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 is developing 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:** Information Management and Open Government, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

**Name of the practice:** International Open Data Conference

**Principles implemented:** Principle 8 – Strengthen international co-operation with other governments

**Description:** The Government of Canada partnered with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the World Bank to host the International Open Data Conference in Ottawa, May 28-29, 2015.

This conference brought together open data experts and professionals from across the world to share perspectives on the global impact of open data, and to collaborate on a roadmap for maximizing its potential internationally.

No business case was prepared. A funding model was prepared and approved by the President of the Treasury Board.

The IODC was governed by a Steering Committee organized and led by TBS and IDRC with representation from the World Bank.

A separate Program Committee, composed of internationally-recognized civil society experts in open data was formed to advise the Steering Committee and to review and approve the conference agenda.
Results

The IODC was widely considered a great success among the international open data community.

The conference featured more than 200 speakers at 58 parallel and plenary sessions, with more than 1,000 government, civil society, and private sector attendees from around the world.

Key outcomes of the conference included:

- The launch of the International Open Data Charter.
- An Open Data Leaders’ Summit, where policy leaders from governments around the world met to share best practices and build networks of expertise.
- An Open Data Roadmap, summarizing work done at the IODC and acting as an open data call to action.
- The launch of the Open Data for Development (OD4D) Fund.
- A full week of summits and meetings by more than a dozen Canadian and international open data organizations.
- Over 200 blog posts by international open data leaders.

An announcement by the Government of Spain that the next IODC will be held in Madrid in 2016.

A survey was sent to all conference participants to evaluate the conference.

When asked their overall impression of the conference, 82% rated the conference “Very Good” or “Excellent”, while 81% of respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the conference format.

In addition, The World Wide Web Foundation, the Open Data Institute in the UK, and Open North have recommended Canada for an OGP award for the conference.

Development

Design: 2014 / December

A Program Committee, composed of international open data experts, was formed to help develop and approve the program for the conference.

An Open Call for Proposals was held that returned 269 submissions from 49 countries, on 6 continents. The Program Committee then evaluated these proposals and made recommendations for the final conference agenda.

In addition, international open data civil society organizations were invited to hold pre- and post-conference events in the margins of the conference. More than 15 such events were held, making the IODC a week-long open data event.
Digital government toolkit

Testing: 2015 / February

The Program Committee provided a thorough evaluation of proposals submitted to the open call and to other proposed agenda items for the conference. This was the third version of the Conference. The previous two were hosted by the U.S. Government (data.gov and the World Bank) and were held in Washington, D.C.

Implementation: 2015 / May

Tools: Google Docs was used to document and coordinate conference planning. A conference schedule tool – “Sched” – was used to coordinate the agenda and communicate it to conference participants.

Resources: Conference organizers included government employees, contractors, and volunteers. The total budget for the IODC was approximately $800,000 CDN.

Diffusion and scaling: 2015 / July

In the lead-up to the IODC, the conference was promoted through a website, through social media, and through word-of-mouth at other international open data meetings. Following the conference, the work done at IODC has been summarized in an Open Data Road Map. This document, available through the IODC website, serves as a call to action for governments, civil society, and the private sector to further international collaboration on open data.

The IODC will become an ongoing international conference in the years ahead. Canada is currently working with the government of Spain, who will be hosting the next IODC in Madrid in 2016. Work done at the IODC in Canada will be continued and built upon at the upcoming conference in Spain.

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

Key partners: World Bank and Open Data Institute

The World Bank partnered in the organization of the conference and was a financial contributor.

In addition, several other organizations partnered with the IODC to organize pre and post-conference events, leading to a week of international open data meetings and workshops. These organizations included:

- ABRELATAM
- CKAN
- ConDatos
- Follow the Money
- GODAN
- GovLab
Lessons learned

Involvement of civil society in the planning and early evaluation of the conference program was essential to its success. Conversations and work on open data is best when a diversity of voices are included. This was at the heart of planning and implementation of the IODC.

Including space at the margins of the IODC for international open data organizations to hold meetings was important both for raising interest in the event, and for raising the level of dialogue at workshops and parallel sessions at the main conference.

The IODC set aside significant funds to pay for travel and accommodations of developing world participants and speakers. This helped make the IODC a truly diverse international event, which was one of its greatest strengths.

More effort needs to be made in future instalments of the IODC to include media representation, particularly as speakers.

Conditions required: Open collaboration among government and civil society is important to legitimizing the process and producing a strong agenda.

Willingness to reach out to and include developing country governments and civil society organizations not just as attendees but as speakers and full participants who help set the agenda.

Additional information: