

# Canada's direct online engagement on climate change

 Innovation image

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**Organisation:** Environment and Climate Change Canada

**Country:** Canada

**Level of government:** Central government

**Sector:** Environmental protection

**Type:** Communication, Digital

**Launched in:** 2016

**Overall development time:** 2 month(s)

**Link to the innovation's website**

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# Description

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The Government of Canada has elevated the importance of public participation in policy development by conducting direct online engagement with Canadians on climate change and, specifically, to help establish a pan-Canadian framework for clean growth and climate change. Visitors to the website ([www.Canada.ca/ClimateAction](http://www.Canada.ca/ClimateAction)) are offered an opportunity to submit their ideas on how to combat climate change, participate in and report back on town hall discussions and receive the latest news and information on Canada's climate action plan. This is the first time when the public was invited to participate in a major policymaking process that cuts across all orders of government from coast to coast to coast. Crowdsourcing was used to tap into the collective intelligence of the general public and stakeholders via an innovative online platform and traditional consultation methods such as town hall meetings. A crossfunctional team consisting of program areas, policy, communications and information technology specialists delivered a holistic engagement experience that was open, transparent and accessible to all Canadians.

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## Why the innovation was developed

- To engage directly with Canadians on climate change and give them the opportunity to help establish a pan-Canadian framework for clean growth and climate change.
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## Objectives

Enhance transparency, Increase citizen engagement, Other

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## Main beneficiaries

Civil Society, General population, Government bodies, Government staff, Young people

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## Existing similar practices

### Budget 2016

In public administration of my country  
Finance Canada

In early 2016, Canadians participated in Pre-Budget consultations. Finance Canada received submissions through Facebook, Google Hangouts and Twitter, online, as well as in person from coast to coast to coast. Pre-Budget consultation comments were rolled into reports for senior management and the Minister's Office.

<http://www.budget.gc.ca/2016/home-accueil-en.html>

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# Results

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## Other improvements

- Unprecedented level of public involvement in government policy.
- The #CANClimateAction / #ActionClimatCAN hashtags have become popular, mentioned in over 18,000 tweets and retweets from close to 10,000 users. Roughly 100 individuals and organizations have tweeted their #CANClimateAction o 34 related ECCC Facebook posts have been viewed about 458,264 times. These posts have prompted 499 clicks o Over 3,000 ideas and 6,400 comments were submitted via the online engagement tool, email and other electronic means o Over 3,500 individuals and organizations registered to participate in the dialogue o The online engagement tool allowed the department to reach a diverse audience, including non-traditional stakeholders, in a non-intimidating, accessible and convenient manner o Unprecedented level of activity helped inform direction on climate change, one of the most pressing global issues, while showcasing the government's commitment to involve Canadians in decision-making processes.

# Development

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## Design

Policy makers, political leaders and communications staff (partnership)Design time: 1 month(s)

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## Testing

- Testing with prototypes was done internally

Testing time: 0.3 month(s)

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## Implementation

### Tools used:

- Information and communications technology

### Resources used:

- Staff, technology and budget
- Teams housed in Communications Branch and policy areas
- Views and perspectives from across the department
- Online resources and ideas from other departments and the private sector.

Implementation time: 0.5 month(s)

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## Challenges and solutions

- The existing technical capacity has not caught up to the expectations of the general public.
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## Partnerships

**Federal, provincial and territorial governments and public policymakers, who will benefit from new tools, approaches and ways of working.**

Other Public Sector, Private sector

Strong partnerships resulted in a strong innovation.

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# Lessons Learned

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## Lessons Learned

- There is a strong appetite by the Canadian public for a meaningful and open dialogue with the government
  - Online engagement is not a one-size-fits-all approach; separate targeted strategies are required due to the duty to consult with Indigenous peoples and to reach underrepresented segments such as youth and seniors
  - Culture shift within the public service is required to overcome obstacles to accommodate greater acceptance of technological innovation and crowdsourcing in policymaking
  - Collaboration and multidisciplinary teamwork are essential
  - The existing technical capacity has not caught up to the expectations of the general public.
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## Conditions for success

- Partnerships, leadership, values and motivation
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