



## 1. Statement of Policy

The Government of the Northwest Territories is committed to transparency and accountability through public access to government data (Open Data) and information (Open Information), and public engagement on government decision-making (Open Dialogue) in a way that is responsive to the needs and expectations of the residents of the Northwest Territories.

## 2. Principles

The Government of the Northwest Territories will adhere to the following principles when applying this Policy:

- (1) Public services should be open by design, to build a government that becomes open by default.
- (2) Government data, information, and decision-making should be accessible in a way that is responsive to the needs and expectations of NWT residents.
- (3) How open government is understood in the NWT should reflect territorial culture and priorities.
- (4) Increased accountability and transparency should result from open government policy and practice.
- (5) Use of government data and information, along with public participation in decision making, should help identify opportunities to improve programs and services.
- (6) Access to government data, information and dialogue should be timely, simple, and available across multiple platforms.
- (7) Citizen participation into potential government decisions should be encouraged.
- (8) Reasonable limits should be placed on information sharing to prevent the unauthorized collection, use, or disclosure of information.



### 3. Scope

The Policy applies to all departments, agencies and employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

### 4. Definitions

The following terms apply to this Policy:

Deputy Head – the deputy minister of a department, the chief executive officer of a public committee, board or council or such person as may be appointed as deputy head.

Open Data – government-held data, including but not limited to data sets, facts, figures, or statistics, which is released proactively and made available to the public through a variety of means and in formats that are accessible and user-friendly, with minimal or no restrictions on use or reuse, excluding that which is considered sensitive or subject to privacy, security or legal restrictions.

Open Dialogue – a range of interactive engagement activities that facilitate and support the meaningful contribution of ideas, insights and expertise of residents, communities, and organizations into government decision-making processes.

Open Information – government-held information, including but not limited to information regarding government programs, activities, publications and spending, which is released proactively and made available to the public through a variety of means and in formats that are accessible and user-friendly, with minimal or no restrictions on use or reuse, excluding that which is considered sensitive or subject to privacy, security or legal restrictions.

### 5. Authority and Accountability

#### (1) General

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Executive Council. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy rests with the Executive Council. Authority and accountability is further defined as follows:



(a) Ministers

Ministers are accountable to the Executive Council for the implementation of this Policy. Ministers will ensure that Open Data, Open Information and Open Dialogue are implemented within their departments and agencies in accordance with any broad policies and strategies approved by Executive Council and directives and guidelines established by the Premier.

(b) Deputy Heads

Deputy Heads are accountable to their respective Ministers and responsible to their respective Ministers for the administration of this Policy. Deputy Heads are accountable for adherence to any broad policies and strategies approved by Executive Council and directives and guidelines established by the Premier within their respective public bodies.

(2) Specific

(a) Executive Council

The Executive Council may establish broad policies and strategies on Open Data, Open Information and Open Dialogue necessary to the implementation of this Policy.

(b) Premier

The Premier:

- (i) may recommend broad policies and strategies on Open Data, Open Information and Open Dialogue necessary to the implementation of this Policy to the Executive Council; and,
- (ii) may establish, review and amend directives and guidelines necessary to the implementation of this Policy.



(c) Secretary to Cabinet

The Secretary to Cabinet:

- (i) will direct the Open Government Steering Committee to develop Open Data and Information and Open Dialogue directives and guidelines in accordance with sections 6.(2) and 6.(3) of this Policy;
- (ii) may direct the Open Government Steering Committee to develop any other broad policies, strategies, directives and guidelines necessary to the implementation of this Policy.

(d) Open Government Steering Committee

The Open Government Steering Committee:

- (i) will develop Open Data and Information and Open Dialogue directives and guidelines in accordance with sections 6.(2) and 6.(3) of this Policy; and,
- (ii) may develop any other broad policies, strategies, directives and guidelines necessary to the implementation of this Policy to be recommended to the Premier.

## 6. Provisions

(1) Open Government Steering Committee

- (a) An Open Government Steering Committee is established.
- (b) The Steering Committee shall report regularly to the Secretary to Cabinet on the implementation of this Policy.
- (c) Membership of the Steering Committee includes:



- (i) Deputy Secretary to Cabinet, Office of Priorities and Planning, Department of Executive and Indigenous Affairs;
  - (ii) Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Department of Finance;
  - (iii) Assistant Deputy Minister, Attorney General, Department of Justice;
  - (iv) Director of Corporate Communications; and,
  - (v) Other officials as required by specific issues and activities under the Steering Committee's consideration.
- (d) The Deputy Secretary to Cabinet, Office of Priorities and Planning, and the Chief Information Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer will co-chair the Steering Committee.
- (e) The Steering Committee may create interdepartmental working groups as needed to develop, implement and/or review Open Data and Information and Open Dialogue directives and guidelines in accordance with sections 6.(2) and 6.(3) of this Policy and any other broad policies, strategies, directives and guidelines necessary to the implementation of this Policy.

(2) Open Data and Information

Open Data and Information directives and guidelines will be developed to provide departments with direction, standards, and processes to support the release of government information and data, and to permit its use, adaptation and distribution, subject to applicable privacy, security and legal restrictions.

Open Data and Information directives and guidelines may be developed regarding the following:



- (a) categories of data and information that should be made available to the public;
- (b) processes to guide departments to identify, assess, and prioritize data and information for publication;
- (c) principles of data governance to ensure the quality of data, including data ownership and stewardship;
- (d) establishment of a central open data and information portal including links and contextual information for government datasets;
- (e) processes for engaging with the public to solicit feedback on whether the data and information provided are relevant and useful, and for addressing issues related to the central portal; and,
- (f) any other directives, guidelines and procedures necessary to the implementation of this Policy.

### (3) Open Dialogue

Open Dialogue directives and guidelines will be developed, implemented and periodically reviewed to guide departments' public engagement activities to facilitate the meaningful contribution of ideas, insights and expertise of residents, communities, and organizations into decision-making processes.

Open Dialogue directives and guidelines may be developed regarding the following:

- (a) adoption of a public engagement model (new or existing) that assists in selecting engagement activities and methods based on the determined objectives of the engagement process, as well as the time frames, resources, and levels of concern in the decision to be made;



- (b) a process to seek input from the public in designing how they are engaged to ensure approaches are relevant, meaningful, and appropriate;
- (c) a central portal for information on previous, current, and upcoming public engagements to improve access to government public engagement initiatives;
- (d) a reporting approach to account for how public views have influenced government decisions;
- (e) a process for addressing issues related to public engagement processes and the public engagement portal based on public feedback; and,
- (f) any other directives, guidelines and procedures necessary to the implementation of this Policy.

## **7. Prerogative of the Executive Council**

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Executive Council to make decisions or take action outside the provisions of this Policy.

Premier and Chairman of the  
Executive Council

Date

