The OECD Council adopted on 15 July 2014 the Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies. The Recommendation provides a set of 12 principles structured around 3 pillars. The OECD Secretariat has developed a Digital Government Policy Toolkit to support OECD member countries and non-member adhering countries with the implementation of the Recommendation. This practice was submitted by the government of Canada to be considered as a good practice in the implementation of one or more of the principles contained in the Recommendation.

**Description of the practice:**

**Organisation:** Open Government, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Name of the practice:** Canada’s National Action Plans on Open Government

**Principles implemented:** Principle 1 – Ensure greater transparency, openness and inclusiveness of government processes and operations

**Description:**

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance, in partnership with civil society and the private sector. As a member of the OGP since April 2012, Canada has published three National Action Plans on Open Government with its fourth, the 2018-2020 National Action Plan (NAP) scheduled for release in November 2018.

Each NAP sets out the national agenda guiding implementation of Canada’s commitments to a government that is transparent, accountable, and encourages participation from all of its citizens. The Government of Canada is extremely proud that the 2018-2020 Plan will coincide with its role as lead Government Chair of the OGP for the 2018-2019 term. This role provides a tremendous opportunity for Canada to champion the values of inclusion, participation, and impact within the open government community.

Given the increased scrutiny and attention associated with Canada’s OGP leadership role, the Government of Canada has worked diligently to develop the 2018-2020 Plan using its most comprehensive and participatory process to date. Canada hopes the practices outlined below will offer an example to our OECD colleagues in how to foster greater transparency, openness, and inclusivity within government processes and operations.

**Results**
Digital government toolkit

While implementation of the 2018-2020 NAP is just beginning, the Government of Canada is proud of its accomplishments under previous Plans. Some of these highlights include:

- Issuing a Directive on Open Government which makes “Open by Default” the standard for the Government of Canada.

- Issuing a universal Open Government Licence with the goal of removing restrictions on the reuse of government information.

- Making completed access to information request summaries searchable.

- Introducing a searchable online Expenditures database, providing easy access and analysis of all government spending

- Establishing the Open Data Exchange (ODX) as a national marketplace for open data to develop new tools and applications that use government data, establish a framework for open data standards, and incubate new data-driven companies.

- Launching the Suggest a Dataset web page, where citizens can indicate data they wish to see released, vote on, and check the status of these releases

- Developing a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Alberta to create a federated open data search service that links the province’s open data portal to the Government of Canada’s Open Government Portal.

Development

Design:

November 2017 to August 2018

The 2018-2020 NAP is a product of extensive co-creation, developed through the Government of Canada Open Government team’s most ambitious public engagement process to date. In total, approximately 10,000 people participated through online and in-person events held in 14 cities across Canada.

These consultations were complemented by two newly created processes to introduce subject matter expertise into the NAP’s development. The Multi-stakeholder forum on open government – a permanent body comprised of eight civil society leaders and four public servants – was launched in January 2018 to provide advice and input on the process and identify new areas of focus. Similarly, a feminist and inclusive peer review process convened four experts to review all draft commitments in line with the Government of Canada’s commitment to inclusivity and Gender-based Analysis Plus. Both initiatives represent innovative approaches that the Open Government team hopes will inform best practices for Canada’s partners within the international community.

Together, these consultation processes informed collaboration between the Open Government team, relevant federal departments, and civil society partners in the development of 10 draft
The Government of Canada’s recently announced Digital Standards commit public servants to improve end-user experience by conducting ongoing testing on new initiatives. The 2018-2020 NAP reflects this commitment both in its development and content. During the development phase, the 10 draft commitments were published to Google Docs for a final round of public consultation. This final testing helped the Open Government team gauge initial reaction and improve the strength and coherence of the end product.

Likewise, many of the milestones outlined in the Action Plan, commit to pilot programs that rely on testing and iterative development. For example: the commitment on “User-Friendly Open Government” will include launching a pilot for users to submit their own datasets, visualizations, and reports based on data and information used from the Open Government Portal – Canada’s searchable repository for federal data and information.

Implementation:

Tools:

Tools used to develop and implement the 2018-2020 NAP include, among others, an environmental scan of national and international best practices on open government, online discussions with Canadian citizens both through Government of Canada websites and social media channels such as Reddit and Twitter dialogues, the Multi-Stakeholder Forum on Open Government, and an internal network of open government directors and departmental implementation plans.

The previous 2016-2018 NAP also saw the creation of the Open Government Results Tracker, a digital dashboard that offers quarterly updates on the progress toward implementation of each NAP commitment. By going beyond the OGP’s annual reporting requirements, this tool holds the potential to become a new international best practice for promoting government transparency and more rigorous evaluation of open government programming.

Resources:

The Open Government team at TBS is currently resourced with a staff of approximately 20 who are responsible to overseeing and facilitating the numerous Action Plan deliverables.

**Diffusion and scaling:** Ongoing.
The Open Government team at TBS is currently resourced with a staff of approximately 20 who are responsible to overseeing and facilitating the numerous Action Plan deliverables.

**Partnerships:** Private sector, Civil Society, Academics and Research Bodies and Public Sector Organizations

**Lessons learned**

Engagement of Canadian citizens and civil society organization will continue to be critical to the successful implementation of the key deliverables within the 2018-2020 National Action Plan on Open Government. Given Canada’s diverse population and size, national consultations pose a particular challenge that the Open Government team has partially addressed through the use of multiple channels, including in-person roundtables, online consultations, social media outreach, and expert panels and reviews. However, more work is needed to raise public awareness and increase participation by citizens and communities that may feel excluded from the Government of Canada’s open government programming. While initiatives such as Indigenous co-development and the feminist and inclusive peer review represent a positive starting point, work toward Canada’s objective of inclusive open government must remain an ongoing consideration.

The subject matter within 2018-2020 National Action Plan reflects the Government of Canada’s recognition that its thinking around open government programming must evolve for Canada to remain an international leader in this area. Six years on from joining the OGP, Canada is beginning to shift its focus from indicators measuring the volume of data and information release to the complex task of assessing the long-term impact of open government programming for Canadian citizens, businesses, and civil society organizations. New milestones include a focus on user experience, data standards and quality, and service integration across departments and levels of government. This reassessment of open government program evaluation requirements will present ongoing challenges, but it has the potential to break new ground in making government processes and operations more transparent, participatory, and inclusive.