
- (i) Providing public officials with the mandate to design and implement successful open government strategies and initiatives, as well as the adequate human, financial, and technical resources, while promoting a supportive organisational culture;
- (ii) Promoting open government literacy in the administration, at all levels of government, and among stakeholders."

Source: OECD (2017<sup>[1]</sup>), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, OECD, Paris, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438> (accessed 30 November 2018).

### **Canada could consider designing an Open Government Toolkit to facilitate the implementation of the Strategy**

To raise awareness, create buy-in and build their staff's and civil society's open government literacy, most governments across the OECD membership have elaborated guidelines, toolkits and manuals on open government policies and practices (OECD, forthcoming). According to the results of the *2020 OECD Survey on Open Government* (OECD, 2021<sup>[4]</sup>), 30 out of 33 OECD countries (91%) had guidelines on open government data, and 26 OECD countries (79%) had guidelines on citizen and stakeholder participation. Twenty-two OECD countries (67%) had guidelines on reactive disclosure of information, and 21 (64%) on proactive disclosure. Only ten OECD countries (30%) had guidelines that explicitly focused on the concept of open government (Figure 2.6).

**Figure 2.6. Availability of guidelines for civil servants on open government at the central/federal level**



Note: N=33. Multiple selection possible.

Source: OECD (2021<sup>[4]</sup>), 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government.

Canada has already elaborated toolkits and guidelines in different areas of open government, including, for example, a Do-it-Yourself Open Data Toolkit (Government of Canada, 2019<sup>[20]</sup>) which provides a step-by-step guide on how to develop and implement an open data initiative. The design of the Open Government Strategy and the much broader approach to the open government principles that it promoted could be coupled with the development of a holistic (online) Open Government Toolkit made available free-of-charge to all public servants and society. The Toolkit could provide an overview of concrete actions that any public official can take to foster interactions with citizens and increase his or her institution's openness. In addition to including TBS' knowledge and experience on open data / open information, the Toolkit would need to provide concrete tools / advice on participatory tools and mechanisms, as well as accountability and integrity practices that are relevant for openness (e.g. lobbying transparency, asset declarations, etc.).

Similarly, the Open Government Office at TBS could lead the development of an online Open Government Toolkit for citizens, explaining their rights and providing an overview of avenues for collaboration with public institutions. The OECD's Toolkit and Case Navigator for Open Government<sup>5</sup> provides an overview of available toolkits, manuals and guidelines on different open government policies around the world.

### Box 2.13. Examples of existing toolkits in the area of open government

#### Open Policy Making toolkit (United Kingdom)

Developed by the UK Cabinet Office, this toolkit provides tools and techniques for policy makers to develop user-centred policies in four stages: diagnosis, discovery, development and delivery.

#### OGPtoolbox (OGP)

The OGP Toolbox is a collaborative project which currently contains 263 open government cases and provides information about 1445 tools from 651 organisations. This repository of digital tools allows policy-makers to find the suitable tool for their own context and to learn from the experiences of the whole open government community.

### bE-Open toolkit on open government (Council of Europe)

With a focus on Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, this toolkit aims to support democracy through improved local governance. It provides information about international standards, legislation, guidelines and good practices on four themes: public ethics and accountability, prevention of corruption, transparency, and citizen participation.

### Implementing Innovation: A User's Manual for Open Government Programs (Reboot)

This manual covers an eight-phase process from concept development to implementation for building an open government programme.

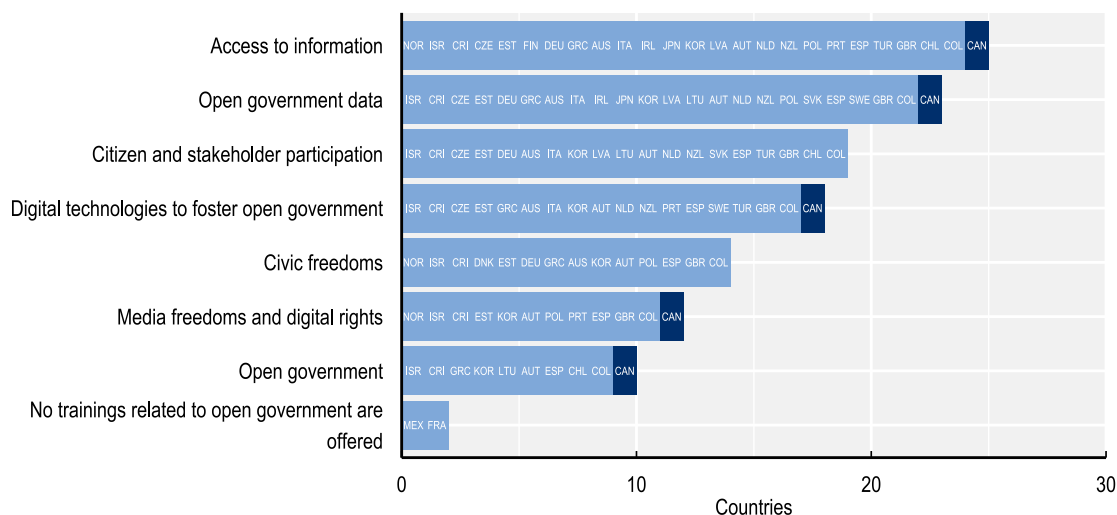
Source: UK Cabinet Office (2017<sup>[21]</sup>), Open Policy Making toolkit, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-policy-making-toolkit>; OGPtoolbox (n.d.<sup>[22]</sup>), <https://ogptoolbox.org/de/>; Council of Europe (n.d.<sup>[23]</sup>), bE-Open: Open Local Government, <https://www.beopen-congress.eu/en/>; Reboot (n.d.<sup>[24]</sup>), Implementing Innovation: A User's Manual for Open Government Programs, <https://implementinginnovation.org/manual/>

## Canada could consider creating an online course on the Open Government Strategy

The provision of trainings, information sessions and capacity-building events is another way of ensuring that public officials and non-public stakeholders embody open government principles and increase their levels of open government literacy (OECD, 2021<sup>[19]</sup>). According to results of the 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government (OECD, 2021<sup>[4]</sup>), most governments across the OECD propose specific trainings on different open government policies and practices to their staff.

For example, 25 out of 33 OECD countries surveyed (76%) provide training on access to information, and 23 (70%) on open government data. Nineteen of the OECD countries (58%) have training on citizen and stakeholder participation. Ten OECD countries (30%) have training on open government as an integrated concept (e.g. explaining what open government means)<sup>6</sup>. Canada is in line with OECD practice, also offering trainings in most of these areas (Figure 2.7)

Figure 2.7. Available trainings for civil servants at the central/federal government in OECD member countries



Note: N=33. Multiple selection possible.

Source: OECD (2021<sup>[4]</sup>), 2020 OECD Survey on Open Government.

While trainings for public officials are common practice in OECD countries nowadays, data from the Survey shows that governments make fewer efforts to foster the open government literacy of non-public stakeholders. For example, only half of OECD countries that responded provide some sort of training related to open government for non-public stakeholders. Most commonly, these trainings cover open government data as well as access to information.

As part of the efforts to create an enabling environment for the implementation of the Open Government Strategy, Canada could consider creating an introductory course on open government that could be made available free of charge on the Open Government Portal, as for example done by Brazil.

### Box 2.14. Trainings on open government in Brazil

The Directorate for Transparency and Social Control of the CGU (in partnership with the Federal University of Goiás) has prepared an online training environment on different open government policies and practices. All of the courses are available for free and can be taken by both public officials and non-public stakeholders (most of them are targeting public officials though). In addition to courses focusing on the CGU's core mandate (e.g. access to information), the catalogue includes a 20-hour course that is specifically dedicated to the concept of open government.

Source: OECD (2022<sup>[25]</sup>), *Open Government Review of Brazil: Towards an Integrated Open Government Agenda*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/3f9009d4-en>.

### **Canada could consider fostering the creation of an open government community of practice**

Communities of practice can be useful tools to exchange good practices and facilitate the sharing of resources and experiences. As part of the process to implement the OGS, Canada could consider setting up a dedicated community of practice on open government, bringing together public officials and non-public stakeholders from all branches of the state and all levels of government that are interested in open government topics and / or have participated in trainings on open government policies and practices. The open government community of practice could integrate the existing Public Engagement Community of Practice.

The open government community could be animated by TBS through a dedicated online space. In addition to being a platform for dialogue, learning and sharing of good practices, the community could provide TBS with an effective informal co-ordination tool. In an ideal case, the community of practice would also involve non-public stakeholders such as civil society leaders as well as representatives from academia, the private sector, and trade unions.

### Box 2.15. Examples of communities of practice on open government policies and practices

#### US OpenGov Community of Practice

The United States Government has established a series of communities of practices across the Federal Government to collaborate and share resources on different policy areas. The Open Government Community of Practice is a digital space and a network where civil servants across government can discuss about open government related initiatives and practices. The Open Government community consists of government employees and civil society members working in the field of Open Government to share best practices to promote transparency, participation, and collaboration, and advocate for



opening government information. This type of communities allow for a continuous exchange of information, peer learning, it supports co-ordination and collaboration across government.

### [UCLG Community of Practice on Transparency and Open Government](#)

The United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Community of Practice on Transparency and Open Government was created with the objectives of supporting peer-to-peer learning, networking, awareness-raising and capacity building on open government and public integrity at local level and promoting the role of local and regional governments in the development and promotion of practices of transparency, participation and accountability for the achievement of sustainable cities and territories. The Community of Practice is constituted by a group of local and regional governments, as well as experts, academics and public institutions and representatives of international city networks interested in discussing and advancing joint solutions, learning opportunities and exchange of public policies on issues of Open Government. It is co-ordinated by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) with the support of the Open Government Partnership and the United Nations Human Settlement Program (UN-Habitat).

### [Hub of communities working on State modernisation in France](#)

The Inter-Ministerial Directorate for Public Transformation has put in place a digital hub to install the communities of practice related to state modernisation, including open government. With more than 50 communities, the hub allows all public officials to discover and join the communities that interest them, according to a topics of interest (participation, digital services, collective intelligence, design thinking etc.) or a geographical area.

Sources: US General Services Administration (2021<sup>[26]</sup>), *OpenGov Community*, <https://digital.gov/communities/open-gov/>; United Cities and Local Governments (n.d.<sup>[27]</sup>), *About the Community*, <https://opengov.uclg.org/en/community-practice>; Interministerial Directorate of Public Sector Transformation (n.d.<sup>[28]</sup>), *Public sector transformation communities*, <https://www.modernisation.gouv.fr/boite-outils/communautes-de-la-transformation-publique>.

## ***The implementation of the Open Government Strategy could be linked with ministers' mandate letters***

In 2015, the Government of Canada publicly released ministerial mandate letters for the first time (Government of Canada, 2021<sup>[21]</sup>). While the original letters have been replaced following subsequent elections, they serve as an excellent example of how such letters can be successfully employed to advance open government. The mandate letters outlined the policy objectives that each minister would work to accomplish, as well as the pressing challenges they would address in their role. The letters described the Prime Minister's expectations for each minister, and were supposed to give Canadians a clear idea of how the government would deliver its agenda. Mandate letters were coupled with a tracker which allow citizens and stakeholders to review the progress of government commitments. This tracker in itself constituted a very interesting open government practice.

The letters included a direction that "Government and its information should be open by default" and indicated that ministers were expected "to continue to raise the bar on openness, effectiveness and transparency in government." Moving forward, Canada could for example consider linking the implementation of the Open Government Strategy explicitly with the mandate letters that Ministers receive from the Prime Minister. The document "Open and Accountable Government" which was referenced within all of the Ministerial Mandate Letters provides an excellent basis to do so. Open and Accountable Government set out core principles regarding the roles and responsibilities of Ministers in Canada's system of responsible parliamentary government.

Future governments could consider paying a similar level of attention to open government in future mandate letters. In line with the broader approach to open government discussed above, Canada could consider renaming the document “Open, Responsive and Participatory Government” and updating it to include explicit provisions on participatory practices.

### Box 2.16. Examples of open government commitments in Ministerial mandate letters in Canada

#### 2021 Mandate Letter Commitments

##### *President of the Treasury Board (TBS)*

- “Building on the vision outlined in Canada’s Digital Government Strategy, lead our Government’s work to advance digital government to better serve Canadians by: 1) Serving as the champion for Digital Standards, encouraging your colleagues to utilize more agile, open and user-focused methods when designing services for Canadians; 2) Further expanding open data initiatives and making more data available digitally.”
- “Continue leading our regulatory reform efforts in collaboration with your Cabinet colleagues to improve transparency, reduce administrative burden and lead our efforts to harmonize regulations that maintain high safety standards and improve the competitiveness of Canadian businesses.”
- “Continuing to build a whole-of-government approach for the improved collection, analysis, availability and publication of disaggregated data, with the support of the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry.”

##### *Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (ISED)*

- “As the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada, continue to support the President of the Treasury Board in their work in building a whole-of-government approach for the improved collection, analysis, availability and publication of disaggregated data.”

#### 2019 Mandate Letters

##### *Common language in mandate letters to all Ministers:*

- “That starts with a commitment to govern in a positive, open and collaborative way.”
- “They expect us to be diligent, honest, open and sincere in our efforts to serve the public interest.”
- “I also expect us to continue to raise the bar on openness, effectiveness and transparency in government. This means a government that is open by default. It means better digital capacity and services for Canadians. It means a strong and resilient public service. It also means humility and continuing to acknowledge mistakes when we make them. Canadians do not expect us to be perfect; they expect us to be diligent, honest, open and sincere in our efforts to serve the public interest.”
- “You will do your part to continue our Government’s commitment to transparent, merit-based appointments, to help ensure that people of all gender identities, Indigenous Peoples, racialized people, persons with disabilities and minority groups are reflected in positions of leadership.”
- “Tracking and publicly reporting on the progress of our commitments; assessing the effectiveness of our work; aligning our resources with priorities; and adapting to events as they unfold, in order to get the results Canadians rightly demand of us.”
- “We have committed to an open, honest government that is accountable to Canadians, lives up to the highest ethical standards and applies the utmost care and prudence in the handling

of public funds. I expect you to embody these values in your work and observe the highest ethical standards in everything you do. I want Canadians to look on their own government with pride and trust."

- "You will be provided with a copy of Open and Accountable Government to assist you as you undertake your responsibilities. I ask that you carefully read it, including elements that have been added to strengthen it, and ensure that your staff does so as well."

Source: Government of Canada (2021<sup>[2]</sup>), *Answers to the background questionnaire for the OECD Open Government Scan* (unpublished working paper).

## Moving towards an Open State approach

The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government invites countries to explore the potential of moving from the concept of open government towards that of open state (Box 2.17). In the Recommendation an open state is defined as "when the executive, legislature, judiciary, independent public institutions, and all levels of government - recognising their respective roles, prerogatives, and overall independence according to their existing legal and institutional frameworks - collaborate, exploit synergies, and share good practices and lessons learned among themselves and with other stakeholders to promote transparency, integrity, accountability, and stakeholder participation, in support of democracy and inclusive growth".

### Box 2.17. Provision 10 of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government

"While recognising the roles, prerogatives, and overall independence of all concerned parties and according to their existing legal and institutional frameworks, explore the potential of moving from the concept of open government toward that of open state."

Source: OECD (2017<sup>[1]</sup>), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, OECD, Paris, <https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438> (accessed 30 November 2018).

The development of an OGS can be a powerful way to create a shared commitment to the principles of open government across the entire Canadian public sector, including in all branches of power and at all levels of government. Taking into account the Federal nature and the prerogatives of all levels of government (Box 2.18), the OGS could support a new ambition for open government across the country and promote a substantive dialogue on it across levels of government. TBS has already initiated a constructive dialogue with provinces and territories, especially in the areas of open data and open information. The Strategy could be an opportunity to bring this collaboration to a new level, improving the co-ordination of open government agendas and creating synergies. This open state perspective could also include actors from the Legislative and the Judicial powers, which have implemented open government initiatives but are still working in isolation from the other branches of the State.

### Box 2.18. Canada's administrative setting as a federation has to be taken into account when designing open government policies and practices

The Canadian Constitution (1867) and Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) define Canada as a federal system of shared powers in which the federal government and the provinces have equal status

(OECD, UCLG, 2016<sup>[29]</sup>). The subnational system is two-tiered and made up of 10 provinces and 3 territories at the upper level and 3 805 municipalities at the lower level. Municipalities are not formally recognised in the federal constitution, but they are mentioned as “coming under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces”. Therefore, there are a variety of municipal structures which differ from one province to another (municipal intermunicipal authorities, metropolitan and regional municipalities, towns, townships, cities, etc.).

Provinces and territories have own and shared responsibilities with the federal government. Own responsibilities include education, health care (including hospitals), highways, prisons, natural resources, municipal affairs. Shared responsibilities include pensions, energy, water, agriculture and immigration. Municipal tasks are set by provinces and vary considerably. In addition, provinces can delegate some of their responsibilities to municipalities. Municipal functions typically include transport (roads and transit); protection (police and fire); water and sewerage, waste, recreation and culture, land use planning, social housing. Education, social and health services are not included in municipal responsibilities, except when they are shared with the province (e.g. social assistance in Ontario). Primary and secondary education lies with independently elected local authorities (schools boards) who are directly answerable to provinces and territories (OECD, UCLG, 2016<sup>[29]</sup>). According to the OECD (OECD, UCLG, 2016<sup>[29]</sup>), the share in GDP and public spending of subnational government is by far the highest of the OECD, well above the OECD average (16.6% of GDP and 40.0% of public spending in 2013). A vast majority is made by the provinces (78%). Subnational governments are also key employers (SNG share in public staff spending is 20 percentage points above the OECD average of 63.2%).

Source: OECD, UCLG (2016<sup>[29]</sup>), Country profile: Canada, <https://www.oecd.org/regional/regional-policy/profile-Canada.pdf>.

### ***Canada could use the OGS to foster the maturity of open government agendas at the subnational level***

In order to strengthen collaboration on open government initiatives between the various levels of governments, Canada launched the Canada Open Government Working Group (COGWWG) in 2017. According to its mandate (a revision took place in 2021), the COGWWG provides a space for Canadian jurisdictions to collaborate and share information on (Government of Canada, 2021<sup>[21]</sup>):

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

Members of the Working Group are, for example, responsible for “promoting the implementation of open data, open information and public engagement principles in their respective jurisdiction” (Ibid.). They elaborate a joint annual work plan to “set a strategic direction to pan-Canadian open government initiatives”. The Evaluation of the Open Government Program that was prepared by the TBS Internal Audit and Evaluation Bureau (Government of Canada, 2021<sup>[30]</sup>) found that “the working group’s efforts have yielded positive results for open government initiatives across the country”, including the following:

- adoption of the Open Data Charter;
- standardization of high value datasets;

- federation of open data search capabilities between the federal government and the government of Alberta;
- building data literacy and associated technical skills among public servants;
- establishing a coordinated mechanism for public dialogue and engagement across Canada.

The Evaluation continues stating that “evidence gathered from both the interviews and the focus groups reveals widespread agreement that the federal government has played an important role in creating a baseline for open government activities in all provinces and territories that have open government programs” (Ibid.).

While the positive contribution of the Working Group to Canada’s national open government agenda is undeniable, interviews conducted for this OECD Open Government Scan showed that the Working Group has made most progress in the field of open data / open information. Despite the fact that the mandate of the Working Group includes a specific reference to participation / engagement, little of its work has in practice focused on the participation-side of open government. Similar to the federal level, many Provinces also separate the open data / open information agenda from the participation / democracy agenda.

The OGS provides an opportunity to support the uptake of a new understanding and foster the maturity of open government agendas at the subnational level. Once created, the new definition of open government (see above) could for example be shared with the subnational level in order to increase coherence and harmonization of practices across Canada. Similarly, as part of its effort to foster the monitoring and evaluation of open government reforms in Canada, TBS could create an open government maturity model adopted to the subnational level, thereby allowing provinces and territories (and possibly even municipalities) to assess their own levels of openness and take initiatives to increase them. Lastly, according to the preferences of TBS, the OGS could include a dedicated section on open government at the subnational level, allowing provinces and territories to outline their own vision and objectives as part of the federal strategy.

## References

- Council of Europe (n.d.), *bE-Open: Open Local Government*, <https://www.beopen-congress.eu/en/>. [23]
- Government of Canada (2021), *Answers to the background questionnaire for the OECD Open Government Scan of Canada*. [2]
- Government of Canada (2021), *Evaluation of the Open Government Program*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/corporate/reports/evaluation-open-government-program.html>. [30]
- Government of Canada (2020), *Policy on Service and Digital*, <https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=32603>. [9]
- Government of Canada (2019), *Do-it-Yourself Open Data Toolkit*, <https://open.canada.ca/en/toolkit/diy>. [20]
- Government of Canada (2019), *Public engagement principles*, <https://open.canada.ca/en/content/principles-and-guidelines>. [12]
- Government of Canada (2018), *Canada’s 2018-2020 National Action Plan on Open Government*, [https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Canada\\_Action-Plan\\_2018-2020\\_EN.pdf](https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Canada_Action-Plan_2018-2020_EN.pdf). [8]

- Government of Canada (2015), *Key Leadership Competencies*, [14]  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/professional-development/key-leadership-competency-profile.html>.
- Government of Canada (2014), *Directive on Open Government*, <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=28108>. [3]
- Government of Canada (n.d.), *Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat Organization*, [10]  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/corporate/organization.html>.
- Government of Spain (n.d.), *Foro de Gobierno Abierto [Open Government Forum], Madrid*, [15]  
[http://transparencia.gob.es/transparencia/transparencia\\_Home/index/Gobierno-abierto/ForoGA.html](http://transparencia.gob.es/transparencia/transparencia_Home/index/Gobierno-abierto/ForoGA.html) (accessed on 10 December 2018).
- INAI (2017), *Resultados Edición 2017*, [18]  
<http://eventos.inai.org.mx/metricasga/index.php/descargables> (accessed on 11 January 2019).
- Interministerial Directorate of Public Sector Transformation (n.d.), *Public sector transformation communities*, <https://www.modernisation.gouv.fr/boite-outils/communautes-de-la-transformation-publique>. [28]
- OECD (2022), *Open Government Review of Brazil : Towards an Integrated Open Government Agenda*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, [25]  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/3f9009d4-en>.
- OECD (2021), *2020 OECD Survey on Open Government*. [4]
- OECD (2021), *Government at a Glance 2021*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [19]  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/1c258f55-en>.
- OECD (2021), *Guía de la OCDE sobre Gobierno Abierto para Funcionarios Públicos Peruanos*, [13]  
<https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government/guia-de-la-ocde-sobre-gobierno-abierto-para-funcionarios-publicos-peruanos-2021.pdf>.
- OECD (2021), *Perception Survey among Delegates to the OECD Working Party on Open Government*. [6]
- OECD (2020), *Catching the Deliberative Wave: Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions*. [11]
- OECD (2019), *Open Government in Argentina*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, [16]  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/1988ccef-en>.
- OECD (2017), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government*, [1]  
<https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0438>.
- OECD (2016), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, OECD Publishing, Paris, [5]  
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en>.
- OECD (forthcoming), *Open Government: Global Report*. [17]
- OECD, UCLG (2016), *Country profile: Canada*, <https://www.oecd.org/regional/regional-policy/profile-Canada.pdf>. [29]

- OECD; OGP (2018), *Communicating Open Government: A How-to Guide*, [7]  
<https://www.oecd.org/gov/Open-Government-Guide.pdf>.
- OGP (n.d.), *OGPtoolbox*, <https://ogptoolbox.org/de/>. [22]
- Reboot (n.d.), *Implementing Innovation: A User's Manual for Open Government Programs*, [24]  
<https://implementinginnovation.org/manual/>.
- UK Cabinet Office (2017), *Open Policy Making toolkit*, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-policy-making-toolkit>. [21]
- United Cities and Local Governments (n.d.), *About the Community*, [27]  
<https://opengov.uclg.org/en/community-practice>.
- US General Services Administration (2021), *OpenGov Community*, [26]  
<https://digital.gov/communities/open-gov/>.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Canada is already taking this agenda forward, with for example, its Algorithmic Impact Assessment Tool: <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/digital-government-innovations/responsible-use-ai/algorithmic-impact-assessment.html>

<sup>2</sup> The objective of the Directive is to “maximize the release of government information and data of business value to support transparency, accountability, citizen engagement, and socio-economic benefits through reuse, subject to applicable restrictions associated with privacy, confidentiality, and security”.

<sup>3</sup> 29 out of 38 OECD Member countries are members of the OGP.

<sup>4</sup> The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (OECD, 2017) defines open government literacy as “the combination of awareness, knowledge, and skills that public officials and stakeholders require to engage successfully in open government strategies and initiatives.”

<sup>5</sup> The OECD Toolkit and Case Navigator for Open Government can be found here: <https://www.oecd.org/gov/open-government-toolkit-navigator.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Some countries do not have a centralised training catalogue, with each ministry and institution responsible for designing the training it offers its employees. These trainings would not be captured by these data.

# 3

## Conclusion: Towards an integrated open government ecosystem in Canada

---

The concluding Chapter includes the main policy recommendations for Canada to move forward with the creation of an ecosystem that puts the open government principles of transparency, accountability, integrity and stakeholder participation at the heart of decision-making processes and that will ultimately allow for the development of an open government culture in all public institutions.

---

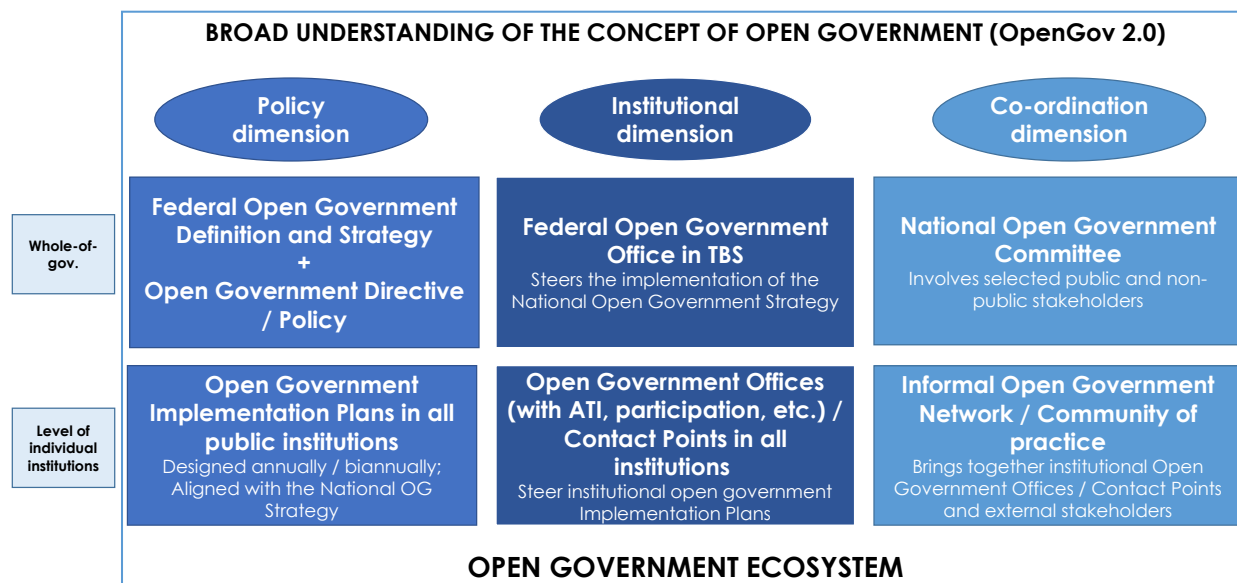


In most OECD Member and Partner countries, including in Canada, the enabling environment for open government is the result of a combination of different layers of laws, policies and institutions, coupled with very diverse implementation modalities and practices. This is due to the fact that, traditionally, public policies that aim to foster the open government principles of transparency, accountability, integrity, and stakeholder participation and related policies and practices (e.g. open data) have most commonly been treated through separate policy agendas, each with their own (often well-established) governance processes and mechanisms. The emergence of the concept of open government invites countries to put all policies that aim to foster government-citizen relationships under one common umbrella to foster synergies and achieve more and better outcomes for citizens is still fairly recent.

Through the design of its first-ever Open Government Strategy, Canada is leading the way for the next generation of reforms and taking first steps towards an integrated open government ecosystem. The findings of this OECD Open Government Scan confirm that the Canadian federal government is ready to take on the challenge to design and implement a far-reaching holistic Open Government Strategy and establish a new benchmark for other OECD Member and Partner countries.

The OECD recognizes that the policy recommendations proposed in this Scan are ambitious and not all of them can be implemented at once. Taken together, they propose an agenda for Canada to move towards an ecosystem that puts the open government principles of transparency, accountability, integrity and stakeholder participation at the heart of decision-making processes and that will ultimately allow for the development of an open government culture in all public institutions and each individual public officials (Figure 3.1). While some recommendations can be implemented fairly quickly, others may require changing decrees and mandates and will therefore take longer to achieve. The OECD stands ready to accompany Canada in this process.

**Figure 3.1. The OGS could be a first step towards a fully integrated open government ecosystem in Canada**



Source: Author's own elaboration.

## Policy recommendations

1. **Create the framework conditions for a successful Open Government Strategy.**
  - Fully involve the senior leadership of the Canadian government in the design and implementation of the Strategy.
    - Identify political champions and involve them in all steps of the development and implementation of the Strategy.
  - **Build the Strategy on a broader understanding of the concept of open government, by including elements relating to the promotion of transparency, accountability, citizen and stakeholder participation and the protection of civic space in it.**
    - Consider including the revised definition of the concept of open government in the Strategy and make efforts to disseminate it widely in order to ensure that the whole-of-society understands that open government refers to a wider agenda that focuses on fostering the government-citizen nexus.
  - Establish a clear roadmap for the development of the Strategy, including an overview of key steps (e.g. planned launching date; intermediary steps that are needed; etc.), a citizen and stakeholder participation plan and a communications plan.
  
2. **Ensure the existence of the necessary legal, regulatory and policy frameworks for the Open Government Strategy.**
  - **Consider coupling the design of the Strategy with a review of the existing Directive on Open Government or – eventually – with the design of a Policy on Open Government.** The updated Directive or a new Policy could, for example, be used to introduce the new broader understanding of open government and fully integrate the wider participation and accountability agenda into the open government agenda.
  - Ensure that the Strategy complements and strengthens existing policy frameworks, including the National Action Plan on Open Government and the Policy on Service and Digital and associated policy documents.
    - Use the Strategy as a tool to promote initiatives that are less appealing to an external audience but that are nevertheless fundamental to a successful open government agenda, such as the establishment of governance mechanisms and processes.
  
3. **Create institutional arrangements and co-ordinate the implementation of the Open Government Strategy.**
  - **Empower the Open Government Office of the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS)** for it to become the co-ordinator of and / or centre of expertise for a new broader open government approach that fully integrates the transparency, accountability, citizen participation and civic space agendas.
    - **Consider reviewing the positioning of the open government file within TBS to elevate its profile.**
      - In the short- to medium-term, the current Open Government Office could be elevated to the Assistant Deputy Minister level and be given additional responsibilities (e.g. the citizen participation file).
      - In the long-term and as a means to further raise the profile of the open government file, Canada could be the first OECD Member country to create the position of the Chief Open Government Officer at the Deputy Minister level. This could be coupled with the creation of a Centre of Expertise for Open Government within the structure of TBS.

- **Consider giving the leadership of the citizen and stakeholder participation file to the Open Government Office of TBS.** This would mean that TBS would, for example, take ownership for disseminating the existing Public Engagement Principles and ensure that they are applied across the whole federal government. TBS would further become the primary entry point for advice and support on any kind of participatory initiative conducted by departments and agencies and for leading the elaborating of regulatory and policy frameworks on citizen participation.
    - Make the Open Government Strategy the primary tool to move forward the participation agenda.
  - **Coordinate the process to design and implement the Strategy across government and with non-public stakeholders.**
    - Update the activities, roles, and responsibilities of both the Open Government Coordinators and Director Generals to reflect the new approach to open government. The Coordinations could function as their departments' contact points for the OGS, while the Director Generals (DGs) could support efforts to ensure policies their institutions design and implement follow open government approaches.
    - **Upgrade existing co-ordination mechanisms for open government.**
      - In the short term, consider creating a mechanism that facilitates the implementation of the OGS. This Open Government Mechanism could be based on the existing Multi-stakeholder Forum, retaking its current composition and expanding its mandate.
      - In the medium- to long-term, consider creating a National Open Government Committee composed of all relevant public and non-public stakeholders as the main co-ordination mechanism for all policies and practices that fall under the realm of the concept of open government.
- 4. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Open Government Strategy.**
- Consider coupling the development of the Strategy with the design of an open government maturity model based on a clear theory of change, indicators, targets and benchmarks.
  - Create an integrated system to monitor the Strategy and its implementation and make results available on the Open Government Portal to allow public and non-public stakeholders to track progress on a constant basis.
  - Provide a mandate to TBS to develop an annual M&E plan for the Open Government Strategy.
- 5. Communicate around the Open Government Strategy.**
- Make dedicated efforts to ensure that all public officials are aware of the Strategy's existence and that high-ranking officials hold their institutions accountable for implementation. This may involve the organisation of high visibility events and the establishment of a dedicated communication strategy for the OGS.
- 6. Ensure the successful operationalisation and take-up of the Open Government Strategy.**
- Design an (online) Open Government Toolkit for public officials to facilitate the implementation of the Strategy. The Toolkit could provide an overview of concrete actions that any public official can take to foster interactions with citizens and increase his or her institution's openness.
  - Develop an online Open Government Toolkit for citizens, explaining their rights and providing an overview of avenues for collaboration and interaction with public institutions.

- Consider creating an online course on the Open Government Strategy and make it available free of charge on the Open Government Portal.
- Foster the creation of an open government community of practice bringing together public officials and non-public stakeholders from all branches of the state and all levels of government that are interested in open government topics and / or have participated in trainings on open government policies and practices. The new open government community of practice could integrate the existing Public Engagement Community of Practice.
  - Consider involving non-public stakeholders such as civil society leaders as well as representatives from academia, the private sector, and trade unions in the community of practice.
- Consider linking the implementation of the Open Government Strategy with ministers' mandate letters.
  - Consider renaming the document "Open and Accountable Government" as "Open, Responsive and Participatory Government" and updating it to include explicit provisions on participatory practices.

#### **7. Use the Strategy to foster the move towards an Open State.**

- Use the Strategy to support existing open government agendas at the subnational level.
  - Share the new definition of open government with the subnational level in order to increase coherence and harmonization of practices across Canada.
  - Consider creating an open government maturity model adopted to the subnational level to allow provinces and territories (and possibly even municipalities) to assess their own levels of openness and take initiatives to increase them.
  - Consider including a dedicated section on open government at the subnational level in the OGS, allowing provinces and territories to outline their own vision and objectives as part of the federal strategy.

## References

- Boehm, F. (2014), *Mainstreaming anti-corruption into sectors: Practices in U4 partner agencies*, Chr. Michelsen Institute, <https://www.u4.no/publications/mainstreaming-anti-corruption-into-sectors-practices-in-u4-partner-agencies>. [2]
- Campos, J. and S. Pradhan (eds.) (2007), *The Many Faces of Corruption. Tracking Vulnerabilities at the Sector Level*, The World Bank. [3]
- Matsheza, P. (2012), *Why work in sectors matters*, UNESCI IIEP, pp. 10-11, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000219686>. [4]
- OECD (2020), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1. [1]
- OECD (2015), *Consequences of Corruption at the Sector Level and Implications for Economic Growth and Development*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264230781-en>. [5]

# Annex A. Practical considerations to design an Open Government Strategy

## Way to cluster actions / initiatives in an Open Government Strategy

The open government initiatives that are included in the Open Government Strategy are the concrete means to reach the identified objectives and ultimately move towards the vision. Given that open government is a wide field, before designing initiatives, it can be useful to define clusters / activity streams which initiatives will contribute to.

Clustering can be done in different ways, including through a principle-based, sectorial, open state or target-audience approach. It should be noted that these approaches are not exclusive and can be matched (e.g. a principle-based approach can be coupled with a target-audience approach). Clustering should always reflect specific priorities and take into account budgetary and human resource limitations.

### *Taking a principle-based approach*

It is commonly accepted that open government includes initiatives that aim to foster openness through the promotion of the principles of transparency, accountability, integrity and citizen and stakeholder participation. Some countries across the OECD have taken the four principles of open government as a basis to structure and cluster their policy documents in the area.

While keeping a similar basic clustering methodology, some countries have added different / additional dimensions to their definitions of open government. For example, the United States' Open Government Directive from 2009 was structured around the three axes of transparency, participation and collaboration. Along similar lines, Spain's 2017-2019 OGP Action Plan has the five following axes: collaboration, participation, transparency, accountability and training.

When taking a principle-based approach the main challenge stems from the fact that the four principles of open government are, in practice, intrinsically related and that the distinctions between the principles are not always clear. Indeed, the most successful initiatives take a holistic open government approach, i.e. they incorporate elements of and contribute to each of the principles (e.g. an open data portal can contribute to making the government more transparent while also increasing citizen participation through the use of data. The increased use of data may in turn foster accountability and integrity; etc.).

Figure A.1. Example of a principle-based approach to an OGS

Clustering initiatives and actions – Taking a policy principle approach



Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

## Taking a sectorial approach

Countries can also take a sectorial approach to the clustering of initiatives in their Open Government Strategies, or they can enrich a principle-based / functional approach with a sectorial approach. The assessment may for example identify important opportunities for open government approaches in policy-making and service-delivery in the health or education sectors, etc. In that case, it can be useful to include concrete sectorial open government measures into the strategy (e.g. design the new health strategy through a participatory approach; create an open data portal for the education sector; etc.).

Taking a sectorial perspective has important advantages (Boehm, 2014<sup>[2]</sup>; Campos and Pradhan, 2007<sup>[3]</sup>; OECD, 2015<sup>[4]</sup>):

- Broad approaches do not always take into account the specificities of open government in all sectors. A thorough understanding of how a given sector works, its processes and actors, may however be required to design effective initiatives.
- Promoting open government in sectors can translate into more concrete goals and results that directly affect people's well-being. Fostering openness in a sector can create positive spill-overs to other sectors, as citizens and stakeholders start recovering trust in their government and ask for more reforms.
- There may be windows of political opportunity making reforms at sector level more feasible (Matsheza, 2012<sup>[5]</sup>).
- A sectorial approach can be a tool to ensure full buy-in from concerned sectors from the outset.

While a sectorial approach bears great transformative potential, initiatives should always be bound together by a common narrative and shared objectives (e.g. all sector-specific open data initiatives should contribute to the OGS' overall open data objectives). For a sectorial approach to work in practice, it is of key importance that all actors share a common understanding of open government and of its benefits. In

addition, a sectorial approach usually needs to be complemented with elements of a principal-based or target-audience approach, as some open government initiatives necessarily concern more than one sector or even the whole-of-government.

**Figure A.2. Example of a sectorial approach**



Source: OECD (2020<sup>[11]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

### Taking a tool-based approach

Some countries have structured their open government agendas by organising initiatives around specific tools that can foster openness such as open data, public sector innovation, or access to information frameworks. This kind of approach can be used to empower communities that contribute to the broader open government agenda (e.g. the open data movement; the access to information community; the civic space movement; etc.). In order to ensure coherence, it will be important to ensure that there is a strong common narrative and that all initiatives contribute to shared objectives.

**Table A.1. Examples of open government tools**

Open government principles	Tools
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to information portals</li> <li>• Physical tools (service windows)</li> <li>• National open data portals and sectoral open data portals (contracting, budget, procurement, etc.)</li> <li>• Websites and mobile applications</li> <li>• Open source software</li> <li>• Algorithmic transparency</li> </ul>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen audit applications (fix my street, follow the money, etc.)</li> <li>• Citizen feedback mechanisms (surveys, apps, letter boxes, etc.)</li> <li>• Public hearings (townhall meetings, virtual/physical hearings, etc.)</li> </ul>

Stakeholders' participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online tools (consultation platforms, e-vote, e-petitions, etc.)</li> <li>• Hackathons</li> <li>• Physical meetings</li> <li>• Local councils</li> <li>• Public consultations</li> <li>• Deliberative practices</li> </ul>
-----------------------------	---

Note: It is recognised that open government tools usually contribute to more than one of the open government principles.

Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

**Figure A.3. Taking a tool-based approach to an OGS**

Clustering initiatives and actions – Taking a **tool-based approach**



Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

### ***Taking a target audience approach***

In some cases it may be advisable to design clusters of initiatives to be included in the OGS according to their target audience. In particular, governments may wish to include streams of activities targeting specific groups of stakeholders (e.g. CSOs, women, LGBT, minorities, etc.). For example, a government may aim to strengthen interactions with youth organisations through their inclusion in the agenda-setting and elaboration of major government policies (e.g. education, environment, health, etc.).



Figure A.4. Example of a target-audience approach

Clustering initiatives and actions – Taking a **target-audience approach**



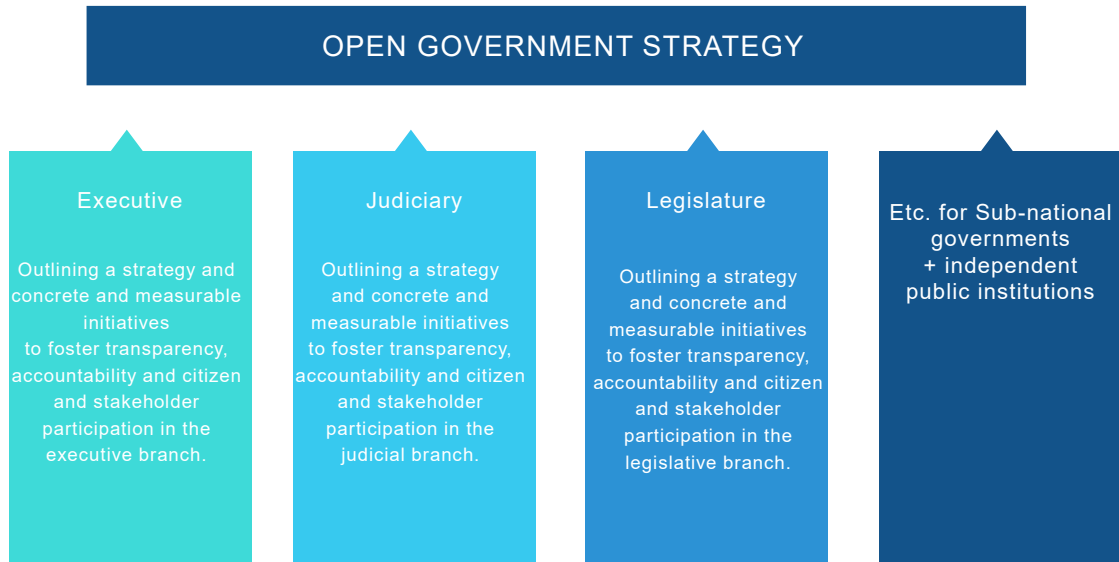
Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

### *Taking an open state approach*

An OGS can even include an open state perspective. Depending on country specific legal context, the strategy may, for instance, include clusters of initiatives to be implemented by each of the branches of power and of independent public institutions and / or a cluster of initiatives targeting the subnational level(s) of government.

## Figure A.5. Example of an Open State approach to an OGS

Clustering initiatives and actions – Taking an open state approach



Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

### Ways to design open government initiatives

No matter which clustering approach Canada ultimately selects (if any), in order to make the link to day-to-day policy-making, the Open Government Strategy needs to define practical ways to achieve its stated vision and the shared objectives. Initiatives / actions outline the steps that the government aims to take to implement the OGS.

Box A.1 details the characteristics of successful open government initiatives while Figure 1.5 above shows the key role of initiatives in building the bridge between the initial assessment and the country's vision and objectives.

Initiatives can either be “general” or “detailed and concrete”. While general initiatives (e.g. develop standards, tools and resources to support a new spirit of participation across government) have to be complemented with actions plans that outline concrete steps to implement them, detailed and concrete initiatives which often follow a sectorial approach (e.g. involve citizens in the design of a new youth strategy through the use of a targeted mobile application) do not necessary need to rely on additional action plans to be implemented as they are usually already coupled with clear milestones and timelines.

#### Box A.1. Characteristics of successful open government initiatives / actions

When developing new open government initiatives or incorporating existing initiatives into the whole-of-government Open Government Strategy, certain key features of successful open government initiatives should be considered. In an ideal case, initiatives should be:

**Aligned to the overall vision and the objectives of the strategy**

The purpose of the open government initiatives is to give substance to the Open Government Strategy. The initiatives, therefore, have to be coherent with the strategy's intended vision and its objectives/priorities.

### **Built on pre-existing work**

Open government initiatives to be included in the whole-of-government Open Government Strategy do not have to be new. Initiatives that are already in place can also be assimilated to the new Strategy, which in turn legitimizes, rationalizes and strengthens them by providing them with a powerful narrative and a broader framework. A Whole-of-government Open Government Strategy can make those initiatives that are already in place more coherent and stronger by working together under the same coherent narrative and methodological setting.

### **Linked to other national strategies**

Linking open government initiatives to other national strategies can make them more feasible and successful. For example, an open data/transparency initiative can be part of the OGS as well as the national anti-corruption strategy. Along similar lines, an indigenous consultation initiative can be in the OGS and in the local development strategy.

### **Linked to resources**

Developing and implementing an Open Government Strategy may involve reforming laws and institutions, developing new skills, new technologies and platforms etc., all of which requires human and financial resources. Adequate funding is therefore vital for an efficient and sustainable implementation of open government reforms. The Whole-of-government Strategy should ensure that funding is as transparent and as consistent as possible. Costs should be assessed realistically and wherever possible integrated into the national budget.

### **Anchored by the open government approach**

Initiatives should, whenever possible, be designed in collaboration with different stakeholders and foster collaboration between civil society and public bodies.

### **Communicated both internally and externally**

Communicating about open government initiatives can help expand their impact. Internally, this helps build coalitions and strengthen commitment for this cause across the public sector, including among senior-level executives. Externally, citizens and CSOs who are more aware of such initiatives, and who understand them better are more likely to participate in such efforts.

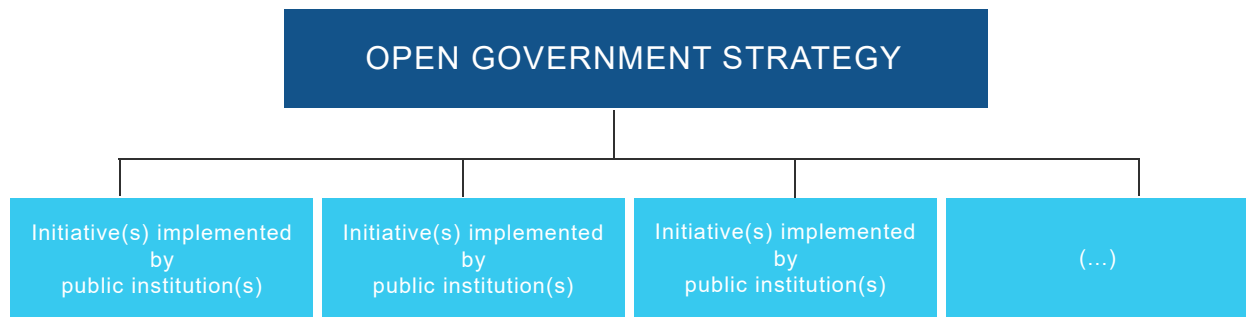
Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

There are different ways to integrate initiatives into Canada's Open Government Strategy.

### ***Model 1: All initiatives are included in the Open Government Strategy***

In this approach, the whole-of-government Open Government Strategy defines the overall vision, sets objectives and specifies all initiatives that are going to be implemented by public institutions over the implementation period. This model is closest to the one proposed by the OGP Action Plan. The model has the disadvantage that it can never cover the entire open government agenda of a country and many ongoing initiatives will be excluded. It may therefore be most suited to countries that are not members of the OGP and that aim to initiate an open government agenda.

Figure A.6. Including all initiatives in the Open Government Strategy



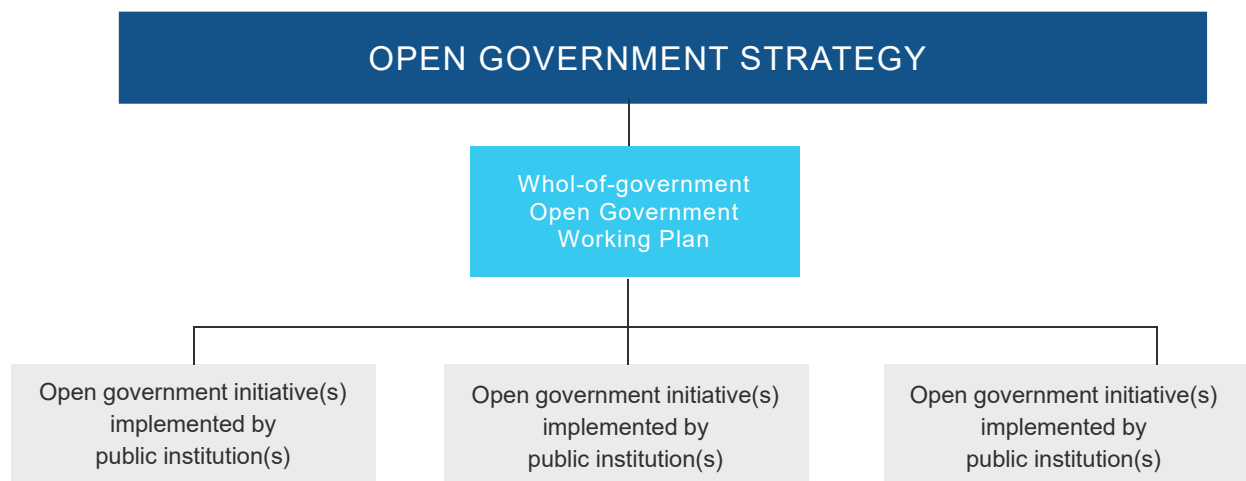
Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

**Model 2: The suggested National Open Government Committee periodically defines a whole-of-government working/action plan to implement the strategy**

In this approach, the strategy provides the narrative, sets the vision and details the objectives while initiatives are designed periodically (in most cases annually or biannually) along the implementation process by means of a whole-of-government open government working plan. The definition of initiatives is centralized by a single institution or by a Steering Committee which involves all key stakeholders (e.g. the suggested National Open Government Committee, in the case of Canada). In some cases, the whole-of-government working plan may be adopted by decree or another legal document.

Countries that participate in the OGP, such as Canada, can use their OGP Action Plan to implement specific targeted commitments (which should of course also be aligned with the strategy's objectives) while the whole-of-government open government working plan defines additional initiatives and priorities that affect the whole-of-government. Initiatives that conform the working plans should be broad enough to be implemented by a variety of institutions. In this model, the strategy usually takes a medium to long-term perspective.

Figure A.7. Defining a whole-of-government open government working/action plan

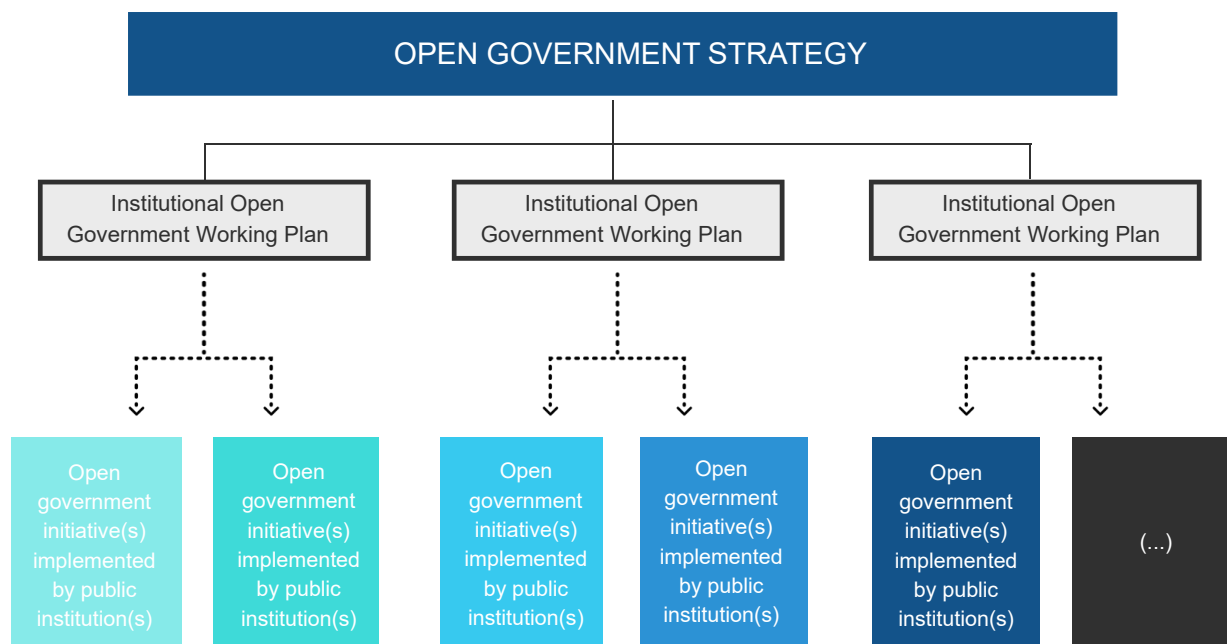


Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

### Model 3: Each institution defines its own open government working plan

In this approach, the Open Government Strategy foresees that all public institutions elaborate their own open government working/action plans in order to achieve the commonly agreed vision and objectives. The resulting institutional open government working plan is an official document. Institutions have autonomy to decide initiatives that they are going to implement initiatives that contribute to the vision and objectives of the OGS. Under this scenario, OGP participants can use their NAPs for targeted key initiatives that they wish to give national and international visibility to.

Figure A.8. Defining independent open government working plans for each institution



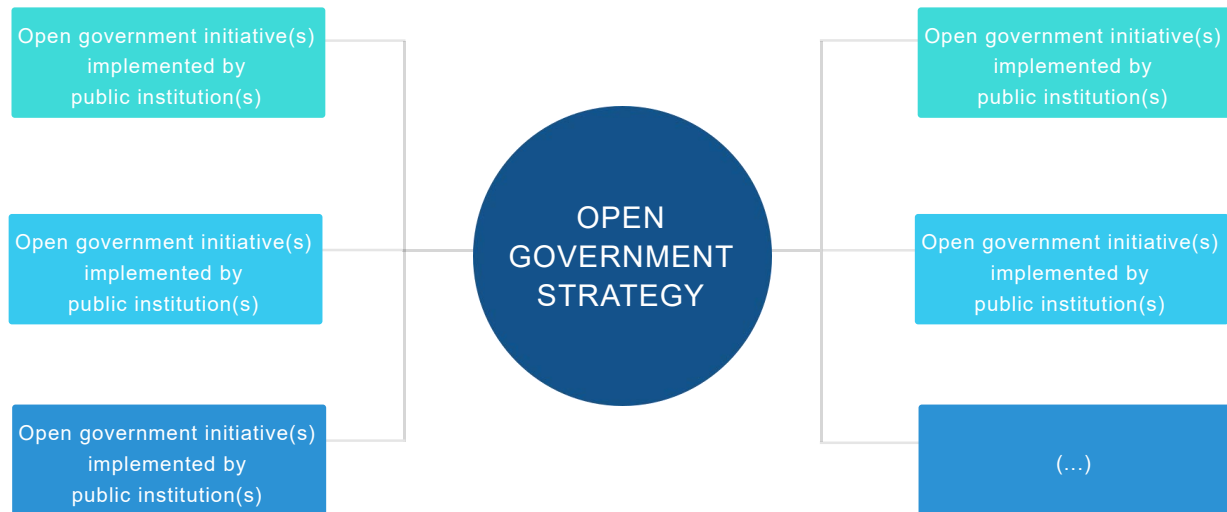
Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

### Model 4: Institutions define initiatives that contribute to the achievement of the strategy's objectives at their own pace

In this scenario, the whole-of-government Open Government Strategy's vision and its objectives function as a general guideline that public institutions follow at their own pace. Each individual institution designs and implements its own open government initiatives without developing an institutional action/working plan.

This model grants a high level of autonomy to public institutions and is best applied in those countries that have a mature open government agenda. The main role of the co-ordinating institution is to raise awareness, support institutions in the elaboration of their own open government initiatives and monitor the achievement of the objectives of the overall policy.

Figure A.9. Defining initiatives at different paces



Source: OECD (2020<sup>[1]</sup>), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Internal paper presented to the Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1.

## References

- Boehm, F. (2014), *Mainstreaming anti-corruption into sectors: Practices in U4 partner agencies*, Chr. Michelsen Institute, <https://www.u4.no/publications/mainstreaming-anti-corruption-into-sectors-practices-in-u4-partner-agencies>. [2]
- Campos, J. and S. Pradhan (eds.) (2007), *The Many Faces of Corruption. Tracking Vulnerabilities at the Sector Level*, The World Bank. [3]
- Matsheza, P. (2012), *Why work in sectors matters*, UNESCO IIEP, pp. 10-11, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000219686>. [5]
- OECD (2020), *Taking an integrated approach to the promotion of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholders' participation: Towards an Open Government Strategy*, Working Party on Open Government, GOV/PGC/OG(2020)4/REV1. [1]
- OECD (2015), *Consequences of Corruption at the Sector Level and Implications for Economic Growth and Development*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264230781-en>. [4]

## OECD Public Governance Reviews

# Open Government Scan of Canada

## DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING AN OPEN GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

The *Open Government Scan of Canada* provides an evidence-based assessment of the governance of Canada's efforts to foster transparency, accountability and citizen participation against key provisions of the OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government. The Scan seeks to support Canada in its ambition to design the country's first holistic and integrated Open Government Strategy. It includes recommendations for strengthening the governance of Canada's open government agenda in the short, medium and long term. OECD Open Government Scans are short, tailored policy reviews that focus on specific key priorities of the commissioning government.



PRINT ISBN 978-92-64-88643-8  
PDF ISBN 978-92-64-55187-9

Co-funded by: | Cofinancé par:

