A Learning Guide to Public Involvement in Canada

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Canadian Policy Research Networks is a not-for-profit organization. Our mission is to help make Canada a more just, prosperous and caring society. We seek to do this through excellent and timely research, effective networking and dissemination, and by providing a valued neutral space within which an open dialogue among all interested parties can take place. You can obtain further information about CPRN and its work in public involvement and other policy areas at www.cprn.org

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Preface

This document provides the reader with a self-managed learning guide to public involvement in Canada. An earlier version of the document was prepared for two researchers from the National People’s Congress of China who completed a three month study attachment to learn about public involvement practice and theory in Canada. Funding for this project was provided by the Parliamentary Centre, which was chosen by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to implement a four-year legislative capacity-building project with the National People’s Congress of China.

Canadian Policy Research Networks and the Parliamentary Centre hope this tool will support those in Canada and elsewhere, who are interested in learning more about public involvement. This learning guide will be updated periodically, as new resources become available. Comments and suggestions from users are most welcome. Please direct your input to website@cprn.org

Overview

The learning guide is an easy to use reference tool, with Web links to many of the sources cited. It offers a comprehensive overview of the theoretical underpinnings of public involvement and practical examples and tools to help readers plan and implement their own public involvement program or project.

First, we provide a glossary of terms relating to the broad field of public involvement. The second section draws on resources from Canada and around the world to provide a solid overview of the theory behind public involvement and background on deliberative democracy theory which has influenced the field. Section 3 offers insight into the latest trends in public involvement. Section 4 provides information on public involvement within the regulatory process (reflecting the trend towards increased regulatory requirements).

Sections 5 through 7 focus on the practical application of public involvement methods, providing guidance on how to match purpose and method; the latest in tools for on-line public involvement; and several practical “how-to” guides for public involvement. Section 8 offers examples of public involvement frameworks being used by organizations at different levels of government. Section 9 provides lessons learned from public involvement initiatives undertaken at home and abroad. Section 10 gives the user some examples of different elements of public involvement projects, from issue framing and preparing the participants, to analysis and reporting on the outcomes, with links to materials from CPRN’s citizen dialogues and examples from the U.S. based National Issues Forum work. The last section provides links from CPRN’s Web site to additional Canadian and international research resources and organizations involved in public involvement.
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Resources and References


2. Theory of Public Involvement and Deliberative Democracy


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1 References are provided with title first, for ease of use. Where appropriate, references are presented in suggested order of review. CPRN does not necessarily share the views presented in this material.

Theoretical Tool Kit (Institute for Public Administration in Canada Centre for Governance Dialogue) http://www.quantumgovernance.ca


3. Trends in Public Involvement


Recent Citizen Engagement Around the World. 2004. Fultz, Jennifer, Conference Board of Canada

4. Public Involvement in the Regulatory Process


Parliamentary Committees and Public Hearings http://www.parl.gc.ca/compendium/web-content/c_g_committees-e.htm#10

Public Participation, Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/011/index_e.htm
5. **Public Involvement Methods: Form Follows Function**

*A Beginner’s Guide to Dialogue and Deliberation* (National Coalition on Dialogue and Deliberation) [http://thataway.org/?page_id=491](http://thataway.org/?page_id=491)


**Tool Kit Inventory** (Institute for Public Administration in Canada) [http://www.quantumgovernance.ca/toolkit/index.html](http://www.quantumgovernance.ca/toolkit/index.html)

6. **On-line Public Involvement**


7. **How-To-Guides for Public Involvement**


8. Examples of Public Involvement Frameworks / Policies

Canadian Rural Partnership Community Dialogue Toolkit
http://www.rural.gc.ca/dialogue_e.phtml

Health Canada Policy Toolkit for Public Involvement in Decision Making


Sustainable Calgary http://www.sustainablecalgary.ca/

9. Lessons Learned from Public Involvement Initiatives


British Columbia Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform http://www.citizensassembly.bc.ca/public
Democratic Renewal: the BC Citizens’ Assembly and Beyond, 2005 Workshop Summary. UBC Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions

British Columbia Regional Citizen’s Forum on Clean Air: The Public’s Voice. 2001, Public Policy Forum


Citizen Voices in Pandemic Flu Choices: A Report of the Public Engagement Pilot Project on Pandemic Influenza. 2005
http://keystone.org/spp/health-pandemic.html

Community Engagement / Dialogue with the City. 2003. Department for Planning and Infrastructure, Government of Western Australia


I bring my own…A Public Participation Story of Passion and Determination. New Zealand Consumers’ Forum on Food Safety, Anne Patillo Consulting
http://www.pattillo.co.nz/home.php
http://www.apconsulting.co.nz

Listening to Canadians: A First View of the Future of the Canada Pension Plan Disability Program: Report of the Canadian House of Commons Sub-Committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities


Ontario Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca

http://www.tni.org/newpol-docs/pbcanada.htm

Senate of Canada Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology: Study of Mental Health 2004.
http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/soci-e/rep-e/rep02may06consultation-e.htm

Saskatchewan Green Strategy Formal Consultations. 2005
http://www.se.gov.sk.ca/green/Consultation.htm
Planning, Implementing and Reporting Citizen Dialogues: Examples from CPRN and National Issues Forum (participant workbooks, issue framing and reports)

National Dialogue and Summit: Engaging Young Canadians. 2006, CPRN

Citizens’ Dialogue on Sharing Public Funds. 2006, CPRN

Citizens’ Dialogue on Privacy and Health Research. 2006, CPRN


Results from the On-line workbook http://www.cprn.org/en/doc.cfm?doc=43

Indicators of Quality of Life in Canada: A Citizen’s Prototype. 2001, CPRN

National Issue Forums Discussion Guides – there are workbooks on many subjects available, as well as teachers’ guides for discussion in the classroom, reports, video clips of discussions, etc.
http://www.nifi.org/
• Americans’ Role in the World (issue book)
• The New Science of Food: Facing up to our Biotechnology Choices (issue book)
• Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do? (issue book)

10. Additional Resources of Public Involvement