

Engagement and Consultation Plan

**Department of Municipal Affairs and Community Engagement
Community Engagement Branch**

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1.0 Introduction

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador values engaging residents in a wide array of public policy issues. Through broad public engagement and consultation an opportunity is created to better connect the people of the province to their government. Various engagement and consultation methods are utilized including, but not limited to, live virtual sessions, in-person events, and online questionnaires. Public engagement is a fundamental step in the democratic process. It supports the development of public policy that is based on evidence and research, including supporting efforts to strengthen the policy capacity of the public service. Therefore, a comprehensive engagement and consultation plan is essential to facilitate meaningful dialogue, empower stakeholders, and enhance decision quality and legitimacy. Leading these efforts is the Department of Municipal Affairs and Community Engagement of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Engagement and Consultation Plan is to be completed following the project initiation meeting.

2.0 Defining the Project

This section will clearly define the client, project, issue, objective, and background information for this engagement and consultation project. If you require assistance with any of these items, please reach out to the Planning Team.

2.1 Client Information

Department Name:

Project Title:

2.2 Issue Statement

What is the key issue that is prompting the engagement and consultation process?

Write your key issue here. The key issue should be conveyed in one sentence.

2.3 Objective

What are the objective(s) of this engagement and consultation process?

- List your objective(s) here.
 - What are the key questions that this consultation process is intended to answer?
 - What is the value of gathering public input on this topic?
 - Why is this consultation being undertaken at this time?
 - Example objectives:
 - To offer an opportunity for the public to help define a public issue and its causes.
 - To determine whether there is consensus among stakeholders on a specific issue.
 - To gather feedback on a program or service
 - To determine whether there is consensus among stakeholders on a specific issue.

2.4 Background Information

Is there any background information that can help to explain the rationale for the engagement and consultation activities?

- List your background information here.
 - Background information should be no more than five bullet points.
 - Consider the following: departmental direction regarding this engagement and consultation, public commitments (e.g., mandate letters, strategic documents, budget, media interviews, Speech from the Throne, etc.), to seek information and input on a particular issue to inform the decision-making process, to gather feedback on a program or service.

3.0 Defining the Audience

This section will clearly define the intended audience(s) for the engagement and consultation process.

3.1 Target Audiences

Please list the internal and external audiences for this project. For more information on engaging diverse audiences, please see Section 5.0 of this document.

Stakeholders refer to any person or group with an interest in an issue or decision, or who can affect or be affected by an issue or decision. Consider the following to help define your internal and external audiences.

- Individuals/groups that may be affected by an issue
- Individuals/groups that may care or have concerns about an issue
- Individuals/groups that have expertise that would be helpful to inform an issue
- Individuals/groups who have a needed perspective on an issue, but who may be challenging to reach through typical engagement and consultation methods

Efforts should be made to identify specific categories of stakeholders (e.g., industry associations, community sector organizations) as well as defined groups of the population that are being targeted (e.g., parents of school-aged children, seniors). Target audiences may also be defined by demographic considerations such as age, occupation, and geography.

3.1.1 External Audience

Please list the external audiences for this project. Be specific.

- Please list your specific external audiences/stakeholders here
 - E.g., instead of Indigenous groups, use specific examples such as Miawpukek First Nation
 - E.g., instead of youth organizations, use specific examples such as Choices for Youth

- E.g., instead of community groups, use specific examples such as Canadian Mental Health Association

3.1.2 Internal Audience

Please list the internal audiences for this project. Be specific.

- Please list your specific internal audiences/stakeholders here
 - E.g., instead of Provincial Government, use specific examples such as Department of Finance
 - E.g., instead of Agencies, Boards, and Commissions, use specific examples such as NL Health Services

4.0 Strategic Considerations

It is important to reflect on the rationale for this engagement and consultation process, including activities and issues that are evident based on the internal and external environment. This reflection should encompass an analysis of activities and issues relevant to the context at hand. Understanding these factors is crucial for anticipating and addressing potential impacts on how the issue will be communicated and received during the engagement and consultation phases. This section is critical to providing a complete understanding of any factors that may impact how the issue will be communicated and received in the engagement and consultation process. Please **concisely** answer the following questions. Answers should not exceed three bullet points.

1. **Based on existing work and prior engagement activities is the issue, direction, or decision, expected to generate negative, neutral or positive feedback? Will this response vary by stakeholder group?**
2. **Does this decision/policy/issue have a disproportionate impact on marginalized or underrepresented groups such as women, rural and urban populations, 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals, Indigenous peoples, seniors and youth, newcomers, persons with disabilities, or other populations?**

3. **What efforts will be taken to ensure hard-to-reach stakeholders are informed?**
4. **Is the engagement and consultation process likely to address topics that are potentially triggering? If so, have additional measures been put in place to support participants? Have trauma informed best practices been considered?**
5. **What considerations should be kept in mind – do we know how target audiences consume media or messages?**

5.0 Inclusive Public Engagement

5.1 Collaboration with other Departments

To ensure your engagement and consultation project is inclusive of target audiences, clients must consult with Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's **Disability Policy Office (DPO)**, **Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation (IAR)**, and **Office of Women and Gender Equality (WGE)**.

5.2 Guidance

All clients should familiarize themselves with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's **Inclusive Public Engagement Policy**. Accessibility considerations are essential throughout the planning stages to ensure public engagement and consultation sessions are inclusive and barrier-free for participants.

Specific attention is required for those individuals who are most likely to be impacted by a public action or decision. When thinking about inclusivity, as an example, have you taken measures to ensure the consultation is inclusive for women, non-binary or trans individuals, individuals whose first language is not English, newcomers, persons with disabilities, single parents, people with other unpaid care responsibilities or those with precarious employment or shift work.

Measures may include one or more of the following: providing child/senior care, transportation allowance and/or a stipend; language needs; online alternatives; flexible timing/scheduling of events; accessible location; gender-neutral washrooms; and/or offering the services of interpreters (oral or sign language).

It is important to ensure that the overall approach is consistent with government's **Inclusive Public Engagement Policy**. This policy provides instructive guidance to ensure public engagement and consultation processes are accessible to and inclusive of everyone, including people with disabilities. It is a resource for preparing, planning, and holding public or targeted engagement and consultation sessions which are barrier-free. The policy applies to all departments of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Reaching a diversity of perspectives is important. Public bodies are encouraged to identify civil society partners, such as community organizations, to facilitate broad engagement and consultation to gather alternative perspectives and valuable knowledge.

6.0 Methodology

6.1 Approach

This section should outline the engagement and consultation activities that will be undertaken, including the methodology that will be used for each activity. This section should generally describe the tactics being used/considered and identify the specific target audience(s) for each (where applicable).

It is important to consider alternate approaches. A single approach is often not appropriate for all stakeholders in an audience. Public bodies may wish to use a combination of approaches depending on the target audience(s). Examples of broad types of public engagement and consultation approaches include:

- In-person sessions (public and/or stakeholder)
- Virtual sessions
- Online questionnaires posted on engageNL
- engageNL landing page (recommended for all projects)

- Written submissions
- Videoconference/teleconference

6.2 Stakeholder Input

This section will clearly define how stakeholder input, feedback, and privacy is managed for the duration of the engagement and consultation project.

1. How will the public body record and track input throughout the process?

- Please do not exceed three bullet points.
- Potential data collection methods include:
 - Dedicated note taker to capture summary comments
 - Capturing of individual comments from small group discussions
 - Online or paper-based questionnaires

2. How will the engagement and consultation data be shared with participants, the public and other government entities and in what format?

- Please do not exceed three bullet points.
- Consider the following examples:
 - Publishing a public summary document or posting data online
 - Documents that outline the findings of the consultation

3. How is it anticipated that the input received from participants will be used?

- Please do not exceed three bullet points.
- Consider the following example:
 - Information and feedback will be considered by the Department of Finance in developing Budget 2024

6.3 Schedule

This section should answer the following questions:

- Where will the sessions take place?
- Have potential venues been identified?
- What are the anticipated dates and times?

Depending on the level of detail, it may be appropriate to provide an appendix with this information.

6.4 Communications

This section will clearly indicate how information about the engagement and consultation process will be communicated to the public and stakeholders.

6.4.1 Considerations

You will more than likely utilize several different communications channels. This may include personal invitations, engageNL e-mail blasts, news releases, government advertising, social media, etc.

When compared to social media marketing campaigns, evidence has shown that large scale email blasts have a higher conversion value.

- 1. How will interested participants learn about this opportunity?**
- 2. What post-engagement communications activities will occur?**
- 3. Are there any marketing or brand management items to consider for this engagement and consultation?**

7.0 Privacy (PIA Template)

Complete the Preliminary Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) Template.

A Preliminary Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is required to be completed for every engagement and consultation project. Please complete the PIA Template provided to you by the Planning Team. All recommendations from the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Office must be integrated into the PIA Template.

8.0 Roles and Resources

This section should indicate what resources, if any, may be required to implement the engagement and consultation project. Public bodies are encouraged to review the chosen venue (if applicable) for the session(s) in advance to determine basic logistical requirements, such as lighting, set up, and technology requirements. The requirements will depend on the engagement and consultation approach chosen. Categories of additional resources include:

- Accessibility – sign language, plain language or oral interpreters, captioning, hearing assistive technology, microphones;
- Facilitators and notetakers – tablets for notetaking, flip charts, post it notes; and
- Technology – Online platform for virtual sessions (i.e. Zoom, Webex), projectors, polling resources.

8.1 Role of the Community Engagement Branch

This section should describe the role of the Community Engagement Branch in the development of the Engagement and Consultation Plan, and the role the division is requested to provide in the engagement and consultation process. The following questions should be considered:

- Was the Community Engagement Branch involved from the concept stage?
- Will the Community Engagement Branch be directly involved in the delivery of the activities?
- Does the Community Engagement Branch support the methods/ approach outlined in the plan?

9.0 Review and Approval

Every engagement and consultation plan should pass through a formal approval process. The Community Engagement Branch engagement planners will assist and guide entities in the development of engagement and consultation plans. All plans must receive Community Engagement Branch input prior to being reviewed by department executive. Each project will be guided by the Community Engagement Branch team in collaboration with the client. Please ensure you reach out as soon as possible to start the development of the plan.

Department, Agency, Board, or Commission	
Prepared by:	Date Prepared:
Reviewed by:	Date Reviewed:
Approved by:	Date Approved:
Public Engagement and Planning	
Approved by:	Date Approved:

10.0 Annex A

Please use this check list to guide you through the action items.

Table 1: Engagement and Consultation Plan Checklist

Action Items	Responsibility
Client Information Issue Statement Objective Background Information	Department/Client
External Audience Internal Audience	Department/Client
Strategic Considerations	Department/Client
Collaboration with other Departments Guidance	Department/Client
Approach Stakeholder Input Schedule Communications	Community Engagement Branch
Privacy (PIIA Template) Role of the Community Engagement Branch	All
Review and Approval	All

